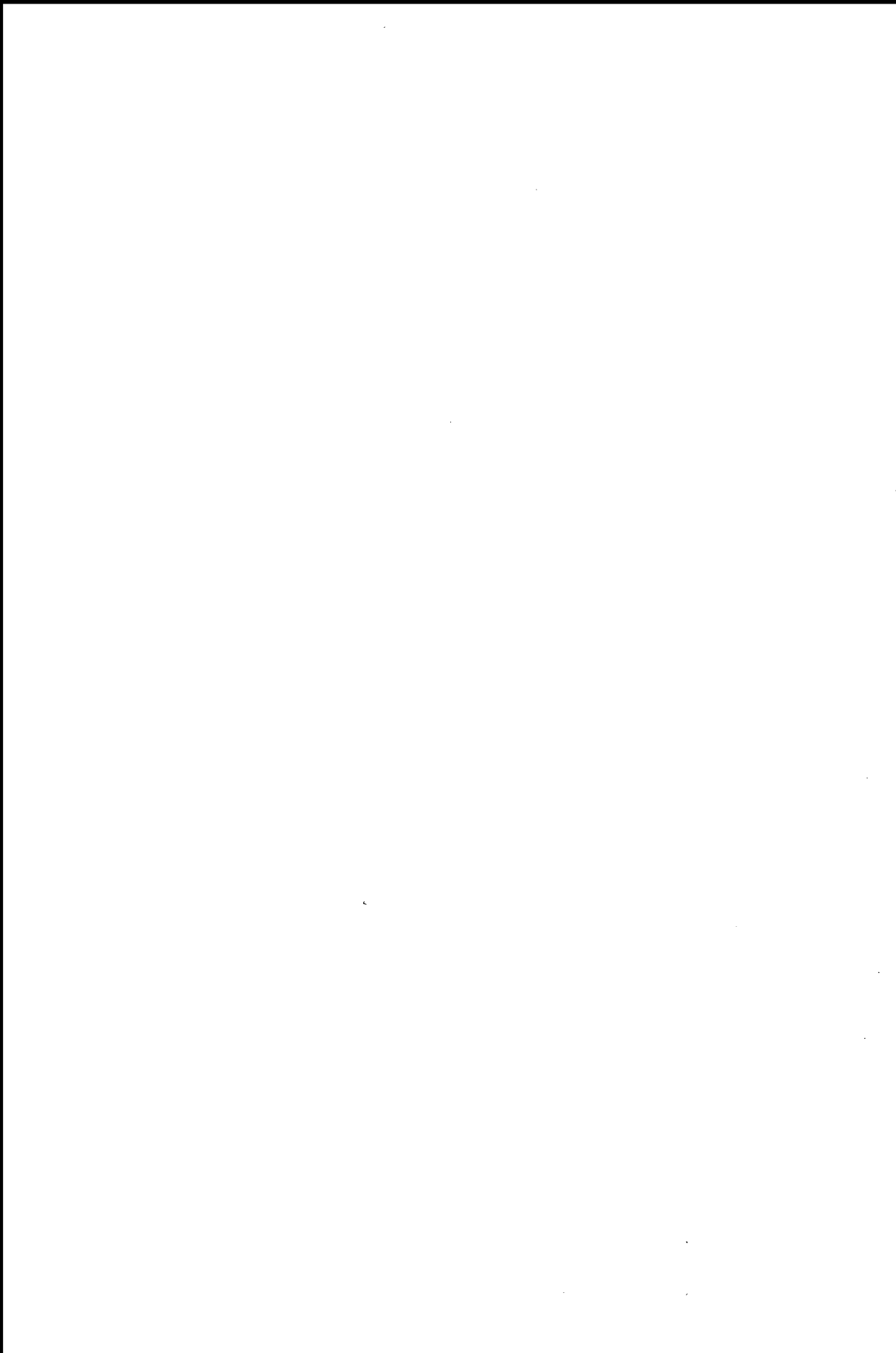

PUBLIC PAPERS
OF THE
PRESIDENTS

William J.
Clinton

1999

II

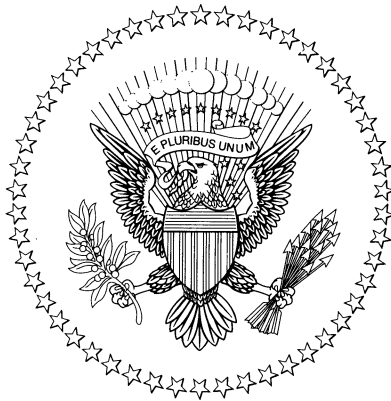


PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE
UNITED STATES



PUBLIC PAPERS OF THE PRESIDENTS
OF THE
UNITED STATES

William J. Clinton



1999

(IN TWO BOOKS)

BOOK II—JULY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1999

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Foreword

In the second half of 1999, the Nation's attention turned to meeting the challenges of a new millennium—and seizing the opportunities presented by our strong and growing economy.

Our economic expansion continued to set records as the longest in America's peacetime history. The number of new jobs created since 1993 passed the 20 million mark, as unemployment reached its lowest level in 20 years, and unemployment among African-Americans and Hispanics fell to record lows. At the same time, America experienced the fastest and longest growth of real wages in two decades—and inflation fell to its lowest level since the 1960s. We achieved our first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

With support from Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, I launched a New Markets Initiative, to reach those parts of America that economic growth has passed by. We began with the principle that, just as we give companies incentives to invest in developing markets overseas, we should give them incentives to invest in inner cities, poor rural areas, and Native American reservations right here in America. As I traveled from Watts to the Mississippi Delta to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, I met a stream of talented people, eager for opportunity and ready to work. With investment incentives, loan programs, and support for business development, our New Markets Initiative is helping put them to work—and helping to keep our economy growing.

Working with the Congress, we made a bipartisan commitment to put 100,000 new teachers in our schools and 50,000 more police on our streets. We doubled funds for after-school programs. We provided, for the very first time ever, funds to help school districts turn around failing schools or shut them down. We funded 60,000 housing vouchers to help people move from welfare to work. Working with Senators Jeffords and Kennedy, we passed a bill allowing people with disabilities to move into the workplace and keep their government-funded health care.

We also reaffirmed our commitment to global leadership for peace and freedom in the century ahead by reaching an agreement with the Congress to pay our arrears to the United Nations. We reached a ground-breaking agreement to allow China to enter the World Trade Organization in exchange for China's opening its markets to U.S. goods. We continued our efforts to promote peace in the Middle East, working to assist negotiations between both Israel and Syria and Israel and the Palestinians. We concluded the adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, which will help ensure military stability and predictability in Europe; and Russia committed to withdraw its forces from Georgia and Moldova. We helped conclude a Caspian pipeline agreement to further ensure our energy security and reinforce the independence of the new nations of Central Asia. In our own hemisphere, we honored America's commitment to entrust the Panama Canal to the government and people of Panama. We also gave strong support to the democratic transitions in Nigeria and Indonesia, and we led the way in negotiating an historic debt relief initiative for the poorest countries of the developing world.

We recommitted ourselves, as well, to meeting the challenges we face at the dawn of a new millennium, abroad and at home: the need to keep Social Security and Medicare safe and sound for future generations; the need to make sure the trade that keeps us prosperous becomes not just freer, but fairer; the need to bridge the digital divide between those who have and can use a computer, and those who do not or cannot; the need to manage the implications of new technology, new science, new ways of doing business. And perhaps the most important challenge of all: the imperative not to give in to complacency, but to use our prosperity for good—and for a better future.

William Clinton

Preface

This book contains the papers and speeches of the 42d President of the United States that were issued by the Office of the Press Secretary during the period July 1–December 31, 1999. The material has been compiled and published by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration.

The material is presented in chronological order, and the dates shown in the headings are the dates of the documents or events. In instances when the release date differs from the date of the document itself, that fact is shown in the textnote. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy: Remarks are checked against a tape recording, and signed documents are checked against the original. Textnotes and cross references have been provided by the editors for purposes of identification or clarity. Speeches were delivered in Washington, DC, unless indicated. The times noted are local times. All materials that are printed full-text in the book have been indexed in the subject and name indexes, and listed in the document categories list.

The Public Papers of the Presidents series was begun in 1957 in response to a recommendation of the National Historical Publications Commission. An extensive compilation of messages and papers of the Presidents covering the period 1789 to 1897 was assembled by James D. Richardson and published under congressional authority between 1896 and 1899. Since then, various private compilations have been issued, but there was no uniform publication comparable to the Congressional Record or the United States Supreme Court Reports. Many Presidential papers could be found only in the form of mimeographed White House releases or as reported in the press. The Commission therefore recommended the establishment of an official series in which Presidential writings, addresses, and remarks of a public nature could be made available.

The Commission's recommendation was incorporated in regulations of the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, issued under section 6 of the Federal Register Act (44 U.S.C. 1506), which may be found in title 1, part 10, of the Code of Federal Regulations.

A companion publication to the Public Papers series, the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, was begun in 1965 to provide a broader range of Presidential materials on a more timely basis to meet the needs of the contemporary reader. Beginning with the administration of Jimmy Carter, the Public Papers series expanded its coverage to include additional material as printed in the Weekly Compilation. That coverage provides a listing of the President's daily schedule and meetings, when announced, and other items of general interest issued by the Office of the Press Secretary. Also included are lists of the President's nominations submitted to the Senate, materials released by the Office of the Press Secretary that are not printed full-text in the book, and proclamations, Executive orders, and other Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the *Federal Register*. This information appears in the appendixes at the end of the book.

Volumes covering the administrations of Presidents Hoover, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and Bush are also included in the Public Papers series.

The Public Papers of the Presidents publication program is under the direction of Frances D. McDonald, Managing Editor, Office of the Federal Register. The series is produced by the Presidential and Legislative Publications Unit, Gwen H. Estep, Chief. The Chief Editors of this book were Karen Howard Ashlin and Anna Glover, assisted by Brad Brooks, Margaret A. Hemmig, Maxine Hill, Alfred Jones, Jennifer S. Mangum, Lisa N. Morris, Michael J. Sullivan, and Karen A. Thornton.

The frontispiece and photographs used in the portfolio were supplied by the White House Photo Office. The typography and design of the book were developed by the Government Printing Office under the direction of Michael F. DiMario, Public Printer.

Raymond A. Mosley
Director of the Federal Register

John W. Carlin
Archivist of the United States

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Secretary of Energy	Bill Richardson
Secretary of Education	Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Veterans Affairs	Togo D. West, Jr.
United States Representative to the United Nations	Richard C. Holbrooke
Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency	Carol M. Browner
United States Trade Representative	Charlene Barshefsky
Director of the Office of Management and Budget	Jacob J. Lew

Chief of Staff	John D. Podesta
Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers	Janet Yellen Martin N. Baily (effective August 12)
Director of National Drug Control Policy	Barry R. McCaffrey
Administrator of the Small Business Administration	Aida Alvarez
Director of Central Intelligence	George J. Tenet
Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency	James Lee Witt

Administration of William J. Clinton

1999

The President's News Conference With President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt July 1, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon. I'm delighted to welcome President Mubarak back to the White House. He is our longtime partner in building a safer and more peaceful world.

Once again, we now have a real chance to move the peace process forward in the Middle East. Egypt has been central to that process and to all the progress which has been made since the Camp David accords over 20 years ago. Egypt will continue to play a leading role to address the important tasks ahead, building on Oslo, Wye River implementation, reaching a permanent status agreement between Palestinians and Israelis, widening the circle of peace to include agreements with Syria and Lebanon, revitalizing talks between Israel and the Arab world on a host of other important issues from the environment to water resources to refugees to economic development. There are, to be sure, major challenges ahead, but the will of the people for peace is strong.

President Mubarak and I also discussed our common determination to fight terrorism in all its forms.

With regard to the peace process, let me just say one other thing. The best way for the Israelis to have lasting security is a negotiated peace based on mutual respect. That is also the best way for Palestinians to shape their own future on their own land. A negotiated peace is the best way for all the people of the region to realize their aspirations.

Let me just say also that over the last two decades, under President Mubarak's leadership, Egypt has done much to fulfill the aspirations of its people. Economic growth has been strong and sustained; inflation has been held in check; the GDP per person has increased by a factor of five. Egypt is building a modern infrastructure in roads, powerplants, communication systems. Civil society has grown, with work ahead to strengthen it, so that all Egyptians participate in building a better future.

Among the reasons for all this progress, two stand out, both advanced by President

Mubarak's wise leadership. First, Israel's—excuse me—Egypt's deepening peace with Israel that has freed resources and energies of the people. A broader regional peace will be good for prosperity, for progress, and for freedom.

Second, Egypt's economic reform, with expansion of the private sector and free markets. The work of President Mubarak and Vice President Gore on our U.S.–Egypt partnership for growth and development, which they will advance later today, has been crucial. The President is committed to continuing the reforms, and America will continue to help.

Today we discussed a number of other issues. I'd like to mention just one: Kosovo. I am profoundly grateful to Egypt for supporting the stand taken by NATO. Already, more than half the refugees have returned to Kosovo. There is still much work to do, and I thank Egypt for its commitment to provide Egyptian police officers for the civilian police implementation force there.

But we have made a powerful statement together. The future belongs to those who reconcile human differences, not those who exploit them. The future belongs to those who respect human rights, not those who destroy people because of their religion, their race, or their ethnic background.

I hope we can carry some of the momentum from what we have achieved in Kosovo to the Middle East, as we seek there to promote tolerance and a durable peace. As we do, the leadership of President Mubarak, as always, will be critical.

Mr. President, welcome. The floor is yours.

President Mubarak. Thank you. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I was very pleased to see my friend President Clinton and exchange views with him on matters of common concern. As usual, our talks this morning reflected the similarity and the convergence of our views. We value our solid friendship with this great Nation and consider it one of the pillars of our policy.

For decades, we have been working together in order to bring about peace and reconciliation in the Middle East. President Clinton has been playing an active and very effective role. Under his leadership, the American contribution to the cause of peace has reached a new high. His continued involvement is appreciated by those of us who are committed to peace in the region.

In the months ahead, we'll be looking forward to reviving the peace process, which has been stalled for sometime. Unfortunately, valuable time has been wasted. Today there's an opportunity which should not be missed. We shall work closely with the U.S. and coordinate our joint efforts in order to have the parties break the stalemate and restore movement towards peace.

Recent events indicate that most of the region's inhabitants are yearning for peace. We shall be working with President Asad, Prime Minister Barak, and Chairman Arafat, respectively, with a view to creating the necessary atmosphere for resuming the peace process without delay. I'll be meeting with each of them in the near future for this purpose.

Agreements which have been signed on the Palestinian track must be implemented fully and in good faith. Provocative actions, especially settlement activities, should be stopped altogether. This will pave the way for starting final status negotiations. In parallel, negotiations should be resumed on the Syrian track. There are signs that the ground is favorable for that. It would be a mistake to assume that movement should be confined to one track at a time. Progress on each track facilitates movement on the other. The goal is to achieve just, comprehensive, and stable peace in the whole area.

In that context, we were alarmed by the recent Israeli bombing of civilian targets in Lebanon. Such actions only poison the atmosphere in the region. They create an erosion of the people's confidence in the process at the time when we are working hard to encourage the parties to take confidence-building measures. We call upon Israel to apply maximum self-restraint in the crucial months ahead.

As tangible progress is achieved towards peace, we can work for enhancing cooperation and interaction in the region. Egypt was a country that initiated the peace process, and we remain most willing and determined to do all we can to help bridge the gaps and restore confidence between the parties.

We also discussed some other regional and international problems, notably African issues, as well as matters related to cooperation between countries of north and south.

I commended President Clinton on the success of the American role in bringing about peace and security in Kosovo. We hope that the events that took place in that part of the world will convince all those concerned of the necessity to abide by the rule of law and respect the human rights of all peoples. We are aware of the fact that much has to be done to help the refugees and to prevent any recurrence of ethnic, religious, or cultural violent conflicts. On our part, we will contribute to international forces as being assigned the task of maintaining security and order in Kosovo.

As we are about to enter a new era, with the dawning of the new millennium, we must spare no effort in our quest for peace and security. For all nations, global problems that threaten the future of mankind ought to be addressed with vigor and determination. In all these endeavors, we shall cooperate with our partners and friends, among whom the U.S. figures very prominently.

Our bilateral cooperation is expanding every year, and it will continue to grow. This is a goal both of us are committed to. The Clinton administration has done much in this respect, and the President's personal involvement in this process was and continues to be most appreciated by the Egyptian people.

Before I conclude, I would like to send a message of friendship and affection to all Americans. Thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you, Mr. President. Now, as is our practice, we will alternate between American and Egyptian journalists.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], you go first.

Q. I'd like to ask both Presidents questions. President Clinton, do you have any new ideas for breaking the stalemate in the Middle East? And with the advent of our own Independence Day, when do you think Lebanon will be free and independent and rid of a longtime occupation?

President Mubarak, do you think the new Israeli Government will make a gesture toward halting the settlements?

President Clinton. Well, let me answer the questions you asked me first. I do think that

the time is right, but I think that before I advance publicly any ideas, I should have a chance to meet with the Prime Minister-elect, Mr. Barak, when he—according to the reports in the press this morning, he has constituted a government on quite a broad base. We should give him more freedom of movement to move aggressively ahead.

Our role, traditionally, has been to try to create the conditions and provide the support necessary for the parties to make peace, and I expect that he will have ideas of his own about that. And so I think that the appropriate thing for me at the moment is to look forward to our meeting, which I hope will occur in the near future, and then after that, after I talk with him, to make whatever statements are called for at that time.

On the question of Lebanon, I think our position on that has always been clear. We believe that a comprehensive peace in the Middle East should include not only an agreement with the Palestinians and an agreement with the Syrians but also an agreement which includes Lebanon and promotes its independence and integrity.

President Mubarak. The question about the settlements you mean? I think the time now is, at least, to improve the atmosphere in the area, to stop building the settlements now until the negotiations start. Then the Palestinians and the Israelis could sit and find out what could be done. This is, I mean, a step for improving the atmosphere between the two groups.

President Clinton. Would you like to call on one of your journalists?

President Mubarak. Yes.

Q. Thank you. The question is for President Clinton. I would like to follow up on Helen's question on the settlements. President Clinton, in 1991, when you first were running for the Presidency, you made a pledge never to criticize Israel publicly. However, your administration expressed its dissatisfaction with Israel's settlements activities by describing them as an obstacle to peace.

However, 23 new settlements have been built since the signing of the Wye River accord. Would you be willing, your administration, would be willing to tell Israel to stop building the settlements, the new Israeli government, to stop building the settlements and undo the wrong that has been done? Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, I think our position on the settlements has been clear. We don't

believe that unilateral actions by any parties, including other interested parties like the United States, which compromise the capacity of the parties to the Oslo accord to reach agreement on final status issues, should be taken. And that includes provocative settlement actions. We have made that clear and unambiguous.

But I do not believe—the Israeli people just had a huge election, a big election, and they voted in very large percentages in ways that almost every commentator has concluded sent the signal that they were ready to pursue the peace process to its conclusion. They now have a Prime Minister-elect who has just completed his government. He is coming to see me in the next few days. I think the less I say, until I see him and until we see if we can embrace a common posture toward making a peace, the better. But my views on the settlement question are well-known and have not changed.

Yes, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

2000 Election and Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Mr. President, Governor Bush has raised a record-breaking \$36 million, more than 10 times his closest rival for the Republican nomination. Do you think he's wrapped up the nomination, or is wrapping it up? And if he decides not to accept Federal campaign money and the spending limits that go with it, as appears increasingly likely, do you think that would be a blow to campaign finance reform?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I don't want to get into being a political handicapper, so I can't say—how do I know what the Republicans are going to do in their nominating process? I don't have a clue.

But I would make two observations. First of all, the leadership of the Republican Party, in general, are unanimously hostile to campaign finance reform. They don't believe in it. And so, if he did that, he would have that in common with the other leaders, who won't permit us to bring the McCain-Feingold bill to a vote or to try to pursue what I believe are needed changes in the campaign finance laws. So that is one thing that—that's just where they are, and they're very forthright about it. And the American people are going to have to make up their minds whether this is an important issue to them or not.

But I would make one point, generally. I think the most valuable commodity in an election, in a democracy, in which you will cover

the candidates extensively—even more valuable than money—is ideas. And I think the most important thing, therefore, that I have seen in this election so far is that Vice President Gore is, nearly as I can determine, the only candidate of either party who has yet actually told the American people what he would do if he got elected.

And I think that if you look at the 1998 elections, for example, it's a good example that, in a democracy which has a vigorous media publicizing what people are doing and saying, money may be important, but ideas are even more important.

World Summit on Terrorism/Middle East Peace Process

Q. My first question is for President Mubarak. You've been suggesting for some time the preparation of a world summit on terrorism. Did you discuss your ideas on this issue with President Clinton? And, Mr. President, do you have a specific plan for dealing with this international threat?

And for you, President Clinton, to carry on with the peace process, how do you plan to work really on the peace process as you approach the next, best and maybe the happiest, 18 months in the Clinton administration? [Laughter]

President Clinton. Well, being at peace would be a good start. [Laughter]

President Mubarak. I've already discussed this issue about international terrorism with the President, as well as I have discussed it with other heads of states, but mainly here with President Clinton I did this issue. I'm saying that in the coming century, the most dangerous element is not the war program of this or that; it's terrorism spreading all over the world.

Sometimes when the terrorism starts, when I start speaking about terrorism sometime, I was told, "Oh, because of some kind of incident, you're speaking about terrorism." Now terrorism is spreading everywhere in the world. It's a very dangerous phenomenon. And a summit, and if it's well prepared before it—I think the whole world will suffer from terrorism. War is much more easier than terrorism. Terrorism, you never know when the attack is going to take place. But war is planned, and you know its limits.

That's why I discussed with the President, and I hope we could reach a summit, and before

the summit there should be very thought-out preparation with a technical group to see what kind of agreement could be reached in the whole world under the U.N.

President Clinton. We discussed this issue quite extensively, and this has been a subject of great concern to me. It's one thing we've shared over the last 6 years. A few years ago, I gave a speech at the United Nations, at the opening session, about terrorism and asked that we focus on it.

We have asked the Congress to provide substantial resources to look into what else we can do to fight terrorism, to deal with the threats of biological and chemical weapons and the prospect that they might get into the hands of terrorists. We have to consider the prospect in the future that, as the President said, the most serious security threats to nations will not be from other nations but from terrorist groups that cross national borders and that may well form presently unprecedented allegiances with other illegal groups, organized crime groups, drug traffickers, weapons profiteers.

And so I think that all the nations of the world that are interested in stability and peace for their people are going to have to have a much higher level of cooperation on these issues. So I'm for doing anything that can be done to increase that.

Now, you asked me about the Middle East peace process. Let me just say again, our role has never been to dictate to either party the terms of the peace. Even though we have many Arab-Americans and many Jewish Americans in this country, we do not live in the Middle East. The people of the Middle East live there, and they have to work out the terms of their own reconciliation.

What we have always tried to do is to keep the parties working together and then to do whatever was necessary to provide the support that the friends of peace need, and if the process seemed in danger of failing, as it did before the Wye River 9½ days and sleepless nights, to do what could be done to keep it alive. But I think that the people of Israel have sent us a loud message that they want the process to be kept alive and they want it to be seen through.

So we're in a period of transition now. Let's let the Prime Minister, the new Prime Minister-elect get his government in place, take office, come to see me, talk to President Mubarak,

and talk to all the other parties and see where we go from there. But those of us who are friends of the peace process in the Middle East should focus on successful resolution of it. And sometimes, the less we say in public, the more likely we are to have a positive impact on the outcome of the negotiations.

Q. On Northern Ireland—

President Clinton. Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters]? Yes, I'll take an Irish question. Go ahead.

President's Relationship With the Vice President/Medicare

Q. President Clinton, as you're aware, there have been reports of tension between you and Vice President Gore, and I wondered if you could comment on your relationship. And are you resigned, as the campaign goes on, that inevitably, you're going to be at odds on certain issues and disagree with the Vice President, and for that matter, assuming your wife decides to run for the Senate, perhaps on Medicare and New York issues?

President Clinton. Well, that's a substantive question. I'll be glad to answer that if you want. But let me say, I have been, frankly, bewildered by those reports. Only one person ever asked me about it directly, one of your number, and that was Wolf Blitzer, in an interview I did before I left my European trip at the G-8, and I gave him a very good answer, which was that I thought that the Vice President had done a good job in his announcement. I thought the most important thing he had done is—I'll say again—is to tell the American people what he would do if he got the job and to pose the choice that I think is before them, which is do you want to go beyond—build on and go beyond the successful direction of the last 6½ years, or would you like to turn around and go back and take a different course?

And so I think he's doing fine. I honestly do not know what the source of the stories are, but they are not in my heart or my mind. I want him to get out there, and if he disagrees with the decisions that I make as President during the next year and a half, then of course, he will have to say so. And I will take no offense at that. And if my wife decides to run for Senator from New York, then some of the disagreements that we've had in the past over decisions I've made as President she may be constrained to state publicly because they will be relevant

to the future. And that's the way a democracy works.

You know, members of a political party, whether Democrats or Republicans, belong to the political party because they share a general set of values and a general approach and because they agree on almost all things, not because they agree on all things. It would be a dreary world, indeed, if we all agreed on everything, and I didn't ask Al Gore to become Vice President so that he would agree with me about everything. Nobody with a fine mind and a lot of experience and looking at the world we live in would agree with anyone else with the same qualities on every issue. It just wouldn't happen.

Now, on the merits—let me say, on this Medicare issue, there have been many people—not just in New York with the teaching hospitals, but there are rural hospitals; there are home therapy providers; there are others—who have felt that the budget savings, the cuts in the '97 Balanced Budget Act, were too severe and made it difficult for them to maintain quality of care. One such group are the teaching hospitals. There are a lot of them in New York who take care of a lot of poor people, but there are a lot of them in Massachusetts, a lot of them in California, and there is at least one in every State in the country.

When we put out our Medicare plan, we, therefore, did not continue all of the cost savings in the '97 Balanced Budget Act beyond the period when they run out. We actually left some of them off to try to alleviate that pressure. The second thing we did was to create a fund, a quality fund, of about \$7.5 billion, which the Congress can use to debate and allocate to alleviate present problems.

So I would encourage the Senators from New York, or anyone else who's concerned about this, to bring those concerns, bring the facts to the table, get it out in the open, then embrace the idea of Medicare reform, pass that fund, and then allocate it as it should be allocated. Because I do think that's a legitimate issue.

Iraq/Kosovo/Middle East Peace Process

Q. For President Mubarak, have you discussed the issue of Iraq and how close or distant American and Egyptian positions are? For President Clinton, Mr. President, I'd like to congratulate you on your success and resolve on Kosovo. And from your statement, you referred as one

of the criteria for success, the return of refugees; will you work—the return of refugees, Kosovars, to their homes. Will you use the same criteria in the Middle East, that the Palestinian refugees and displaced will come back to their homes? Thank you.

President Clinton. That's really good. [Laughter] That's really good. [Laughter]

President Mubarak. Well——

President Clinton. You called on him. [Laughter]

President Mubarak. I didn't know what was the question. [Laughter]

Really, for the first part of the question, about Iraq, really, our position didn't change at all. We are looking forward, how to help the people of Iraq under any circumstances. I have discussed this with the President, and I think that the resolution in the U.N., and I think maybe some improvement in it in the near future, may lead to helping the people of Iraq for medicine, food, and other things. And I hope that something can conclude in that direction—discussed this with the President.

President Clinton. Let me say, our position on Iraq is that we favor the proposal before the United Nations, advanced by the British and the Dutch. It would provide for more money to Iraq to help the people there, with their human needs. But it would maintain a vigorous arms control regime, because we do not believe that Saddam Hussein should be permitted to develop again weapons of mass destruction.

And I would remind everyone that he has actually used weapons of mass destruction. He has used chemical weapons on the Iranians. He has used them on his own people, on the Kurds that live in Iraq.

So I think that we have a balanced position. But I have never wanted the Iraqi people to suffer because of their leader. And I think we supported a relaxation of the way the funds flow there so that more can go to benefit the people. But I do not believe we should give up on an attempt, an insistence, indeed, that the United Nations, in return for this, maintain an arms control regime.

Now, on the refugee question, let me say one brief question about Kosovo because I do appreciate the interest in Kosovo in Egypt and in other countries of the region. About half the refugees have gone home. They're dying to go home. And one of the reasons that NATO was determined to act is we knew, if we acted quick-

ly enough, that the refugees could go home and most of them would wish to go home.

Even in Bosnia, where the war went on from—the conflict—from 1991 until 1995, there were many people who had established other lives in other places and did not want to go home. There are still a lot of refugees who have not gone home in Bosnia.

So I'm delighted that the Kosovars are pouring in. The truth is that we've actually tried to slow it down a little bit, because we're worried about the landmines and other explosives which might be there, and we want it to be safe for them, and because we're trying to get organized to help everybody rebuild their homes and the basic infrastructure of life so that once they do go home, they can actually live and do well.

Now, that brings you back to the refugee question you asked in the Middle East. I think that the important thing is if we have the right kind of a peace agreement. That's why I say—no one can accuse me of dodging Middle East questions. I've been up to my ears and eyeballs in this peace process since the day I took office. But if you just look at it as a practical matter—the agreement that is made in the end—whether refugees go home depends in part on how long they've been away and whether they wish to go home. It will also depend on what the nature of the settlement is, how much land will the Palestinians have, where will it be, how does it correspond to where people lived before.

And I would like it if the Palestinian people felt free and more free to live wherever they like, wherever they want to live. I would also like it very much if we could help those countries which have borne a heavy burden, particularly Jordan where a majority of the population is now Palestinian, to build a better life for the people who are there, because they have a lot of very serious economic challenges. They have a fine new King who is an able person, and we're trying to help, and we want others to help. But I think it will depend upon the refugees themselves, and it will depend upon the shape of the final agreement.

Ask the Irish question if you want.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Thank you, sir. Several questions on Northern Ireland. What is the latest—[laughter]—sorry.

President Clinton. They're learning from you now. [Laughter]

Q. What is the latest update you can give us about your activities? Do you plan to make an emergency trip over there? Do you blame either side for the impasse? And what constructive suggestions can you convey to us at this juncture?

President Clinton. Well, I have been—for the last couple of days, particularly, we've been in virtually constant contact with the parties there. And I spent a lot of time on it yesterday and late, late last night and this morning early. They are in negotiations as we speak. The mood seems to be reasonably positive, and they are exploring some new ideas. I offered my suggestions for a possible resolution of the sticking points, with the benefit of all the folks on our national security team who have been working on that.

And I'll say this, it is a very difficult problem for the parties, but it will be very hard for the world to understand if this breaks off, since everyone has agreed to the fundamental elements of the Good Friday agreement. Both sides agree that they have to comply with every bit of it. There was an election where the Irish people voted for it. Then there was an election where the Irish people voted for leaders under it.

So if you have a situation where you've had two elections ratifying a peace agreement and you have all the leaders saying that we all have to comply with every element of it and it falls apart over sequencing, I think that it would be—to call it a tragedy would be a gross understatement. But it is a very difficult thing—it would take 30 minutes to go through the whole litany of why. But they are working now. They are exploring some new ideas, and they do seem determined to work it through to a positive conclusion.

Would you like to take one more?

Middle East Peace Process/Iraq

Q. Thank you. President Clinton, you talked about the 9½ days at the Wye Plantation. We know you tried; God knows you tried, but you failed, sir. [Laughter] What makes you think that—

President Clinton. I got an agreement. It wasn't my job to implement it. It has not been fully implemented. The agreement, itself, was a success.

Q. That's correct, sir, but your officials—[laughter]—

President Clinton. That's all right. They tell me I've failed every day. It's quite all right. [Laughter] You just save them the trouble today. Go ahead.

Q. Your officials used to speak about CBM, confidence-building measures. The Palestinians did their part, even Netanyahu thanked Arafat at one stage. But let's say you failed in convincing the Israelis to reciprocate and do the same. What makes you feel that this time around you would be more successful, sir?

My question to President Mubarak: Sir, how does Egypt view any external interference in Iraqi internal affairs from whatever source it comes? Thank you.

President Mubarak. I've failed also this time. [Laughter]

President Clinton. Yes, they zinged you this time.

Let me say, I think, with regard to Wye, obviously, I think its conditions should be honored, because it's like any agreement between two parties; unless both parties agree that the agreement should be modified, then it should be honored.

I believe that historians, when they look back on this period, will conclude that the principal difficulty that Mr. Netanyahu had was the nature of his coalition, and because it was small enough—his majority was so small and it included people who were so hostile to the peace process, that no matter what he tried to do, they could always threaten to bring him down.

Now, the reason I think it will be different now is, number one, Prime Minister-elect Barak was a much more open and heartfelt supporter of the Oslo process. He has—you remember, I think his first public event after his election was to visit the gravesite of our friend Prime Minister Rabin. But number two, he got a big vote from the people of Israel with peace being the major issue. And number three, he has constituted a government—apparently, from the morning press—with quite a large voting majority in the Knesset, obviously geared toward the peace process, because the parties have deep differences, in his coalition, over domestic policies unrelated to the peace process.

So for those reasons, I think the chances of success are now greater. And therefore, I think that all of us should try to restrain our comments about specifics until we talk to the Prime

Minister-elect and we can form a common strategy.

President Mubarak. Concerning the interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, you know our principle from the beginning; we never interfere in the internal affairs of Iraq. If there is any change in the Government of Iraq, it should come from internally, not from outside. This is our principle which has been adopted all our life with any country in the world.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you.

President Clinton. One more, go ahead.

Q. On Russia?

President Clinton. One more.

Q. What if I say I'm going to leave? [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. I'll give you a question. [*Laughter*]

Bill Bradley

Q. Mr. President, when you were asked about George W. Bush and the Republicans a few moments ago, you deferred, pleading ignorance. Perhaps I could ask you about the Democrats. When you said that Al Gore is the only one in the race on either side of the party who has been talking about ideas, clearly that represents a dig not merely at the Republican candidates but also former Senator Bill Bradley as well. So let me ask you about his candidacy, sir, if I may.

Number one, do you believe that he's as qualified as is the Vice President to be President of the United States? And number two, how do you explain, in your own mind, when you heard the figures yesterday showing that the Vice President raised less money than he'd hope for and Bill Bradley appears to have raised more?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I'm not going to talk about their fundraising because I don't think I should be a political handicapper. But anyone who understands Senator Bradley's career and life story would not be particularly surprised by this. I certainly wasn't. And I don't think it's accurate to say the Vice President has raised less money than he hoped for.

On the other question, it wasn't a dig at Senator Bradley. He has said, himself, that he has not laid out his case for being President and said that he wants to wait until the fall to do it. That's what he said. I'm not digging him. I have nothing bad to say about him. That's a fact.

But I, personally, have always believed that you should begin by saying why you want the job, because you're asking people to hire you to do things. And I think the Vice President deserves a lot of credit for doing that. That's my view. But you can't read that as a dig at Senator Bradley because he, himself, said, "In the fall, I will tell you what it is I intend to do." That's his position.

Q. And do you think he's as qualified as the Vice President, sir?

President Clinton. I think the question—the American people will have to decide who's qualified and who's not. There is nobody in the race who is running or who could run who has had as much experience in as many different ways. He's had both legislative experience and executive experience. Besides that, he's been a journalist, the Vice President. You've got to think that counts for something. [*Laughter*] So he's been a journalist; he's been in the executive branch; he's been in the legislative branch. He has vast experience in foreign policy, in arms control issues, and vast experience in domestic policy. And maybe even more important than experience, the ideas that he's advanced have made America a better place. So if results counts and experience counts, then he has quite a good resume.

And I don't have to make comparative judgments about the other candidates to say that. No one has anything like that level of experience, with that level of positive impact on the people of our country. Those are just, I think, indisputable facts.

Q. How about one more?

President Clinton. You want to ask one more Egyptian? Equal time.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. I have a question for President Mubarak and one for President Clinton. Sir, at this moment, Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak is forming his government in Israel. What should be, with so little time before the next American elections, which are just around the corner, what would be—

President Clinton. Seventeen months? [*Laughter*]

Q. What would be perhaps the one thing or one message you would direct towards Mr. Barak as a step that should be taken as soon as possible to revive the peace process?

And President Clinton, your comment on President Mubarak's statement?

President Mubarak. Is the question directed to me?

Q. Yes, first, Your Excellency.

President Mubarak. I think I have already mentioned that, in the comments I started with, there should be some steps to make that feel much far better and to start the peace process. Eighteen months is quite a lot; we could achieve in one year so many things. The peace process was already started years and years ago. The Palestinians have signed some agreements. If Mr. Barak—and I'm sure that he's going to do it—starts implementing the Wye agreement, for example makes some steps for the settlements, I think the process will move. And we hope that we could finish or reach a final status in one year. One year and a half is quite a lot of time for negotiations.

President Clinton. I agree with that. It doesn't have anything to do with the time left I have on my term. My advice would be—let me go back to 1993 when I became President. Our biggest problem was the domestic economy was not doing well, and we had a \$290 billion deficit, and there was no easy way to close it. And we presented an economic plan to the Congress that passed by only one vote in both Houses. It was very controversial; it was very difficult, I think in that sense—politically, internally—was perhaps more controversial than making—than in Israel going forward with the peace process maybe now, given the vote in the last election.

I think it's better, if you know you've got to do something without which you cannot succeed in serving your people in the long run, it's better to do it sooner rather than later, generally. That is generally true. And if it is going to be difficult and there are tough consequences, it's better to take them early rather than later. That is just a general rule. Because otherwise, if you don't do it, you may never get around to doing it, but it won't get any better. It will just get worse and worse and worse.

So it's better to just take a deep breath and go on and do what you think has to be done. That's what I believe.

Press Secretary Lockhart. Thank you.

President Clinton. First—next question, I'll give you—next time we come, I'll give you the first one, after we do the roll. I've got to go. Thank you.

President Mubarak. Thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 177th news conference began at 1:47 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; CNN senior White House correspondent Wolf Blitzer; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; King Abdullah II of Jordan; outgoing Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak of Israel; and former Senator Bill Bradley. President Mubarak referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Remarks on the Charters of Freedom Project

July 1, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. As you might imagine, this is a very special day for Hillary and for me, in a signal honor for us to have the chance to serve at this moment. I want to thank John Carlin for his faithful stewardship of these great documents; thank my friend Mike Armstrong for his generosity and for calling on others in the business community to help in this endeavor; thank Secretary Riley and NASA and the Department of Com-

merce for working with the National Archives in designing and developing the new encasement that will house our charters. I thank the Center for Civic Education for their efforts to teach our children the importance of history.

I'd like to thank these young people who are here who read—first they helped us recite the Pledge of Allegiance, and then they read from our founding documents. And I thought that young man did a remarkable job introducing

Hillary. I thought they were all great. Let's give them a hand. [Applause]

And I would like to say a special word of appreciation to Congressman Ralph Regula for his leadership and for proving that this is one issue which is not a partisan issue. This is an American issue, and I'm very grateful to him for his leadership in the United States Congress on this.

On July 4, 1776, King George of England wrote in his diary, "Nothing of importance happened today." Now, even making allowances for the absence of world news and the Internet, His Majesty's diary entry stands as one of the more inaccurate statements ever written. [Laughter] We all know that those who put their names to the Declaration of Independence changed the world forever.

Before then, liberty had been a rare and fleeting thing in the course of human history. Citizens of ancient democracies enjoyed it but let it slip from their grasp. So the Founders labored mightily to craft a Declaration of Independence, then a Constitution and a Bill of Rights that they hoped would help America to beat the odds and keep liberty alive.

Two hundred and twenty-three years later we can safely say they succeeded not only in keeping the liberty they created, in fact, alive, but in moving ever closer, generation after generation, to the pure ideals embodied in the words they wrote.

Today, our liberty extends not just to white men with property but to all Americans. Our concept of freedom no longer includes the so-called freedom to keep slaves or extract profit from the labor of children. And our Constitution is the inspiration behind scores of democratic governments around the world, from Japan to Poland to Guatemala to South Africa.

Each generation of Americans is called upon not only to preserve that liberty but to enhance it; not only to protect the institutions that secure our liberty but to renew and reform them to meet the challenges of the present with an eye for the future. The renewal of our generation—in our economy, our social fabric, our world leadership for peace and freedom—is well symbolized by the project we celebrate today, employing the finest minds and latest technologies to preserve these charters of freedom for generations yet unborn.

When Hillary and I first realized that the turn of the millennium would occur while we

were in the White House, we knew we had an obligation to mark it in ways that would be good for the country, in her words, "by honoring the past and imagining the future."

What we do with these hallowed pieces of parchment, all Americans can do with the important historical treasures that exist all around them, in their attics, their parks, their townhalls. Saving America's treasures is not about living in the past. It is about conveying to future generations the American story in all its texture and richness and detail, about fulfilling our duty to be good ancestors, about catching the spirit Thomas Jefferson had in his later years, when he became devoted to preserving desks and chairs and other ordinary things from his extraordinary times. "These small things," he wrote, "may perhaps, like the relics of Saints, help to nourish our devotion to this holy bond of Union and keep it longer alive and warm in our affections."

I want to thank, first and foremost, Hillary for leading this effort, which has already accomplished so much from restoring the Star-Spangled Banner to honoring our great artists, thinkers, and scientists. I look forward to walking on some of those 2,000 millennium trails we'll build together and to naming more and more millennium communities.

We can all take pride in our efforts to renew our national treasures, for in a larger sense, the story of our Nation is the story of constant renewal, the realization that we preserve the ideals embodied in these documents not simply by revering them but by reaffirming our commitment to them. Each generation must widen the circle of opportunity, deepen the meaning of freedom, and strengthen the bonds of our community.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal." We fought a war of revolution to make those words real in 1776. We rededicated ourselves to that proposition in 1863, recognizing that the bright words of the Declaration could not abide the stain of slavery or endure the breaking of our Union. We rededicated ourselves at the coming of the industrial age, when we recognized that new measures were required to protect and advance equal opportunity and freedom. We rededicated ourselves again in 1920, when we ratified the 19th amendment, granting women the right to vote. We saved those ideals in World War II and for millions upon millions of people in the cold war. We rededicated ourselves again in 1963,

hearing and heeding Dr. King's dream that, one day, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slaveowners would one day sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

Today, at the coming of the information age, we rededicate ourselves yet again. Thank God our challenges are not those of depression or war but those brought on by this hopeful and remarkable explosion in technology, by the globalization of our economy, by all the changes in the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world.

To keep our ideals alive, we must embrace new ideas and follow a new course. Because we believe equal opportunity in 1999 is just as important as it was in 1776, we must rededicate ourselves to the truest guarantor of that opportunity, a world-class educational system that benefits every single child.

Because we believe the Federal Government must promote the general welfare, as our Founders instructed, we are dedicated to using its resources to pay squarely our single, greatest challenge as a nation today, the aging of America, and to do so in a way that pays off our national debt for the first time since 1835.

Because we believe every human being has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and no one should be discriminated against, uprooted, abused, or killed because of his or her race or ethnic background or religion, we are proud to stand with our allies in defense of these ideals in Kosovo.

It is natural for any American contemplating the documents behind me to look upon those who crafted them as almost superhuman in their wisdom and the times that they lived as a golden age. But the more you read about them, the more you respect their achievement because the Founders were not gods on Earth; they were farmers and lawyers, printers and merchants, surveyors and soldiers, chosen by their constituents to hash out divergent interests and make difficult decisions about the future, to engage, in other words, in politics.

I said at my alma mater, Georgetown, last week, that at its best, politics is about values, ideas, and action. That's what they were about. They turned politics into public service and made it a noble endeavor and left us a framework to keep it going. The Declaration and the Constitution emerged only after fierce debate and difficult compromise. Today, these documents enjoy universal acclaim.

And at the time they were written, believe it or not, many Americans—though, thank goodness not a majority—actually did not agree with them. Yet, the framers refused to let serious differences of opinion become excuses to put off action. They overcame their differences and completed their tasks and stayed true to an idea that Jefferson would later express in his first Inaugural, that every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle.

We have to keep that idea in mind today. The greatest threat to our democracy today, and certainly to freedom and democracy around the world, is the poisonous idea that what divides us is far more important than what we have in common; that as long as we have differences of opinion, we must have personal animosities, and we cannot have positive action. This is a dubious political strategy, a dangerous governing strategy, wrong as a matter of historical fact, and an affront to the sacred documents we gather here to save.

Despite their many differences, the framers drafted, debated, and signed the Declaration of Independence in less than a month. They drafted, debated, and approved the Constitution in less than 5 months. If they could produce those enduring charters of freedom in a matter of months, surely there is no reason why we here in our time cannot make major progress in the remaining months of this millennium, to prepare our Nation for the new millennium and a 21st century which I am convinced will be America's best days.

We owe it to these children to honor their past, to imagine their future, and to build a bridge to that future every single one of them can cross. So as we preserve the documents that launched this, the greatest journey in freedom and opportunity in all of history, let us resolve to do all we can to keep alive the spirit that got us to this point. These children will do the rest.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the Rotunda at the National Archives. In his remarks, he referred to C. Michael Armstrong, chairman and chief executive officer, AT&T; and students Jasmine Smith, Kevin Su, and Nora Skelly, who read passages from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First

Lady. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Export Controls on High-Performance Computers and Semiconductors

July 1, 1999

Today I am announcing reforms to the administration's export controls on high-performance computers (HPC) and semiconductors. These policies will strengthen America's high-tech competitiveness, while maintaining controls that are needed to maintain our national security.

These reforms are needed because of the extraordinarily rapid rate of technological change in the computer industry. The number-crunching ability of a supercomputer that once filled a room and cost millions of dollars is now available in an inexpensive desktop computer. Computers that are widely used by businesses and can be manufactured by European, Japanese, and Asian companies will soon exceed the limits that I established on high-performance computers in 1996. These business computers have become commodities, and next year U.S. and foreign vendors are expected to sell 5 million of them.

Maintaining these controls would hurt U.S. exports without benefiting our national security. Moreover, a strong, vibrant high-tech industry

is in America's national security interests. That is why I have decided to raise the licensing threshold of high-performance computers to so-called tier two and tier three countries. For tier three countries, which present the greatest risk from a national security viewpoint, the administration will continue its policy of maintaining a lower threshold for military end-users than civilian end-users. I have also directed my national security and economic advisers to provide me with recommendations to update our export controls every 6 months.

Due to legislation passed by the Congress in 1997, this change will require congressional approval and a 6-month period before it can go into effect. I will work with the Congress to pass legislation that would reduce this period to one month, so that we can keep up with the rapid pace of technological change. I also want to work with the Congress on a bipartisan basis to explore longer term solutions to how we deal with commodities like widely available computers and microprocessors.

Message on the Observance of Independence Day, 1999

July 1, 1999

I am delighted to join my fellow Americans across the nation and around the world in celebrating Independence Day.

Today we gather with family and friends to commemorate the 223rd anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. In marking this historic event, and in remembering the courage and sacrifice of the patriots and soldiers who fought and died that we might shape our own destiny, we are truly celebrating the birth of our great country.

Every generation of Americans owes a profound debt of gratitude to our Founders for

envisioning a nation that, as President Lincoln so eloquently put it, was "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Inspired by this same vision, we have built together a society in which freedom and democracy do more than enlighten our laws and political institutions—they permeate our culture and way of life. We have only to look at the recent tragic events in Kosovo to recognize how blessed we are to live in a land where life, liberty, and equality are cherished rights, upheld by courts and custom, and where, as we realize more each day, our

diversity is a source of strength rather than a cause for division.

On this day, as we look back with pride on our heritage of freedom, let us look forward as well with renewed hope for the future. Enjoying the fruits of a robust economy, the stability of a country at peace, and the talents and energy

of an increasingly diverse populace, America is poised to lead the world into a new millennium full of fresh opportunities and challenges.

Hillary joins me in sending best wishes to all for a wonderful Fourth of July.

BILL CLINTON

Interview With Rick Dunham of BusinessWeek

June 29, 1999

National Economy

Mr. Dunham. I was wondering if I can sort of start broadly and lead into it. I mean, the new economy, with the increase in productivity that's tied to technology and globalism, has really led the United States to sustained economic expansion that's been amazing in the decade and growth beyond just about anyone's predictions.

I was just wondering if you're a believer in this new economy scenario. And then the second part was, why, if there is such a booming economy, do you think it hasn't trickled all the way down to some of these distressed inner cities and the rural areas?

The President. First, I do believe in the new economy. I think that technology is rifling through every sector of economic activity, in ways that have given us dramatic increases in productivity and potential for growth without inflation that I think most models have not accurately measured.

And I think that, therefore, the most important thing for Government policy is to be fiscally responsible, to create the conditions in which people can prosper, and then to try to do things which will accelerate the trends that are already underway. I think that that's what we're trying to do with Internet II, for example, and what we're trying to do with having heavy investments in biomedical research.

Now, why hasn't it trickled down to everybody? I think there are—I'd like to make three points. First of all, there has been a remarkable amount of trickling down. We have the lowest minority unemployment rate, among African-Americans and Hispanics, recorded in the nearly three decades we've been doing racially separate unemployment statistics. And many cities—De-

troit, for example, has an unemployment rate that's roughly half what it was in '93.

On the other hand, I think there are two reasons why it hasn't. One is, there are enormous premiums in this new economy for education and skills, so that people who don't have an education are both more likely to remain unemployed and, even more significantly, more likely to remain underemployed or relatively undercompensated, which I think explains the lion's share of why you've had increasing inequality for over 20 years, which began to abate about the last 2 or 3 years.

Mr. Dunham. In the last couple of years.

The President. You've begun to see comparable and, in some cases, relatively larger income gains in the lower 40 percent.

I also think the wage inequality is also reinforced by the fact that people at lower income levels are less able to buy stocks, and an enormous amount of increased wealth has come from ownership as opposed to just salaried employment. So you see a lot of the companies, for example, that offer their employees, even their lowest wage employees, stock options, something that Wal-Mart, for example, has done for a long time. Those companies will have a better record of increasing equality because their workers can afford wealth. And I think that that's important. The other thing is, of course, what you're here to talk to me about.

The third point is that I think there are still disincentives to invest in the neighborhoods and communities or people which still need to be brought in. They're either real disincentives or they're imagined ones. There are, you know—we have these—I think there are accumulated preconceptions about where market opportunities exist and don't exist.

And what I'm trying to do with—what I've been trying to do from the beginning of my administration with the empowerment zones and enterprise communities, with a vigorous Community Reinvestment Act—over \$18.5 billion was loaned under the CRA in 1997, for example; that's the last year I have numbers for—with community development financial institutions, with the microenterprise lending, with all these initiatives, we've tried to remove the institutional barriers and create mechanisms which would allow capital to flow to people and to neighborhoods where they miss. We had the tax credits for hiring people off welfare or for hiring people that were in the empowerment zones or the enterprise communities. Those are things that have already had an impact.

But what we're trying to do, what I'm trying to do now is to deal with what I think are both of the problems that have kept some of our inner-city neighborhoods and poorest communities from fully participating. That is, we have this new markets initiative, which is basically designed to put together a package of loan guarantees and tax credits to induce new investment in these areas at more attractive rates—and also the psychological barriers. We're going to take—we've got Sandy Weill and Hugh McColl and Dick Huber joining Republican and Democratic elected officials, and Jesse Jackson and Al From and, you know, all these people, to shine the light on the opportunity.

You know, you've got a purchasing power gap over actual sales, retail sales, that averages 25 percent in urban areas throughout the country. It's 35 percent in Los Angeles and 40 percent in East St. Louis, two places we're going.

Dick Huber actually made a kind of an interesting comment, only in jest, when we went to Atlanta to kind of kick off this program. He said, "You know," he said, "I may be the only guy that's kind of sorry you're doing this, because we figured out there's a huge opportunity out there and now all our competitors are going to know." [Laughter]

New Markets Initiative

Mr. Dunham. Well, that's one of the things that I was curious about. I mean, some of these corporations and executives—Citicorp, Aetna, NationsBank—have realized this. But at the same time, it seems to be uneven in the corporate community—

The President. Very.

Mr. Dunham. —where others are sitting on their corporate hands. I was wondering what you can do as President or what could be done through legislation to try to encourage more companies to go into these areas?

The President. Well, I think there are two things we can do, and I hope to do both on this tour. The first is to actually make sure that all the people in positions to make investment decisions understand that there are very gifted, very hard-working, very creative people out there in these communities and that there are enormous opportunities there, just to shine the light on what's going on and what's out there, including the infrastructure we've worked hard to put in place in the last 6½ years.

And secondly, I hope to build bipartisan support for passing the new markets initiative which will, in effect, make it more attractive for people to invest in these areas by giving them a tax credit of up to 25 percent and making them eligible, making certain investments eligible for loan guarantees of up to two-thirds of the amount of the total investment. I mean, if you have Government-guaranteed loans on two-thirds of an investment, you get 25 percent tax credit on what you put up, that cuts the risk considerably, in ways that I think are important. So I hope to achieve that.

And if I could back up, I asked the people to think about this in another way. I think there is a moral logic here, which is that we don't want to go into the 21st century, at an all-time high in prosperity, leaving so many people behind. That's not right. There's also a very compelling economic argument. You know, we've got all the debates now about what's the Fed going to do and do they need to raise interest rates and all that. I don't want to get into that. I think Mr. Greenspan and the Fed do a perfectly good job, and we've had a good partnership by recognizing each other's appropriate roles.

But let me—no one believes, I don't think, that we have completely repealed the laws of economics, traditional laws of economics, that we've completely repealed any tendency for inflation in our economy, or that we've completely repealed the tendency to have some business cycle. But we've dramatically improved it through this technological revolution that's going on.

So if you ask yourself—you put yourself in my position, and you ask yourself: Okay, you've

got 4.2 percent unemployment; you've got the longest peacetime expansion in history; the country may be able to have the longest expansion in history, including wartime, in the next several months. Now, how can you keep this going? How can you keep growth going with low inflation? And that involves, is there a non-inflationary way to add more workers? Is there a noninflationary way to raise wages? And the answer to that, it seems to me, is—there are only basically three answers.

One is, we can sell more of our goods and services around the world, which is why I strongly favor new trade initiatives and not seeing America go back to protectionism. And that's a subject for another day, but you know I'm hoping we can continue to push that forward.

Then, secondly, you can look at discrete populations in America which are underemployed. There are basically only two now: people on welfare—we cut the welfare rolls in half, but we know that there are still people on welfare who could work, but they're harder to place—and the disabled. We're about to take a huge step in that direction, with almost unanimous votes from Congress, by allowing disabled people who get Medicaid health insurance to keep their Medicaid while they go into the work force, and that will bring a lot of extra people into the work force at competitive wage rates.

The third big opportunity—and I'm convinced the biggest one, because it's a two-fer, you get more workers and more customers—is going to the neighborhoods and the communities that have basically not participated in this recovery.

So it seems to me that, quite apart from our moral obligation to do this—if in fact, there are business opportunities there, which are there right now, in the tens of billions of dollars, and if there are ways to make those opportunities even more attractive by the passage of this legislation—that this is a major, major opportunity for our country to keep our economy going and to keep it going with low inflation. So to me, it may be finally something whose time has come.

I also think we've learned something in the last 6 years about what works, and of course, there were models out there before the last 6 years. In the 1960's there was this great effort, through the Great Society programs, to build up the poor urban and rural areas. And we found that, actually, they did a lot of good, in terms of providing nutrition for people, in terms

of providing health care, in terms of providing educational opportunities. But the Government alone could not build a sustaining economy. You couldn't build an economic infrastructure with Government alone.

In the 1980's, we learned that the stock market could grow, and we could create record numbers of new millionaires and billionaires, but the private sector alone could not do this, and that more and more people would fall further and further behind.

So what we've tried to do is to apply our Third Way philosophy, that we should have a partnership between Government and the private sector that would literally empower people to change the dynamics of their lives in these poor neighborhoods. That's what the whole empowerment zone, enterprise community initiative, that the Vice President has so ably run, is designed to do. That's what these CDFI's are designed to do. That's what the—you know, that's why we've been so vigorous in pursuit of the Community Reinvestment Act. As I'm sure you know, over 90 percent of all the loans made under the CRA, even though it's been on the books for over 20 years, have been made during the life of this administration.

So this is the next logical step. The problem with all that is it's sort of uneven, and it—the CRA—applies nationwide where there's available capital. But the CDFI's and the empowerment zones, the enterprise communities, they only apply where they are, and there are 125 of them, but they don't cover every place. And even in the places where they exist, they don't cover all the areas of need within the cities where they exist.

So if we can dramatically increase the awareness in the business community of the investment opportunities, through the use of the bully pulpit with the tour we're about to take with the business leaders and others, and if we can pass the new markets initiative, it is literally—it's a nationwide initiative. It would apply everywhere where there's an economically distressed area.

So I'm very, very excited about this.

Mr. Dunham. I've been talking to Sandy Weill, and he's a big backer of new markets initiative. He was saying that if the U.S. Government can create programs that help American corporations, protect them from some of the risks around the world, that it makes sense that something similar would be offered too, more

incentives in the United States. I was wondering how much of this may be modeled on some of the OPIC or other programs that have been successful around the world, and if you've had any of the same kinds of thoughts in trying to model this?

The President. Yes. We actually—what we tried to do is to create at least the same, if not greater, incentives for American business to invest in America, that we give them to invest in developing economies overseas.

I've been a vigorous supporter of OPIC and the Ex-Im Bank. I think that they're incredibly important to our interests and to the welfare of the people of developing countries around the world, and I would—and I have strongly opposed attempts to cut back on them in the last 6 years.

But I think that it is—I woke up one day and basically realized—we started debating what we could do—that American businesses could get lower risk to invest in developing economies overseas than they could in the developing economy right here in America. And I think that's wrong.

So there is a—the American private investment companies that we set up, which would be eligible for the loan guarantees—\$2 in loan guarantee for every \$1 of unguaranteed investment put up by the private sector—it directly came out of our attempts to parallel the incentives for investing overseas with incentives to invest here.

Minorities in Corporate America

Mr. Dunham. You've mentioned both Al From and Jesse Jackson. I'm curious what you think of the efforts that Jesse Jackson has made, working with corporate America—Wall Street, now in Silicon Valley—to try to encourage corporate America to hire more minorities, to invest more in minority areas, and to help underwrite minority businesses. I was wondering both what your sense is of what he's done and how it may have helped shape what you're doing here?

The President. Well, I strongly support it, and I think that—you know, I've spoken to his Wall Street conference in each of the last 2 years. And I think he deserves a lot of credit. He's been out there trying to get this done for a long time.

And it also influenced my thinking because Dick Grasso—who, you know, sponsors this with him every year—and the others who help

have—they really persuaded me that there was a lot more we could do, even within existing law. And I'm hoping that I can support his efforts, that there will be—that these things will be entirely complementary.

You know, maybe this is just the moment at which years and years of accumulated effort by a lot of people will be bearing fruit. I've been interested in this whole issue, and Hillary has, for a long, long time, every since we first learned about the efforts of the South Shore Development Bank in Chicago, and we brought a development bank like that to Arkansas, with a microenterprise loan program. And I realized that AID was helping people like Muhammad Yunus, who's founded the Grameen Bank at Bangladesh, you know, to do this kind of thing around the world. And I thought we ought to be doing it at home.

And we had some good success in Arkansas. And in the mid-eighties, I headed, along with the Governors of Louisiana and Mississippi, the Delta Development Commission—the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. And we looked at how to do these kinds of things in the Mississippi Delta, which is the poorest part of America.

And so, as I said, there are—lots of people have been out there working on this, trying to get this done for a long time. And it seems to me that we now have enough evidence that what we have done works but that we still have these two big barriers. One is, the business community is not fully aware of what opportunities they actually have to make money now, and the second is that there are, frankly, still some greater risks in these areas that we ought to try to overcome by putting in place a framework where there's much more incentive to invest and at least as much as we give to invest overseas.

President's Upcoming Travel To Promote New Markets Initiative

Mr. Dunham. You've mentioned your upcoming trip that leaves July 5th and will go everywhere from Appalachia to Los Angeles. I was wondering if there are any kind of specific proposals that you see there, that will bring improvement to the communities you're going to visit? If you're—I know that the idea is to leave rays of hope in each of the places, but I didn't know if there were any specifics that you're looking to leave.

The President. We're going to do—we will try to do three things. One, we will try to highlight initiatives that are working now, things that we—like, we'll have places that have benefited from the community development financial institutions, for example.

Two, we will try to highlight how the impact of the new markets initiative, if the Congress were to pass it, would take these benefits and immeasurably increase them and do it on a national basis, wherever there's need.

And the third thing we will do is to have a whole series of announcements by business leaders about things they are going to do on their own, because they would be profitable, and by the way, they'll create businesses; they'll create jobs; they'll create opportunities in these areas.

So we will have a heavy emphasis on that third area, because I don't think that, as I said, for a minute that this is primarily a Government initiative. This is a partnership initiative. But there are lots of opportunities right now, here, that people are genuinely unaware of. And I think most Americans understand how much prosperity we have and that no one could have imagined that the stock market would more than triple and that we would have now almost 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years and that all these things would happen and yet there would still be these pockets left behind. So I think there's a longing to see all of our fellow citizens caught up in this prosperity, everyone who's willing to work.

And I think that, you know, when people actually know the facts, that there's a lot of money to be made out there—just on the retail—if you think about the retail issue alone, the fact that there's a purchasing power gap of 25 percent in these urban inner cities, that's a stunning statistic; and it's a bigger market than virtually all of our foreign markets; and that's just on retail; never mind the factories you could put in; never mind the other kinds of nonretail, small business services you could have. It's amazing.

Status of New Markets Legislation

Mr. Dunham. What is the status of the legislation? Republicans on the Hill say that they're still waiting for precise wording. It's pretty well known in general what will be in it. I was wondering if you have both timetable and game

plan for going ahead and trying to get something done.

The President. Well, what I want to do, I wanted to do this tour first, and get—I know there will be—a lot of Republican legislators, I believe, will participate in this because this really is something that Republicans should like. It's a completely—it's free enterprise. It's using the tax system to prove that the enterprise system can work in every community in America, which is what they believe.

And so what I'm hoping will happen and what I intend to do is, during the tour and then immediately after, I want to consult with the leaders of Congress in both parties, see if there is the kind of bipartisan support for this concept that I think there should be, and then we will quickly move to get the legislation up there, because we've got it all budgeted, and it's well within the budget.

And it also would be well within the budget potential of many Republican initiatives. I mean, the interesting thing is, if you do loan guarantees and tax credits, they don't cost that much money for the enormous benefit that they bring.

Mr. Durham. I guess most of the Republican—the Republican approach where it differs is—zero capital gains, they're talking about, or some further regulatory relief. That is sort of separate from these kinds of incentives, and I don't know if there's any room for that in the final package or—

The President. But that wouldn't do anything. You know, we had a capital gains reduction in the Balanced Budget Act. But that wouldn't do anything to specifically increase the likelihood of money going here. Because what we propose to do is to increase the relative attractiveness of these investments, recognizing that the relative risk is still slightly greater for a lot of the things that we'd like to see done.

So I think that those conversations ought to occur in the context of our larger budget negotiations. But on this, I think that we still should do this. Whatever we come up with, in the end, with a tax bill, this should be done on its own merits. We need to increase the relative attractiveness during this period, just like we're increasing the relative ability to hire people who are disabled because they can carry their Medicaid health insurance with them into the work force.

National Economy

Mr. Dunham. Do you—you were talking about growth, and perhaps the new economy and the changes of the recent decade would change the models of growth. Do you see, down the road, where you could have growth more than 2 percent, where it could be 3.5 percent or more per year?

The President. Without inflation?

Mr. Dunham. Without inflation.

The President. Oh sure, well, that's what we've had for the last 6 years.

Mr. Dunham. Yes, exactly.

The President. I do. But I think if we're going to do it, you have to find ways to find new customers and add to the work force in areas where there is an opportunity for growth without inflation. For example, I think—suppose we did all this, and we got down to a 3.5 percent unemployment rate. It's not inconceivable to me that we could do that, if we target these population groups and these neighborhoods and these places, without a substantial increase in inflation.

Then the next big step is, I still believe, is that we and the other wealthy countries of the world are going to have to really work in a disciplined fashion with well-run nations, developing nations, and maximize the use of technology. I think a lot of these poor countries, if they're well-run, could skip a whole generation of economic development because of technology. With the advent of the Internet, I think you could—first of all, you could revolutionize all their schools. When I was in Africa, in these little villages in Uganda, which is the country in Africa that's done the most to cut its AIDS rate—so it has—it's a country with capacity and a sophisticated government, and I went into the little villages that had outdated maps that still had the Soviet Union there and all that.

And I thought to myself, if we wired all these schools, if we hooked them up to the Internet, they could also have printers, and they wouldn't have to buy new maps; they could print out new maps. And the government could cover the operating costs of the computers in the schools. They could just be printing—you know, you just hook them up with a printer. They could print their educational materials. They could print their maps.

There are things we could do, and I believe—let me just say one other thing, I also think these countries can skip a generation of develop-

ment in the sense that they do not have to, even in their initial stages, worsen their environment the way people did through the industrial revolution if they do it in a clever way.

So I think the opportunities for new jobs, new growth without inflation, because of technology and because of what we know in these areas, are stunning. But in order to do it over the long run, over a sustained basis—for 10 years, let's say—we're going to have to have much more sophisticated trading links, which means that we are going to have to deal with the things I talked about in Geneva—both times, in my two trade talks there—and the things I talked about at the University of Chicago. We've got to somehow build a consensus on trade that makes the American working people feel that we are preserving the social contract, if you will, here at home, and that we're doing it in a way that advances the lives of ordinary people around the world.

I think, if we can do that, if we can sort of adapt the world trading system—on the theory of leaving no one behind and making maximum use of new technologies and what we know about economic potential—I think that this thing can go on for an indefinite period.

But if we don't, if we don't do that, if we don't deal with the populations and the neighborhoods here at home, if we don't do these things, then at some point, you'll reach a floor in unemployment, and wage demands will occur and there will be some shortage or another around the world in some thing or another people need, and inflation will resume.

Mr. Dunham. Right.

The President. But I do think that the world is in a different place now. I think we—whatever happens, about things we don't know about—you know, no economist has an accurate model of how this has all changed the business cycle or what productivity has really done to growth.

But what we know is that if we are fiscally responsible and we continue to pursue this course that you and I discussed here today, that we will perform far better than we otherwise would, that we'll be better citizens in terms of our relationships with one another in America, and we'll be better citizens of the world. We know that, regardless, we'll get better performance and we'll be a better society. So I hope that we can keep pushing all of this.

Federal Budget Surplus

Mr. Dunham. I wouldn't be a good BusinessWeek reporter if I didn't ask about the trillion-dollar windfall, as it were, and if you see this as an opening to a possible agreement that would cover everything from Medicare, with the prescription drug benefit that you talked about today to, on the Republican side, perhaps tax cuts that would be larger than what you had spelled out in the State of the Union?

The President. I think it—obviously, when you have more money than you thought you were going to, it should make it easier to have an omnibus agreement. And I hope it will.

From my point of view, I want to caution, however, that—all of this, what we have this year, we will actually have, everything else we're projecting—that what will make the projections turn out to be facts is very disciplined, responsible management of the economy and the clear signal to the markets that we're managing our long-term problems.

So this should make it easier to make an agreement on Social Security and Medicare and paying down the debt and still have more funds for education, medical research, tax cuts, you name it. But we have to have our priorities in order. We still don't want to go off and have a big tax cut and ignore the Medicare liabilities, the Social Security liabilities, or what I consider to be the enormous opportunity we have to pay off the debt of the country over the next 15 years.

When I became President, we had a \$290 billion deficit, and it was projected to increase forever. And now we project that next year we'll have a \$142 billion surplus, and we could actually be out of debt in 15 years.

Now, I think it's important to note why that is. Again, in a global economy with global financial markets, I think that's quite a desirable thing, because it means lower interest rates for everything from business investment to car payments to home mortgages to college loans to credit cards. It means, therefore, more money for jobs, for growth, for wages; and it means we are relatively less dependent on global markets in times of turmoil, like we had in Asia.

It also means that our trading partners—again, we want them to grow; they need to do well, these developing countries—it means they will be able to access capital, that they will have to get from beyond their borders, at

lower interest rates than would otherwise be the case, because we won't be—the Government, at least—won't be in these markets.

So I think the idea of the United States and, hopefully, other wealthy countries in the world being free of public debt, at least long-term, structural public debt—you know, maybe if a country wants to undertake to rebuild all its airports and float bonds to do it, that's one thing. But you know what I mean; I mean long-term, structural public debt—I think is a very appealing prospect for the world over the next 15 to 20 years, because then we could take a lot of this investment capital that would normally go to governments in the United States and put it into these developing economies, where it is desperately needed, in a way that would benefit them and benefit us.

So I hope that—again, this should have appeal to the Republicans as well as the Democrats, the idea of making America debt-free.

Mr. Dunham. Right.

The President. And we can have a tax cut. But we ought to do Social Security and Medicare, and I still believe a big portion of these taxes ought to be—tax cuts ought to be directed toward helping more people save for their retirement. That's another thing.

You know, most people will not have enough in their private pensions and Social Security and in their present 401(k) accounts to sustain their lifestyles when they retire. So I do think that my proposal there deserves some consideration from the Republican majority, just because I think it's good social policy, and it's a good way to give a tax cut to increase savings.

We've got—our savings rate in America has gone up in the last 6 years solely because of the decline in Government deficits, and now the surplus. There has been no increase in savings by individuals. Now, that is somewhat misleading, because it doesn't count record-high homeownership. But still, I think, I hope we can get all this done. The new economic news should increase the chances of an omnibus agreement. But we still have to keep first things first here.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman

Mr. Dunham. My Sam Donaldson question is, what about Alan Greenspan?

The President. Well, you know, he's established a pretty good record, and he's been right a lot more often than he's been wrong over

the last several years. And as I said, the relationship we've had has been one of mutual respect and independence, and I respect his—he knows what we're doing. He knows that we're determined to be fiscally responsible, and he knows—actually, we haven't talked about some of the things that are in this article, but I'm sure he'll read it, and he'll get a feel for what my theory is for how we can achieve long-term growth without inflation.

But he also knows there are these underlying things that he monitors every week for the Fed, and he'll make the best judgment he can. And whatever he does is his decision to make.

Mr. Dunham. Do you think he might for 5 more years?

The President. Oh, I don't even know if he wants to do it. I haven't talked to him. I don't even know if he's interested.

Mr. Dunham. Well, thank you very much. *The President.* Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House on June 29 but was embargoed for release until 10 p.m. on July 1. In his remarks, the President referred to Sanford I. Weill, chairman and chief executive officer, The Travelers Group, Inc.; Hugh L. McColl, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, Bank of America; Richard L. Huber, chairman and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc.; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; former Gov. Charles (Buddy) Roemer of Louisiana; and former Gov. Ray Mabus of Mississippi. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Radio Remarks on the Observance of Independence Day, 1999

June 29, 1999

This weekend, as we celebrate the 223d anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the birthday of our great Nation, let us reflect on what it means to be an American.

Let us remember the visionaries, the patriots, and the soldiers who were inspired by a single ideal, that we are all created equal; and let us strive to honor that ideal today and every day by building a world where every individual can make the most of his or her talents and know what it truly means to live and breathe free.

On this, the last Independence Day of the 20th century, Hillary and I wish you a happy and memorable Fourth of July.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 1 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast on July 4. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Interview With Susan Page of USA Today Aboard Air Force One

June 30, 1999

President's Medicare Modernization Plan

Ms. Page. We want to talk to you first about Medicare and then about new markets. You've got your long-awaited plan out on Medicare. What do you think the prospects are, especially looking at the early initial reaction that you got yesterday? What do you make of that?

The President. Well, first, I think it's a good sign that we have the Republican leadership with the door open. That's what having Senator Roth and having Congressman Thomas and the other two Republican congressmen there—McCrery from Louisiana, in particular, is a guy I know and have a regard for. He believes in getting things done. McCrery would like to

make an agreement on Medicare and Social Security—very serious man. So these guys came; even though there were only three House Members and Bill Roth, they were the right people.

I think, also, the breadth of the presence of the Democrats indicates that the most liberal Democrats have acknowledged that we need to make serious structural reform; and our moderate-to-conservative Democrats believe that this is enough structural reform to unify and coalesce around. So I think we've got something to go forward on.

And what I intend to do is to call the leaders—Senator Lott and the Speaker and Senator Daschle and Mr. Gephardt—and ask them to come and meet with me the day we get back from Fourth of July recess, and let's try to make a plan for how we could do it this summer. Because I believe that I can do the same thing with the Social Security I've done with Medicare, I can offer them something. We could even maybe build on it and get the—done, because we can't know that we're really going to pay the debt off which, as you know, I believe is profoundly important, unless we understand where we are on both. But I think the first thing to do is to get the Medicare because there's a real interest in it.

Ms. Page. When you have this meeting with the congressional leadership, are you going to give them a deadline for action? What will you do, specifically, at the meeting? What do you want to come out of it?

The President. Well, what I want to come out of it more than anything else is a common commitment to the goal. In other words, if the leaders will all say we want to do this and we think we can, it doesn't mean we will, but it will get us a lot closer. That will send a signal to the rank and file in both caucuses that this is something we're really going to try to do.

And it would be a phenomenal gift to the country to do it, and we have the money to do it, and the only reason not to do it, frankly, is if somebody makes a real decision that the money should be diverted to something else. There is no reason not to do it. We're close enough now; we're much closer now, frankly, on Medicare than we were before we did the omnibus balanced budget in '97.

Ms. Page. This meeting or really the release of the plan is the start of a process. Some people think the end of the process could be a deal that enables Republicans to get some of

the tax cuts they want and you to get the Medicare plan you want. Do you think that's what will happen? Is that a possible end of this?

The President. Well, I think it depends first on whether we can get close enough so that—on the particulars of the structure of the Medicare—that is, can we get everybody, or more or less everybody for the kind of structural modernization that I think is imperative, where we have some genuine competition, but we do it in a way that doesn't sacrifice quality—that's why I want to set up this extra fund, because most people believe that in the '97 Balanced Budget Act we had excessive savings in some areas of Medicare from the point of view of providers, so we set aside a fund for the Congress to deal with that—and then whether we can get a general agreement on the structure of the drug benefit.

A lot of our people—and I'm very sympathetic—and maybe some of theirs would like to accommodate both the people that have huge drug bills and the biotech industry which wants to be able to sell these drugs if they keep investing and pushing the envelope on the big things. But I thought it important not to have a drug benefit that would be subject to the same criticism that we leveled at one of their tax programs back in '97—that, okay, it looks good for 5 years. So now, we've avoided that.

But I think that if we can get agreement on the fundamentals of this and then if we can get agreement on real commitment to paying down the debt and taking the interest savings and plowing it into Social Security, then I think there is enough funding left over, not committed to either of those pots, given this new budget, that we can probably make it a kind of omnibus agreement covering other things.

But I think we—

Ms. Page. Including tax cuts?

The President. Yes, but I think that what we have to focus on is first things first. I think that, for the Democrats and for me, the important thing will be having the right kind of Medicare reform, having the prescription drug benefit, and getting the details right here. And so that's why I think we have to really—we've got to focus on that.

I think the other stuff—assuming, as I said—it's a big assumption—assuming you get the financing right on the Social Security piece, I'd also like to have an omnibus agreement. I'm going to try to get them to agree on Social

Security, too. And a lot of people—most people don't think we can do that. I disagree. I think there's a lot more commonality than most people think. I spent a lot of time just quietly thinking about it, on our trip to Europe and other things, trying to write out different scenarios. But I think there is much more energy right now behind the Medicare issue and a much greater sense of urgency. And frankly, you've got one that goes broke in 2015 and the other one, if they just hang with the money I've got, will stay all right until 2053 or 2055.

So I think Medicare first, see if they want to do it, see if they'll commit to try to do it by the summer. And then I think they can raise their other concerns once we get into the framework of the substance. But we've got to stay—this is a big, big—changes in Medicare, and we need to focus on that first.

Ms. Page. Are you concerned at all, though, that there may be a good number of Democrats who are afraid there will be a deal that they won't like? And I know you've said you want to—

The President. But none of them think that so far. In other words, I have worked very, very hard to keep our caucus together. I took a good deal of time to come out with the specifics of this plan, and we did a lot of serious work, all of us—and I include the White House in that, too—really trying to take the politics out of this in terms of what specifics we recommended. That is, I really tried to figure out what I thought had to be done structurally for this program to work, what kinds of savings we had to achieve, whether the economics really would support getting rid of all the copays on the preventive screening if you put in the copays on the lab tests that tend to be—most people believe are overused. That kind of stuff.

So I think that—all I can tell you is that the negotiating process that I would support would be designed to produce an agreement that would be supported by the overwhelming majority of our caucus, and I would hope the overwhelming majority of theirs.

If you look at the balanced budget agreement, we did a pretty good job. They had a slightly higher percentage of Republicans voting for it in the House than the Democrats, and in the Senate we had a slightly higher percentage of Democrats voting for it than Republicans. But in both Houses, there were big, big majorities

in both parties. I think to get an agreement, we're going to have to do that.

President's Agenda and 2000 Election

Ms. Page. Given how important it is to you to try to win the Congress back, or as much as you could, for your party, do you ever feel personally torn about a deal versus trying to give Al Gore and the Democrats an issue?

The President. No, because I don't believe—it might help some individual Republicans get reelected to Congress if they voted for such an agreement, but I believe that for Democrats what is good policy is almost always the best politics. The "do right" rule is almost always best for us because we get hired to do things.

The American people, when they vote for Democrats, they hire them. They give you this job, and you get a contract, and your contract is 2 years, 6 years, or 4 years if you're President; and they hire us to go to work every day and to do things. And I don't believe—for example, it didn't hurt the Democrats in 1998 that we had a big budget at the end where there was a compromise that a lot of Republicans voted for, and we got the big downpayment on 100,000 teachers and a lot of other educational priorities. It didn't hurt them at all.

The only—this is not going to turn into a status quo country, and there are too many issues on which we are too deeply divided. If we can reach agreement on—and I'm not saying this could happen—if we could reach agreement on Medicare, Social Security, taxes, investments in education, and there would still be differences in 2000 on next steps in education, on guns, on patients' rights, even if we pass a Patients' Bill of Rights, there are going to be differences, unresolved differences, on choice, on a lot of issues.

In other words, there will be a vibrant election-year environment in 2000 for issues still to be decided by America that will be clear in the Presidential race and clear in the congressional races. Even if both parties—even if the Republicans join us—if you look at George Bush's message, it's assumed he will be nominated on this compassionate conservatism thing—and that both parties are competing for the dynamic center of America, I happen to think that's a healthy thing. If you just look at the real substantive differences, all—just the issues I've mentioned and others, we'll have

plenty to fight about, argue about in the election.

So I think that actually both parties will be better off in dealing with the agenda of the 21st century. If we dealt with the baby boom problems right now, if we dealt with Social Security and Medicare and committed to pay the debt down, if we did all that, the Republicans would still say we need more for tax cuts than maybe we'll get, or here's our next round of tax cuts, or whatever. There will be plenty to debate.

President's Medicare Modernization Plan

Ms. Page. One last question on Medicare, before we turn to new markets. Senator Breaux was critical, saying your plan didn't go far enough by addressing structural reforms. And you, yourself, since "Putting People First," have supported things like means testing. Are you frustrated that politically it wasn't possible to go farther than you went in this Medicare plan?

The President. No, I think—well, first of all, I think the structural reforms in the health care—there are two issues there. One is the means testing, which was not in his report, either, because some of the Republicans didn't go for it. I don't think that's as big a problem as some people do, and I'll come back to that.

The second is an area on which we have an honest disagreement—Breaux and Thomas and me—and it's an honest disagreement. I want there to be—I want the managed care Medicare people to be given the maximum opportunity to make their program attractive to people in the traditional fee-for-service program, if they can do so. In that regard, I go just as far as they do.

Now, what I don't do, and I really don't think I should do, especially given the level of anxiety Americans have about managed care—even though I have imposed a Patients' Bill of Rights for federally funded programs, so our guys, our Medicare people, get the Patients' Bill of Rights—what I don't do that they do is I don't permit a level of what they call competition in the fee-for-service program in a way that would permit the cost of the traditional program to the beneficiaries to rise so rapidly that it would force people into managed care, whether they wanted to be there or not. That's the only difference. And we just have an honest, philosophical difference about that.

Now, on the upper income premium issue—I ran on that in '92. I've never made any secret to the American people that I think that's the right thing to do. But it is not as compelling as it once was—and a lot of people have forgotten this for one simple reason: We took the income limit off of the Medicare tax in the '93 balanced budget act. So every wealthy person in America today is paying much more in Medicare taxes than they will use anyway. In other words, if you're making a quarter of a million dollars a year, you don't have that \$67,000—I think it was \$80,000 cap, something like that—you don't have that cap anymore.

So since '93, you've been paying a great deal into the Medicare program. So you don't have the equity argument you used to have. One of the reasons that Medicare program was extended in its life—apart from the cost savings we effected and waste, fraud, and abuse stuff, which we really did better about than most of us thought we could—is that we took the earnings limitation off the Medicare tax, and I think that a lot of times people who say upper income people should pay more have forgotten that and forgotten just what a significant amount of money that is to a lot of people.

New Markets Initiative

Ms. Page. We better turn to new markets, because we want to talk a little about that, too. So you're going next week from Appalachia to Watts. Tell us why you're doing the tour.

The President. Well, I'm doing it first to shine the light on these areas in America, because I believe that we have both an obligation to give the communities and the neighborhoods that haven't been touched by the economic recovery the chance to be a part of it, to go into the new century with us, and secondly, because I think it is very good economic strategy.

All the discussion leading up to what the Federal Reserve was going to do today on interest rates was all premised on the fact that we're having a great national debate now, because no one thought 5 years ago, 6 years ago that we could possibly have average growth well in excess of 3 percent and unemployment under 4.5 percent without having inflation. So we don't have any signs of inflation, but shouldn't they be worried about it, since nobody really thought we could have it?

Everyone knows that the technology explosion, especially in telecommunications and information technology, has dramatically increased productivity in ways that traditional economic models don't measure. But no one really believes the whole business cycle and all traditional economics has been repealed. So if you're sitting in my chair and you're asking yourself not only what would you like to do to make sure all these people who aren't participating get a chance to participate—you ask yourself a bigger question: Is there any way we could keep this economic recovery going, creating even more jobs, raising incomes even more, and not have inflation?

And the answer is, yes, if you can either find more customers for American goods and services or more workers to come in and produce more so they're not just being added on for the same level of production.

Now, what are the possibilities for that? Expanded trade, which is why I've worked very hard to build a consensus in my own party for trade, plus labor and environmental standards—why I went to Geneva and made those speeches, why I went to the University of Chicago and all that—for trade.

Two, getting more discrete populations into the work force. The most obvious ones in America are more people from welfare to work. Tonight I had Eli Segal at the fundraiser, if you listened in on that. He's now got 12,000 companies in this deal where we're trying to hire even hard-to-place welfare recipients and train them. Why? Because that's adding to the productive capacity. You get people who are both workers and consumers. The other big discrete population are the disabled, which is why this thing that apparently we're going to have an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Congress do, which is to let disabled people keep their Medicaid in the work force, it's potentially a very big, positive contribution to long-term growth, because, again, you're creating more workers and more consumers.

Now, the third big opportunity is to find what areas have not been fully reached with investment and jobs in growth. And that's what this is about. I want to emphasize—so that's the idea.

Now, I want to talk about three things when we go there. One is I want to emphasize the tools that are already out there, to make sure people are making the most of them: the em-

powerment zones; the community development banks, including the microenterprise zones and the enterprise communities; the tax credits employers get now for hiring people in those areas; and the Community Reinvestment Act, which, as you know, had been on the books for over 20 years, but over 95 percent of all the lending under the Community Reinvestment Act has been done during our administration. We really pushed it. So we'll do a little of that, hear things that are working now.

The second thing I want to do is to point out that one of the reasons there hasn't been more investment in these areas is that there is imperfect knowledge on the part of the American business and investment community. They don't know what a good deal it is. The head of Aetna insurance company, when we went to Atlanta, when we did our pre-trip—on the way back he was ragging me. He said, "You know, I'm the only guy here who's not happy we did this, because," he said, "I'd already figured all this out by myself, and now all my competitors are going to know." He said this is a big deal.

I'll just give you one example. On average, there is a gap, between purchasing power and retail sales in the inner cities, of 25 percent. In Los Angeles it's 35 percent. In East St. Louis, where we're going, it's 40 percent. That's just retail sales, no small-scale manufacturing, no professional services, none of that other stuff, all the other things you could do.

So I think there's really a lot I can do just with the bully pulpit and taking these business leaders around and getting them—you know, we're going to have bipartisan political folks there; we've got Jesse Jackson and Al From; we're going to have Republican and Democratic Congressmen and Governors and all. But I think that just getting the business community to focus on the fact—because they're all interested in this question, what I want to say to them is, look, you don't just have to debate what Alan Greenspan is going to do; you can change the underlying reality on the ground if you change the economics.

And the third thing that I want to do is to push the specific new markets legislation. Why? Because all these other things we've done—even though the CRA, the Community Investment Act, is a nationwide law, it depends still in part on the vigors of the bankers in specific places, and all the other things have discreet impacts. In other words, we don't have a community

development bank everywhere; we don't have an enterprise zone or empowerment community everywhere—I mean, an empowerment zone or an enterprise community everywhere.

This new markets initiative basically is designed to put in place for the whole Nation, all distressed areas the same incentives that we give America to invest in developing economies overseas. I think they ought to have those incentives, developing economies at home.

So, for example, the way this would work is let's suppose someone wanted to build a \$150 million shopping center in East St. Louis and open 20 stores—I'm just making this up—and they started with \$50 million of investments; they've got a \$50 million investment fund. On that \$50 million they could get tax credits of 25 percent for their investment. They would also be able to go to the bank and borrow \$100 million and have that \$100 million subject to the Government guarantee, which would dramatically lower the interest rate that they would be charged to borrow the money, because if they defaulted on the loan, the Government would guarantee it. And those are the kinds of mechanisms we have in place now for people who invest in developing markets overseas.

The reason that's important is, number one, unlike the empowerment zones, it would be nationwide, and number two, even if you had perfect knowledge on the part of investors, that you don't have now, there would be, in many of these places, somewhat greater risk to the investment than in a traditional investment. So by providing these two big incentives you lower the relative risk of this investment compared to others and make it even more attractive to do.

But if you think about it, this is sort of my classic Third Way kind of approach. In the 1980's, we found out for sure that free enterprise alone would not develop these areas into the 1990's. In the 1960's, with the whole Great Society approach, it isn't true that it didn't accomplish anything. It accomplished a great deal. It fed people; it educated people; it started Head Start; it provided health care in rural areas; it provided some Government-funded jobs. But there was no internal structural change that would allow a lot of these places to become more self-sufficient on a long-term basis.

If we could do this and really make a big difference over the next few years, then when the next recession comes along in America, it

won't hit these areas as hard, because they will have, just like other places, some underlying economic supports, some self-sufficiency. And that means fewer people on the streets. It means the crime rate won't go up as much. It means you won't lose as many kids. It means a lot of things when times are tough.

But it seems to me that there is an enormous interest in this now, in the business community. You can see it in the Wall Street Project that Jesse Jackson and Dick Grasso and others have done for the last few years, and you can see it in the massive commitment that—and NationsBank made to setting up community banks and microenterprise lending over the next 10 years. They made a huge commitment on their own.

So there is a lot of this stuff just sort of germinating out there. A lot of great things have happened in our empowerment zones. A lot of these development banks are beginning to really show some results. But there is no either nationwide awareness or nationwide framework which could be applied to every place. And that's what the new markets initiative is all about.

It's about just increasing the awareness and the attractiveness of these areas to the investment community and then putting in place a framework that would make it even more attractive to invest now. And if we could get a lot of this done while the economy is growing, I think the benefits to America could be permanent. I think, in that sense, it's the perfect public/private partnership example that I've been trying to develop all along. I'm really excited about it. I'm just—it's a real dream of mine to prove this can be done.

Ms. Page. You'll apparently be the first sitting President to ever go to an Indian reservation.

The President. Is that right?

Ms. Page. I think so.

The President. It's high time. I'm sorry it has taken me so long, because I spent a lot of time with Native American leaders. I went to reservations back in '92, and I spent enormous time with the leaders of the tribes over the last 6½ years. So I'm very excited about going.

Ms. Page. Some people would say you've done a lot—you've focused on empowerment zones; you've focused on some of these problems of poverty, people who haven't participated in the economic good times—but that we haven't heard so much about it lately, '95, '96. Why now? Why is now the time to put this kind

of spotlight on the places that remind people that the economic prosperity hasn't been good for everybody?

The President. Two reasons. One is, I think that there is a feeling that the prosperity of the country is broadly shared, and that's right. We've got the lowest minority unemployment rates we've recorded. In the last couple of years, we've finally started to close the inequality gap. We've had substantial increases in wages for people in the lower 40 percent of our earnings. And there's a level of security about the direction of our economy that I think frees people in a way to think about those things that are still not done, because I think most Americans genuinely want to see everybody who is willing to work have a chance to participate in this.

Secondly, I believe that it's an essential component of my effort to keep this economy growing without inflation, as I said. In other words, I think moving people from welfare to work is a moral imperative, but I also think it's very good for the economy. I think giving disabled people a chance to take their Medicaid and get in the work force is morally right; I also think it's very good for the economy, and I think this could be even better for the economy, and it's certainly morally right.

We tried to do this in the past, and we've gotten kind of sporadic publicity for it. But we worked consistently at it. It's one of the many things that I asked the Vice President to lead. But he has done a superb job of this, and he's been systematic and disciplined. And just slowly, slowly, slowly over the last 6 years, I think we have completely satisfied that a lot of these communities, if they can get enough investment, can really take off and do well.

So I think that the timing is really right now for America to think about this as sort of the next economic agenda.

2000 Election and Campaign Finance Reform

Ms. Page. I know we have to leave, but speaking of economic good times, George Bush has raised \$36 million so far in the first half of this year. What do you think about that? Do you think this has gotten out of—spiraled out of control? Or is this not—what do you think? It just seems like a stunning number today.

The President. It's a big number, but you've got to remember, Republicans have more money than Democrats, and they always promise upper income people bigger tax cuts. And he's the

Governor of Texas; his brother is the Governor of Florida; and they've been out for 8 years, and they want in. So all those reasons mean big numbers.

But what did he raise in Texas? Eleven million?

Ms. Page. I don't know.

The President. When I ran in '92—8 years ago—in a State of 2.5 million people, with a lower per capita income and not nearly as many millionaires, we raised \$4 million. That would be the equivalent of \$20 million or more in Texas.

So he's got a lot going for him. He's a Governor of a State; his brother is a Governor of a State; his father was President. They want to win; they've got more money than we do anyway. So I think that it's a credit to—he's got good people raising that money, obviously, but I'm not at all surprised they've raised that kind of money.

Ms. Page. It's early, though; it's very early. Which also raises the point that conventional wisdom probably told us the Democratic nomination would be sewed up at this point, but the Republican wouldn't; and it's actually the opposite, it appears to be actually perhaps the opposite of that. What do you—

The President. I don't know, it just depends, you know. It depends; the voters in Iowa and New Hampshire will not be as influenced by the money, probably, just because there's only so many of them. There's only so much you can—but I think the real problem for all these guys, and one reason they can compellingly go out and raise this money—I mean, arguably, if you're talking about the money Bradley raised, he was a national figure for longer than any of the other people running in the Republican primary, except for Elizabeth Dole; maybe she was. But she was in the Cabinet, but Bradley was a nationally known figure for 18 years in the Senate, from the day he got there, and traveled the country extensively all that time building a network, for all 18 years. So I'm not particularly surprised that he's raised a good deal of money.

But I think that—to go back to the main point—one of the reasons all these people can compellingly argue that they need to get out and raise this money early is that, unfortunately, it not only gets more and more expensive to advertise with every election cycle, the States at the back end get more and more anxiety-

ridden, so they keep moving their dates up. So this whole thing gets more and more and more frontloaded.

And one of the interesting things to me would be—I do not know the answer to this. I'll start by saying I do not know the answer to this, but when you write the history of this election in the primary process, it will be interesting to see whether or not, even though the small States have retained their early status—which I happen to think is quite a good thing, having been through it; I think it's a good thing, because I think it's terrible that when you get all these primaries—people running for President from tarmac to tarmac, they will run about the States; they don't really listen to the people's voices, their concerns, and when it's all said and done, they haven't learned as much about the country as they should.

If you have to run in Iowa and New Hampshire, you've got to know things. You've got to take time. You've got to listen and so forth. So I believe in that. But anyway, it will be interesting to see when the history is written whether you and other observers conclude that their relative influence has declined anyway, simply because as soon as you turn around, everybody else is voting.

When is this whole thing over now? March? April? Mid-April? Keep in mind, on June 2d in 1992—June 2d—you had California, New Jersey, and Ohio. When are they all voting now? March?

Ms. Page. Yes.

The President. So I just don't know. I'm not particularly surprised about the amount of money anybody has raised.

Ms. Page. Are you concerned that it's bad news for Gore?

The President. Oh, no. I don't think that at all. I don't think that at all. I mean, I think the Republicans are going to raise more money than us. They outspent \$100 million last year. They take care of their interest groups. The NRA's going to give them a ton of money. Look what they've done on the Patients' Bill of Rights. Everybody in the world with an opinion is for the Patients' Bill of Rights, except one, who is health insurance. But the health insurance might wind up giving more money in the election cycle than all the 200 groups that are for us. And so, that's the dynamic of modern politics. And their whole strategy is to rake in that dough and to dominate the communications.

It does not matter in our politics if your opponent outraises you if you raise enough. The only issue in modern politics is whether you have enough. And keep in mind, in the primary process—unless Governor Bush is going to slow the campaign finance law and not take any matching funds—in the primary process, the only thing that really matters is whether you can raise all the money you need before the first primary starts so you can rationally plan how to spend it during the remainder of the primary season. Because there's a ceiling on how much you can raise in order to get the matching funds in all of the campaign finance system.

So he shouldn't—nobody else should be worried about that. The only people who should be worried are people who aren't going to have enough to get their message out, and the fact that early money normally means you've got big political support. What you're seeing in the Republicans now is a little bit what you saw in '92. We'd been out a long time, and we wanted to get in. And Governors can raise more money than Senators, especially Governors of big States.

I'm not too surprised he's got all that money. But it's not bad news for the Vice President, because he's doing very well, and he's got all he needs, and he's going to get his money by the time he needs it. I think you will—my gut feeling is that you will not see that have an appreciable impact on the outcome of the election.

Ms. Page. Before he actually grabs our arm and drags us out here, I guess we've got to go.

The President. I'm glad you're covering these things, though. This is really important. This new markets thing is big, and the Medicare thing is big. It gives us a chance to really do something important. Thanks.

Ms. Page. Thanks a lot.

The President. Get some sleep. I'm really sorry I kept you waiting.

Senate Seat in Arkansas

Ms. Page. Oh, it's fine. So, can we get a firm and final no from you that you're not going to run for Senate? I know it sounds crazy, but that's not exactly a firm and final, absolute no.

The President. Yes. I have to go out and make a living for my family, and that is—and I'm going to spend the first 2 years organizing my life, doing my memoirs, and finishing my library.

That's what I'm going to be doing. I'm not running for the Senate. I was—

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Sounds firm to me.

The President. I don't even know where that story came from. I think the story—the guy that reported the story first said someone said they mentioned it to me, and I didn't say no. I don't even remember anybody mentioning it to me. But it's not—I had a lot of people in Arkansas ask me if I'd come home and run for Governor, every time I go home. And I tell them that we've got to get a young crop up there and put them in there. I'm not in—I'm not going to do that.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:55 p.m., e.d.t., aboard Air Force One en route from Chicago, IL, to Washington, DC. In his remarks, the President referred to Governors George W. Bush of Texas and Jeb Bush of Florida; Eli Segal, president, Welfare to Work Partnership; Richard L. Huber, chairman and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc.; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; former Senator Bill Bradley; and former president of the American Red Cross, Elizabeth Dole. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Steps To Remove the American Bald Eagle From the Endangered Species List

July 2, 1999

Thank you very much. I have to tell you I was very moved by that. Let's give him another hand. *[Applause]* And all these young people, I thank them.

Thank you, Levar. Thank you, members of the Earth Conservation Corps. I'd like to thank all the adults and sponsors who are here with them today and one strong supporter of this program that is not here, my good friend Ethel Kennedy. I thank her and all of you for what you have done to give these young people a chance to contribute to the conservation of their community and to earn some money to go on with their education.

I'd like to thank Secretary Babbitt for his outstanding leadership in this regard. He has been a wonderful, wonderful steward of our Nation's fish and wildlife and natural resources over these last 6½ years, and I'm grateful to him.

I'd like to thank George Frampton, who works on these issues for us here in the White House; Jody Millar, the recovery coordinator for the Fish and Wildlife Service. I'd like to recognize in her absence Jamie Clark, the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, who I believe is absent because she's about to have a baby, which is a good way to support species preservation. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank Al Cecere and the great eagle, Challenger, who are here. They look very good today together, and I thank them for coming.

This is a special day for us to be having this announcement, because we're about to enter the weekend to commemorate the very last Independence Day of this century.

Yesterday Hillary and I joined a number of people at our National Archives to celebrate this Fourth of July with a renewed effort to give a special gift to America in the new millennium, the preservation of the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

Today we honor the living symbol of our democracy, the American bald eagle. It was, in fact, on July 4th, 1776, the very day the Declaration of Independence was signed, that our Founders first considered the question of a fitting emblem for our Nation. Believe it or not, Ben Franklin wanted our national symbol to be a turkey. The press would be having a field day with that to the present day, wouldn't they? *[Laughter]*

Fortunately, in this case, Mr. Franklin, who had a lot of good ideas, had this referred to committee—*[laughter]*—three committees, in fact, and finally, 6 years later, the Continental Congress approved a design for the Great Seal

of the United States, a proud bald eagle, wings stretched wide, an olive branch in one claw, 13 arrows in the other, "A free spirit," said Thomas Jefferson, "high-soaring and courageous."

Yet, years later, even as its likeness was known world over and the very symbol of our might and our independence, here in America, the eagle struggled barely to survive. At our Nation's founding, as many as half a million bald eagles soared the skies in North America. Two hundred years later only a few hundred breeding pairs remained in the lower 48 States. Our majestic eagle was slipping toward extinction. You just heard Levar's story about Washington, DC, and the Anacostia.

But the American people decided to do something about it. First, we banned the pesticide DDT which had poisoned the eagles' fragile eggs. The naysayers said if we did so, it would wreck the economy, and as we had seen before then and time and again since, the people who say improving the environment will wreck the economy are wrong. We've done reasonably well with the economy while we brought the bald eagle back.

But banning DDT was only the first step. People all across our Nation banded together to guard nest sites; to nurse injured birds, like our friend Challenger here, back to health; and like Levar and all of his young colleagues who are here with us today, to reintroduce eagles in places where they had long ago disappeared. Most important of all, we made the Endangered Species Act the law of the land, declaring that extinction is not an option, not for the eagle, not for other creatures put here by God.

Thanks to these efforts, the bald eagle is now back from the brink, thriving in virtually every State of the Union. When I became President, I'm proud to say, my State had the second largest number of bald eagles in the country. But now they are everywhere, and we are very, very happy about it.

Today I am pleased to announce that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is taking the first step to remove the American bald eagle from the endangered species list. It's hard to think of a better way to celebrate the birth of a nation than to celebrate the rebirth of our national symbol.

The return of the bald eagle is a fitting cap to a century of environmental stewardship, charted for us in the beginning by one of our

greatest conservationists, President Theodore Roosevelt. I am proud of what we have tried to do to fulfill his legacy, from the Yellowstone to California's ancient redwoods to the Mojave Desert to the spectacular red rock canyons of Utah, and just yesterday Vice President Gore announced the largest environmental restoration effort in history, our plan to save the precious Florida Everglades.

In all these efforts we honor Teddy Roosevelt's ideal of leaving our Nation even a better land for our descendants than it is for us, and now, on the threshold of a new century, at a moment of unparalleled prosperity, we have an historic opportunity to deepen our commitment to conservation and to make it permanent.

The balanced budget I proposed for the coming year includes \$1 billion for a lands legacy initiative, the largest annual investment ever proposed for the protection of America's lands. This initiative would expand our efforts to preserve critical wildlife habitat and other national treasures. It would provide new assistance to communities to protect farms, city parks, and other local green spaces.

In addition, I have also proposed guaranteed funding of \$1 billion a year every year to sustain these efforts into the new century. I was disappointed that earlier this week committees in both the House and the Senate voted to cut deeply into this request of the coming year, including funds to help to keep other wildlife from becoming endangered in the first place. All through our century we have found ways to pull together across party lines to stand up for the environment, for wildlife, for our natural heritage. I hope we can do that again.

It took all Americans to save the bald eagle: people in places where you would expect the bald eagle and people in places where we had forgotten the bald eagle ever existed, like Washington, DC. Now that we have the bald eagle back, let's get the spirit behind the bald eagle back and put America back on a bipartisan American course of conservation of our natural resources.

You know, when Hillary talked to me about starting this Millennium Project and devoting ourselves this year and next year to giving gifts to the country for the new millennium, she came up with this phrase, "Honor the past and imagine the future." More than any other area, the environment and dealing with our natural resources gives us a chance to do both things

at the same time. By saving the bald eagle and bringing it back home to the Nation's Capital, these young people have honored our past. They have also imagined a future in which we give all of our children a chance to get a good education and to have a good income and a thriving economy where we no longer destroy our natural resources but, instead, build them up. It is the past, and it must be the future.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Eagle Corps member Levar Simms, and Al Louis Cecere, founder and president, National Foundation to Protect America's Eagles, who handled the eagle.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea and an Exchange With Reporters

July 2, 1999

President Clinton. Let me begin by welcoming President Kim and his delegation to the United States. He is a remarkable leader and a person that all of us very much admire, and in the last year, we have seen an astonishing turnaround in the Korean economy, going from a period of contraction to a period of quite robust growth, in ways that no one could have predicted. It's a great, great success story, and I congratulated President Kim on that, and then we talked some, and we will talk more in our meeting after this of our security partnership.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

The second thing I would like to say very briefly is I think all of you know that the British and Irish Prime Ministers have issued their proposal for the way forward on the Irish peace process, and I think this is a very welcome development. It gives us a chance to fulfill the Good Friday accords. It gives the people of Northern Ireland, both Protestant and Catholic, a chance to shape their destiny and govern themselves. It gives us a chance to put an end to guns and violence forever. And the United States intends to support their efforts and to hold all the parties to their commitments. I think that is very, very important.

This is a major opportunity to resolve that difficult problem forever, in ways that are good for all the people there. So it's good news.

South Korean Military Technology

Q. Mr. President, do you plan to support the South Koreans' bid to make a long-range missile—develop a long-range missile that could possibly hit their northern neighbor?

President Clinton. Well, we're going to have our security discussion after this, and I think that we should talk about it before I make a public comment.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Sir, to those who are dissatisfied with the proposals outlined by the Prime Ministers today, what would you say?

President Clinton. I would say, first of all, let's look at how far we've come. All the parties to the Good Friday accord and large majorities in Northern Ireland agree on the commitments that everyone has and how it should look at the end.

This whole argument has been over the sequencing of how do you stand up the government? How do you get on with decommissioning? No one disputes the fact that everything has to be done by next May, on the decommissioning, for example. No one disputes the fact that everyone who got a certain percentage of the vote in the last election is entitled to be part of the executive.

And so I would say to those who are dissatisfied, first of all, everybody's got to comply with everything. One of the things this proposal does is to reaffirm that. So who can be dissatisfied with that?

Secondly, if you are afraid that the decommissioning won't occur, therefore, you don't want to stand up the government, my answer to that is that the Prime Ministers have offered to pass a bill through the British Parliament, which will make it clear that if General de Chastelain's

commission's timetable is not kept, that the whole thing can be brought down.

So I would say to those who are skeptical, there are guarantees here. No one is going to get something for nothing. Everybody's going to have to fulfill the word of the Good Friday accord. And so don't let this thing come apart now.

Would you like to make a statement, Mr. President?

South Korea-U.S. Relations

President Kim. This is my third meeting with President Clinton, and our third meeting in less than 2 years, and this clearly demonstrates the closeness of the bilateral relations between Korea and the United States. And I do hope that these close ties of cooperation will continue to be further strengthened.

I am extremely satisfied with the present state of relations between the two countries. We are meeting in close coordination on all issues, on

economic issues as well as security issues. And I do hope that this close cooperation sends a clear message to North Korea.

Thank you very much.

Q. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you all.

President's Plans for the Fourth of July

Q. What are you doing for the Fourth of July?

President Clinton. We're going to be around here, watch the fireworks on The Mall.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; and Canadian Defense Forces Gen. John de Chastelain (Ret.), chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of Catholicos Karekin I

July 2, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of the Armenian Apostolic Church. I have sent my condolences to the Vicar General at the Holy See of Echmiadzin.

His Holiness was widely respected for his deep scholarship, his deep sense of principle, and his sincere devotion to the broadest possible

ecumenical dialog. To all who followed his inspired leadership in Armenia, the United States, and around the world, I offer heartfelt sympathy and condolences on behalf of myself and the American people. All the members of the Armenian Apostolic Church are in our thoughts and our prayers.

Memorandum on the Federal Worker 2000 Presidential Initiative

July 2, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Federal Worker 2000 Presidential Initiative

Each year, Federal employees suffer over 160,000 injuries or illnesses in the course of their employment. The Federal Government's bill for medical treatment and wage loss compensation costs exceeds \$1.9 billion each year.

Even more disturbing is the pain and suffering of employees and their families that is caused by these injuries and illnesses and the fact that many of such injuries and illnesses are preventable.

The Federal workforce is a valuable asset to our healthy economy. We need to do more to protect our dedicated public servants from preventable injuries and illnesses. From this point

forward, I want to make the safety and health of every Federal worker a central value in each operation performed in Federal workplaces. I ask all Federal agencies to help make Federal Government workplaces safe and productive. Furthermore, we need to ensure that, when injuries do occur, Federal employees are given the best possible care and are returned to work as quickly as possible.

To this end I direct the Secretary of Labor to lead an initiative focusing on the Federal workplace. This initiative will have a duration of 5 years, and will establish 3 measurable goals:

- reducing the overall occurrence of injuries by 3 percent per year, while improving the timeliness of reporting of injuries and illnesses by agencies to the Department of Labor by 5 percent per year;
- for those work sites with the highest rates of serious injuries, reducing the occurrence

of such injuries by 10 percent per year; and

- reducing the rate of lost production days (i.e. the number of days employees spend away from work) by 2 percent per year.

I also direct the Secretary to report to me each year on the progress made to reduce work-related injuries and illnesses, to provide timely services, and to reduce the number of days injured workers are away from their jobs.

I am convinced that this new focus on safety and health in the Federal Government will result in fewer injured workers, significant cost reductions, and an enhanced ability to serve the American public.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

The President's Radio Address

July 3, 1999

Good morning. This Independence Day at backyard barbecues and picnics in local parks, Americans celebrate the spirit of patriotism that has strengthened our Nation for 223 years now. Today I want to talk about what we must do to ensure that the food we serve at those gatherings is as safe as we can possibly make it, to keep our Nation growing healthy as well as strong.

Our food supply is the most bountiful in the world, and for 6½ years, our administration has been committed to making it the safest in the world, from establishing a nationwide early warning system for foodborne illness to expanding food safety research and public education programs to increasing inspections of food at every point in the chain of production.

Last year I established the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research and appointed the first-ever President's Council on Food Safety to coordinate and expand food safety efforts at every level of the Federal Government. I'm proud of the progress we're making, but when it comes to keeping our families safe, we can always do more, and we must.

Today, Americans eat more imported food than ever before, and they have more choices than ever. Think of it: Thirty years ago, just a dozen kinds of fruits and vegetables were available year-round. Today, you could buy a different kind of fruit or vegetable every day of the year, and many were grown on the other side of the world. There's no evidence that these fruits and vegetables are less safe than those grown here in the United States. But some recent outbreaks of foodborne illness have been traced to imported foods.

Our import laws are very clear. We will not allow unsafe food to enter the United States. But a recent GAO report showed that some importers are sidestepping our laws and getting contaminated food across our borders and onto our kitchen tables. While most importers comply with our regulations, it only takes one bad apple to spoil the whole bunch, only one shipment of contaminated food to threaten hundreds, even thousands of Americans.

That is why today, consistent with our international obligations, I'm directing the Treasury Department and the Health and Human Services Department to take immediate action to

keep unsafe food from crossing our borders. First, we will take new steps to stop port shopping, preventing importers whose unsafe food has been turned away at one U.S. port from slipping their goods in at another. To make sure this unsafe food can be easily spotted, we will stamp all rejected food with the clear label, "Refused U.S."

Second, Customs and the FDA will rigorously enforce and expand our policy of destroying imported food that poses a serious health threat rather than risk letting it reach our grocery stores or the global market.

Third, we'll do more to deter dishonest importers by increasing the bond they must post while food is being inspected for safety. Too many importers forfeit their bonds as a simple cost of doing business. That's wrong, and we should stop it. These steps will help us to close the gaps in our food safety system.

But Congress must also act. I'm grateful for the presence here today of Congressman Dingell and Congressman Brown. Congress should start by passing comprehensive food safety legislation that would increase the FDA's authority to turn away imported food that does not meet our high safety standards, and Congress should grant USDA the authority to impose civil penalties and to order mandatory recalls of unsafe meat and poultry.

Finally, Congress should fully fund my \$72 million food safety initiative to increase the number of agents and inspections of high-risk food products right here at home and increase the number of inspections of foreign food processors around the world.

Americans have a right to know that the food they serve their families is safe, whether it comes from the far corners of the world or the corner produce stand. I'm pleased that so many Members of Congress are committed to giving them that security. I appreciate the initiatives, especially of Senator Durbin and Representatives Dingell and Brown, along with Senators Mikulski, Kennedy, Harkin, Collins, and Representatives Eshoo and Waxman. I look forward to working with all Members of Congress of both parties to build a stronger nation with a healthier food supply for the 21st century.

Have a happy and healthy Fourth of July, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:37 p.m. on July 2 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 3. In his address, the President referred to Representative Sherrod Brown. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on the Safety of Imported Foods

July 3, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the Treasury

Subject: Safety of Imported Foods

While the United States has one of the safest food supplies in the world, outbreaks of foodborne illness are still all too prevalent. Millions of Americans are stricken by illness each year from foods they consume, and thousands, mostly the very young and the elderly, die as a result. The threats come from a variety of sources, including both imported and domestically produced foods.

Foodborne illness is difficult to control in a changing world. Consumers enjoy a greater variety of foods than they did 50 years ago, includ-

ing a greater emphasis on food from all around the world. Americans also eat more foods prepared outside their homes, such as foods prepared in grocery stores, restaurants, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, and day care centers. We also are seeing the emergence of new foodborne pathogens such as the highly virulent E. Coli O157:H7.

For these reasons, my Administration has made food safety a high priority. I have requested substantial annual increases to fund food safety initiatives such as a nationwide early warning system for foodborne illness, increased inspections, and the expansion of food safety

research, risk assessment, and education. In January of 1997, I directed the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to identify specific steps to improve the safety of the food supply. In October of 1997, I expanded my initiative to provide special emphasis on the safety of domestic and imported fruits and vegetables. Last year at this time, I announced the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research (JIFSR) to develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research and efficiently coordinating all Federal food safety research. In August of 1998, I issued an Executive order to create the President's Council on Food Safety, which is charged with (1) developing a comprehensive plan for all Federal food safety activities, (2) advising agencies of food safety priorities and developing coordinated food safety budgets, and (3) overseeing the JIFSR. We have made significant steps domestically to help ensure the safety of our food supply.

Today, I am expanding my Administration's food safety efforts even further to focus on the safety of imported foods. While the majority of imported food is safe, problems do exist. These problems are the result of two major changes. At the turn of the century, relatively few foods were imported, but today, we are seeing a dramatic increase in the importation of foods. Imports have doubled over the past 7 years and, based on recent trends, we expect at least an additional 30 percent increase by 2002. Finished and fully packaged food products account for an increasing proportion of all imported foods and there has been a huge increase in fresh produce from all over the world.

While there is no evidence that imported foods pose more of a risk than domestic foods and most importers comply with the applicable requirements, there are a few "bad actor" importers who violate the rules and work to subvert the system. We must give the agencies responsible for food safety the tools necessary to deal with the importers who try to break the rules. While the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) inspects domestic facilities, it has, in conjunction with the United States Customs Service (Customs), relied primarily on border inspection to ensure the safety of imported foods.

I recognize that there are limitations on our resources and statutory authority to take measures to protect consumers against unsafe im-

ported foods. Indeed, there are currently bills before the Congress that would grant explicit authority to improve the safety of imported foods. I applaud these legislative efforts and will continue to work with the Congress to improve our authority and resources.

Nevertheless, consistent with our international obligations, we must take whatever scientifically based steps we can to protect the public health in this area and provide the necessary tools to ensure the safety of imported food. Specifically, I direct you to take all actions available to:

(1) Prevent distribution of imported unsafe food by means such as requiring food to be held until reviewed by FDA;

(2) Destroy imported food that poses a serious public health threat;

(3) Prohibit the reimportation of food that has been previously refused admission and has not been brought into compliance with United States laws and regulations (so called "port shopping"), and require the marking of shipping containers and/or papers of imported food that is refused admission for safety reasons;

(4) Set standards for private laboratories for the collection and analysis of samples of imported food for the purpose of gaining entry into the United States;

(5) Increase the amount of the bond posted for imported foods when necessary to deter premature and illegal entry into the United States; and

(6) Enhance enforcement against violations of United States laws related to the importation of foods, including through the imposition of civil monetary penalties.

Accordingly, I direct you, in consultation with my Food Safety Council and relevant Federal agencies, particularly the Department of Agriculture and the United States Trade Representative, to report back to me within 90 days on the steps you will take in these areas to protect consumers from unsafe imported foods. We must do all that we can to protect Americans from unsafe food.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 2 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on July 3. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Joint Statement With Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan on the Situation in Kashmir

July 4, 1999

President Clinton and Prime Minister Sharif share the view that the current fighting in the Kargil region of Kashmir is dangerous and contains the seeds of a wider conflict. They also agreed that it was vital for the peace of South Asia that the Line of Control in Kashmir be respected by both parties, in accordance with their 1972 Simla Accord. It was agreed between the President and the Prime Minister that concrete steps will be taken for the restoration of the line of control in accordance with the Simla Agreement. The President urged an immediate cessation of the hostilities once these steps are taken. The Prime Minister and President agreed

that the bilateral dialogue begun in Lahore in February provides the best forum for resolving all issues dividing India and Pakistan, including Kashmir. The President said he would take a personal interest in encouraging an expeditious resumption and intensification of those bilateral efforts, once the sanctity of the Line of Control has been fully restored. The President reaffirmed his intent to pay an early visit to South Asia.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks to the Community in Hazard, Kentucky

July 5, 1999

Thank you very much. Well, the Governor always told me, if I would only come to Appalachia, I would get a very warm welcome. I want to thank the good people of Hazard and Perry County for giving me that warm welcome. I want to thank all the people of eastern Kentucky who have made me and my party feel so welcome today: Paul and Judy Patton; I thank Mayor Gorman and Judge Noble. I thank those who have come with me today: our Agriculture Secretary—you heard from Secretary Glickman—our HUD Secretary, Secretary Cuomo; SBA Administrator Alvarez. We have two Congressmen here: Jim Clyburn from South Carolina and Paul Kanjorski who came all the way from Pennsylvania because they have places like Appalachia there, and they wanted to come down here to be with you.

I want to thank Duane Ackerman and the other CEO's who are here, including Dick Huber of Aetna; the One Central Bank Kentucky CEO, Kit Stolen; Sara Gould from the Ms. Foundation; John Sykes from Sykes Enterprises. I'll mention him in a moment.

I want to thank the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who keeps hope alive, and the others in our group, including Al From, the leader of the

Democratic Leadership Council, and David Wilhelm, who is from nearby in Ohio and was my first Democratic National Committee chairman. I'd like to thank the young people here in AmeriCorps, and I would like to say a special word of thanks to Cawood Ledford. Boy, he is—I was thinking that if old Cawood had been a political announcer instead of a basketball announcer and I could have kept him with me these last 25 years, I'd have never lost an election.

You know, Kentucky has been good to me and Hillary and to the Vice President. It has been brought to my attention that, in addition to the economy, we've been pretty good for Kentucky. Since I've been in office, UK basketball has had the most successful 6 years since Adolph Rupp was the coach, and Tim Couch hasn't done badly, either.

You know, yesterday we celebrated the last Fourth of July of this century, the last Fourth of July of this century. Think of it: 223 Independence Days. I want you all to drink plenty of water, and I'll make this quick, but you need to know why we came here. I wanted to come to the heart of America and Appalachia to talk about whether we're all going forward into the

21st century, whether we really can build a bridge over which we can all walk together.

I'll bet you some of you here are actually the descendants of those people Governor Patton talked about, the Revolutionary War heroes who helped to settle this State. But you know, whether our parents and their parents came here on the *Mayflower* or slave ships, whether they landed on Ellis Island in the 1890's or came to Los Angeles Airport in the 1990's, around the Fourth of July we're supposed to celebrate what we have in common as Americans, to reaffirm that what unites us is more important than what divides us. Well, if we believe that, we have a shared stake in one another's success.

I came here to say to you, I believe at this time of prosperity, if we can't find a way to give every single hard-working American family the chance to participate in the future we're trying to build for our country, we'll never get around to do it. Now is the time to move forward.

Our country is the world's leading force for peace and freedom and human rights. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; 90 percent of our little children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in history. We have the longest peacetime expansion we've ever had, almost 19 million new jobs. Wages are rising for the first time in 20 years for ordinary people. We have a million kids lifted out of poverty, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded.

And yet, even though this is a blessed time for America, not all Americans have been blessed by it. And you know that as well as I do.

So I came here to show America who you are, and when I leave here, I'm going on to the Mississippi Delta, to my home country. Then I'm going up into the middle West, and then over to Phoenix, Arizona, and up to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, and then ending this tour in East Los Angeles to make a simple point, that this is a time to bring more jobs and investment and hope to the areas of our country that have not fully participated in this economic recovery. We have an obligation to do it.

I started out the morning in the town of Tyner, a little village, with a wonderful woman who took me to see her 69-year-old father that

just lost his wife after 51 years of marriage. And I saw four generations of that family. And I walked in the neighborhoods, and I listened to the people tell me they needed better housing and better transportation.

And then I went on to Mid-South Electronics, a place that had 40 employees 10 years ago and has 850 today and about to expand some more, to make the point that any work that can be done by anybody in America can be done here in Appalachia and throughout the other places in this country where they're not fulfilling their promise.

I came here in the hope that, with the help of the business leaders here, we could say to every corporate leader in America: Take a look at investing in rural and inner-city America. It's good for business, good for America's growth, and it's the right thing to do. If we, with the most prosperous economy in our lifetimes, cannot make a commitment to take every person along with us into the 21st century, we will have failed to meet a moral obligation, and we also will have failed to make the most of America's promise.

You know, these economists in Washington and New York used to tell me that, if the unemployment rate ever dropped below 6 percent in America, we'd have inflation out of control. Well, it's been under 5 percent for 2 years now, and inflation is still low. And I'm telling you, it can go lower. We can hire more people; we can have more jobs. But we've got to go to the places where there have not been enough new jobs and there has not been enough new investment, and we have to provide incentives for people to go there.

I asked these business and political leaders to join me because we wanted to send a signal to America that we know that Government can't solve these problems alone. But we know that we'll never get anywhere by leaving people alone, either—you've tried it that way here in the hills and hollows of Kentucky and West Virginia and Ohio and Virginia and Appalachia, for years; that didn't work out very well—that what works is when we go forward together.

I came here to say that I believe the Government's part is to create the conditions of a strong economy; to give individuals the tools they need to succeed, including education and training; and to give incentives to businesses to take a second look at the places that they have

overlooked. And then the job of the private sector is to give you a chance to make the most of your God-given ability. That is what we are trying to do.

With the help of Vice President Gore, we've had 135 empowerment zones and enterprise communities. I was in one earlier today. They've helped to create tens of thousands of jobs. But we have to do better nationwide. We've worked with people like the Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation. But we have to do better nationwide.

So that's why I'm going around here. I want to do two things—well, really three. Number one, I want people to know a lot of good things are going on here now; number two, I want them to understand that more good things can go on; and number three, I want us to do more. I want us to pass a law in Congress to create new markets in America, to say we're going to give a businessperson the same incentives to invest in new markets in America we give them today to invest in new markets overseas.

Now, meanwhile, I want to thank the companies represented here, companies like Bell South, ready to help provide jobs and training for your people; the Ms. Foundation. The Appalachian Regional Commission, with my friend Jesse White, here, will help Appalachian entrepreneurs create new small businesses. Sykes Enterprises is making a major commitment—listen to this—to construct two information technology centers in eastern Kentucky that will bring hundreds of new jobs to Pike and Perry Counties. Thank you, Mr. Sykes.

Across our Nation, banks like Bank One, Citigroup, Bank of America, First Union will invest hundreds of millions of dollars to finance new small businesses and other promising enterprises. I want to thank all these companies for their support.

But again, I say: Look here, America. We've got people working out here and doing fine and doing marvelous things. Look here, business community. Take another look. There are great opportunities here. But I also want to say to the Congress, just simply give me one more tool for them: Give people the same incentives to invest in Appalachia or the Native American reservations or the Mississippi Delta or the inner cities we give them today to invest in poor countries overseas, and let the American people show what they can do.

Ladies and gentlemen, it's been a hot day. But when I'm gone, I hope you'll remember more than that the President came and you were hot. I hope you will remember that it was the beginning of a new sense of renewal for this region and for all the people in our country to go forward together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. on Main Street. In his remarks he referred to Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky and his wife, Judy; Mayor William D. Gorman of Hazard; Perry County Judge-Executive Denny Ray Noble; F. Duane Ackerman, chairman and chief executive officer, Bell South; Richard L. Huber, chairman and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc.; Alvin T. (Kit) Stolen III, president and chief executive officer, Bank One Kentucky/Lexington Market; Sara Gould, executive vice president, Ms. Foundation for Women; John H. Sykes, chairman and chief executive officer, Sykes Enterprises, Inc.; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; retired University of Kentucky basketball broadcaster Cawood Ledford; former University of Kentucky quarterback and top 1999 NFL draft pick Tim Couch, Cleveland Browns; Jean Collett and her father, Ray Pennington, Tyner, KY, residents; and Jesse L. White, Jr., Federal Cochairman, Appalachian Regional Commission.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Emigration Policies and Trade Status of Certain Former Eastern Bloc States

July 2, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 21, 1994, I determined and reported to the Congress that the Russian Fed-

eration was not in violation of the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974. On June 3, 1997, I

determined and reported to the Congress that Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine were not in violation of the same provisions, and I made an identical determination on December 5, 1997, with respect to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These actions allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations for these countries and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver.

As required by law, I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldo-

va, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. The report indicates continued compliance by these countries with international standards concerning freedom of emigration.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 6.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to the Taliban

July 4, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 204(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(b) and section 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1631, I hereby report that I have exercised my statutory authority to declare a National emergency with respect to the threat to the United States posed by the actions and policies of the Afghan Taliban and have issued an executive order to deal with this threat.

The actions and policies of the Afghan Taliban pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. The Taliban continues to provide safe haven to Usama bin Ladin allowing him and the Al-Qaida organization to operate from Taliban-controlled territory a network of terrorist training camps and to use Afghanistan as a base from which to sponsor terrorist operations against the United States.

Usama bin Ladin and the Al-Qaida organization have been involved in at least two separate attacks against the United States. On August 7, 1998, the U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, were attacked using powerful explosive truck bombs. The following people have been indicted for criminal activity against the United States in connection with Usama bin Ladin and/or the Al-Qaida organization: Usama bin Ladin, his military com-

mander Muhammed Atef, Wadih El Hage, Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, Mohammed Sadeek Odeh, Mohamed Rashed Daoud Al-Owhali, Mustafa Mohammed Fadhil, Khalfan Khamis Mohamed, Ahmed Khalfan Ghailani, Fahid Mohammed Ally Msalam, Sheikh Ahmed Salim Swedan, Mamdouh Mahmud Salim, Ali Mohammed, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, and Khaled Al Fawwaz. In addition, bin Ladin and his network are currently planning additional attacks against U.S. interests and nationals.

Since at least 1998 and up to the date of the Executive order, the Taliban has continued to provide bin Ladin with safe haven and security, allowing him the necessary freedom to operate. Repeated efforts by the United States to persuade the Taliban to expel bin Ladin to a third country where he can be brought to justice for his crimes have failed. The United States has also attempted to apply pressure on the Taliban both directly and through frontline states in a position to influence Taliban behavior. Despite these efforts, the Taliban has not only continued, but has also deepened its support for, and its relationship with, Usama bin Ladin and associated terrorist networks.

Accordingly, I have concluded that the actions and policies of the Taliban pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. I have, therefore, exercised my statutory authority and

issued an Executive order which, except to the extent provided for in section 203(b) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1072(b)) and regulations, orders, directives or licenses that may be issued pursuant to this order, and notwithstanding any contract entered into or any license or permit granted prior to the effective date:

- blocks all property and interests in property of the Taliban, including the Taliban leaders listed in the annex to the order that are in the United States or that are or hereafter come within the possession or control of United States persons;
- prohibits any transaction or dealing by United States persons or within the United States in property or interests in property blocked pursuant to the order, including the making or receiving of any contribution of funds, goods, or services to or for the benefit of the Taliban;
- prohibits the exportation, re-exportation, sale, or supply, directly or indirectly, from the United States, or by a United States person, wherever located, of any goods, software, technology (including technical data), or services to the territory of Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban or to the Taliban; and
- prohibits the importation into the United States of any goods, software, technology, or services owned or controlled by the Taliban or from the territory of Afghanistan under the control of the Taliban.

The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is directed to authorize commercial sales of agricultural commodities and products, medicine and medical equipment, for civilian end use in the territory of Afghanistan controlled by the Taliban under appropriate safeguards to prevent diversion to military, paramilitary, or terrorist end-users or end-use or to political end-use. This order and subsequent licenses will likewise allow humanitarian, diplomatic, and journalistic activities to continue.

I have designated in the Executive order, Mullah Mohammad Omar, the leader of the

Taliban, and I have authorized the Secretary of State to designate additional persons as Taliban leaders in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Attorney General.

The Secretary of the Treasury is further authorized to designate persons or entities, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General, that are owned or controlled, or are acting for or on behalf of the Taliban or that provide financial, material, or technical support to the Taliban. The Secretary of the Treasury is also authorized to issue regulations in the exercise of my authorities under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to implement these measures in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Attorney General. All Federal agencies are directed to take actions within their authority to carry out the provisions of the Executive order.

The measures taken in this order will immediately demonstrate to the Taliban the seriousness of our concern over its support for terrorists and terrorist networks, and increase the international isolation of the Taliban. The blocking of the Taliban's property and the other prohibitions imposed under this executive order will further limit the Taliban's ability to facilitate and support terrorists and terrorist networks. It is particularly important for the United States to demonstrate to the Taliban the necessity of conforming to accepted norms of international behavior.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive order I have issued. This order is effective at 12:01 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time on July 6, 1999.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 6. The Executive order of July 4 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the National Emergency With Respect to the Taliban

July 6, 1999

I have signed an Executive order imposing financial and other commercial sanctions on the Afghan Taliban for its support of Usama bin Ladin and his terrorist network. The Taliban has allowed the territory under its control to be used as a safe haven and base of operations for Usama bin Ladin and the al-Qaida organization, who were responsible for the bombings of our Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, last year, murdering 12 Americans, nearly 300 Kenyans and Tanzanians, and wounding another 5,000. To this day, bin Ladin and his network continue to plan new attacks against Americans, without regard for the innocence of their intended victims or for those non-Americans who might get in the way of his attack. The United States has tried repeatedly, directly and working with other governments, to persuade the Taliban to expel bin Ladin to the United States for trial or, if that

is not possible, to a third country where he will face justice for his crimes, and to end the safe haven it gives to bin Ladin's network, which lives and trains in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan. These efforts have failed. The Executive order I have signed will deepen the international isolation of the Taliban, limit its ability to support terrorist networks, and demonstrate the need to conform to accepted norms of international behavior. The order does not affect humanitarian aid, food, and medical supplies for civilian use. It is not aimed at the people of Afghanistan but at the Taliban. Those who nurture terrorism must understand that we will not stand by while those whom they protect target Americans.

NOTE: The Executive order of July 4 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Investment in the Mississippi Delta Region in Clarksdale, Mississippi

July 6, 1999

The President. Thank you. Please be seated everybody. Well, it's hot as a firecracker in here. [Laughter] So I feel right at home. [Laughter] I don't know whether Bob Koerber and the people at Waterfield are insured against heat-stroke by strangers happening in along the way, but let me say that I am delighted to be here today. I've had a good day already.

And I've got a large group with me, and I can't mention them all, but I'd like to mention a few of them. First I want to thank Secretary Slater, who is, as all of you know, also from Arkansas and worked with me on the Delta commission. I want to thank our Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman; our Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman, who is here with me; our SBA Administrator, Aida Alvarez. Reverend Jackson, thank you for being here.

I'd like to thank David Bronczek from FedEx; Jack Haugslund from Greyhound. We'll introduce our panelists later. I'd also like to say a

special word of thanks to Lieutenant Governor Ronnie Musgrove and his family. They're here, and we thank him for his interest in the development of the Delta.

Our Congressmen, Bennie Thompson, from this district, thank you; and I understand Congressman Ronnie Shows from Mississippi is also here. Ronnie is standing up there. Thank you. And we have two visitors who have come from a long way away to be with us, Congressman Jim Clyburn from South Carolina and Congressman Paul Kanjorski, all the way from Pennsylvania, down here. Thank you very much.

And we thank Attorney General Mike Moore for being here and all the other people from Mississippi who are here.

Let me say again to Bob Koerber and all the folks here at Waterfield, we thank you for giving us a chance to both tour this plant and to camp out in some of your space.

And I would like to be very brief. I've learned to attenuate these remarks of mine. Yesterday it was 100 degrees in Hazard, Kentucky. We had 10 or 15,000 people outside, and I said I don't believe I'd better give this speech I was going to give.

Hello, Governor Mabus. It's nice to see you. Welcome. Thank you very much for being here. And I think my friend William Winter is here. Governor Winter, are you here somewhere? He met me at the airport. So anyway, I talked for about 5 minutes, and I'd like to do that.

I just want to tell you exactly why we're here. First of all, the people in the Delta know better than anybody else that, while this country has had an unbelievable run—we've had the longest peacetime expansion in our history, nearly 19 million jobs since the day I took the oath of office. We have the lowest recorded rates ever of unemployment among African-Americans and Hispanics. We have the highest rate of homeownership ever. We have a million kids lifted out of poverty.

Now, having said all that, in the Delta, the poverty rate is much higher than the country as a whole. In this county, it's over twice as high. The unemployment rate is higher than the national average, and the investment rate is lower.

Now, a lot of you—I remember when I was out on a barge in the Mississippi River outside Rosedale with Ray Mabus back in the mideighties, and we signed this agreement with the then-Governor of Louisiana about all the things we wanted to do with the Delta, and then we worked on the Delta commission for all those years. A lot of good things have happened here, and I want to talk a little about some of them. But I want you to know I am making this tour of America for one simple reason: I want everybody in America to know that while our country has been blessed with this economic recovery, not all Americans have been blessed by it, that it hasn't reached every place.

I want our country to know that there are great opportunities out here for investment for jobs in America. I want them to know what we have done already to make it easier for people to make the most of those opportunities and what we're still trying to do.

Now, let me say, ever since I became President, I have done what I could to increase investment in undeveloped areas through the empowerment zones, which give tax credits and

put tax money into distressed areas, through the enterprise communities, through getting banks to more vigorously approach the Community Reinvestment Act, and setting up community development financial institutions or supporting those that are already in business, like the Enterprise Corporation of the Delta. It's a private, tax-exempt business group. It is a real success story. Just since 1994, it's given financial or technical assistance to more than 600 companies, including Delta Laundry and Computers here in Clarksdale.

Now, we set these operations up all over the country. Overall, the ECD here has helped to generate more than 5,000 jobs and \$200 million in annual sales. Bill Bynum, the CEO and president of ECD is here. We thank him for being here today.

Today corporations represented here with me are going to invest \$14 million more in the ECD, so they'll have more money to loan out to people here to create more jobs. Today, around the country, there will be about \$150 million more announced to be invested in organizations like this.

In addition to that, I'm trying to get Congress to pass a bill which will give tax incentives, tax credits, and loan guarantees to people to invest in the Delta and other poor areas of America, just like they get today to invest in poor areas around the world. I think that it's a good thing that we encourage people to invest in Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean, but they ought to have the same incentives to invest in the Mississippi Delta and Appalachia and the Native American reservations and the inner cities. That is what we're trying to do here. We're trying to close what Reverend Jackson calls the "resource gap."

Now, let me say, we've got a lot of other challenges in the Delta. We have a terrible crisis in American agriculture today. Last year we came up with billions of dollars to try to keep our farmers going. This year we're going to have to do it all over again. And we've got a lot of other problems. But fundamentally, what I want America to know is that every place in the country, and today this place, is full of good people, capable of doing good work, who can be trained to do any kind of work, and we are going to do everything we can in the Government to give the financial incentives necessary for people to invest here.

And I want to make the same point I made yesterday: Everybody in America has a selfish interest now in developing the Delta. Why? Because most economists believe that, if we're going to keep our economic recovery going without inflation, the only way we can possibly do it is to find more customers for our products and then add more workers at home. If you come here, you get both in the same place. You get more workers and more consumers. So it's good for the rest of America as well.

So again I say I am delighted to be here. I had a wonderful time in Memphis last night, but I ate too much. I'm sorry it's so hot, but I hope nobody passes out, and I want to give Secretary Slater now a chance to talk to our panelists, and then I want all of you to think about, when we leave here, what we can do to show people the opportunity that's here now and what you could do to help me pass, on a bipartisan basis, the necessary tax incentives and loan guarantees to say to any investor, anywhere in America, if you come to the Mississippi Delta, you can get at least as good a deal as you could investing anywhere else in the world. And we're right here at home, and we need you.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the discussion began.]

The President. I just want to emphasize for everybody who is here listening, because a lot of you may be able to come to Bill with a good idea, there are—it's not just that there is not enough money available in this area for good investments; someone has to decide what's a good investment. And what he has done is to basically go out and get money from other people who, on their own, would never have the time or effort or maybe even the inclination to make these investments, but they trust them to do it—including our community development fund, which, as you heard, they've given him \$4½ million. Hillary and I, when we were in Arkansas, helped to set up the Southern Development Bank in Arkansas, as you know, so we believe in this.

In addition to that, I want to emphasize one other thing. In the empowerment zone program, that the Vice President has run for us over the last 6 years, people who invest there can get substantial tax benefits for investing, and then they get tax benefits for hiring people. But they don't get them if they're outside of these zones.

One of the reasons that I'm trying so hard to pass this legislation is not every place in America can be in an empowerment zone, even if we keep increasing them every year. So what I want to do is to make every area in America that needs an investor equally eligible to get the investor's attention by being able to get these kinds of tax benefits, so we can get more money into these development corporations and then have equal tax incentives for investors to go into high unemployment areas. Those two things, if we have enough people like you who are as good as it as you have been, I think will make a huge difference. I think it will—really, in the next 5 or 6 years, would make a breathtaking difference, because people are out here looking at these markets now. And I want to thank you.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Let me say this very briefly. I was there when you started, and I was delighted when I heard you were going to be on the program. I wish we'd had time today—we don't—to tell everybody the fascinating story of how you got started, how you found the equipment to do the brown rice in the first place, and someday you ought to write it up, because no one who understands what was going on in America at the time would believe it. And it's a real tribute to your initiative. And I'm glad you're still doing well and glad you're still growing. Thank you for being here today. Thank you.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Let me say, I'm delighted that you've done so well over these years since you began in Arkansas. I remember when you planted roots in Pine Bluff. I just think it's worth pointing out that the South Shore Bank of Chicago, which financed you, was really the first great community development bank in the United States, and they were inspired, among others, by a man named Muhammad Yunus from Bangladesh who has now made millions of loans to poor, poor village people in Bangladesh through the bank you set up.

Hillary and I had some contact with him. That's what led to the establishment of the bank in Arkadelphia and to my belief that we in the National Government ought to do more to support people like Bill. I think—again, you've just

heard now three stories, and two of them involve people who have had to get credit. A lot—I always say one of Clinton's laws of politics is, when somebody tells you that a problem is not a money problem, they're almost always talking about someone else's problem, not their own. To a great extent, this is a money problem. You have all these talented people and all these good ideas; there is a pretty even distribution of human resources and ability in this whole world, but there is not an even distribution of access to capital. And that's what it is we're trying to fix. So I thank you.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. You're being way too modest. Now, you know, this lady is the assistant plant manager here. According to my notes, she also is the mother of five children. When this place was in bankruptcy, they took it out, and they've turned it around. They're doing good business; they're expanding their work force. And I think what we need, frankly, are more people that have this particular expertise, particularly in the Delta, because there's more than one place like this.

Our host was telling us there's another place across the river in Arkansas that he's been looking at now. If we had a core of people who had this skill to go with what our local venture capitalist and banker here is doing for us, we could really do some good. But I think we ought to recognize that what these people have done here and the jobs that they've given folks the opportunity to hold is quite important and could be a good model for others in the Delta. So I thank you for what you've done.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Well, I know we've got to wrap up. If you don't remember anything else when you leave, remember what Cathy said, not just the \$500 million, although that's real money even in 1999; that's very impressive. This is a good business opportunity here. If we cannot fully develop the Delta now when we have the strongest economy in our lifetime, when will we ever get around to it?

And remember, if you—put yourself in my position. I sit in Washington all the time, trying to think about how can we keep this economic recovery going, adding more jobs, raising incomes, without having inflation. If we get inflation, then the Federal Reserve will have to raise

interest rates so much, the economic recovery will slow down.

The only way to do it—I will say again to all of America—the only way to do it is more customers, which then makes possible more employees, when you can do that with higher productivity and no inflation. The best place in America to do that is a place which has not yet felt the recovery. This is a big deal.

I want to thank all of our business leaders for coming, and all of our great entrepreneurs here in the Delta. I want to thank you. I know we could stay here until tomorrow if we could all keep breathing.

I do want to point out that except for the occasional reverend of the cloth and the odd politician, the head of the electric utility is the only guy still wearing his coat because he wants you to use more juice. *[Laughter]* And I think that is very impressive. I want to thank our friend from Greyhound because we may always need some people to be able to get to and from jobs that aren't in the small towns of rural America but who want to live in rural America. That's been one of the big challenges Secretary Slater has tried to face with welfare reform, even; trying to make sure people who live in the inner cities can at least get to the suburbs or who live in small towns can get to a big city so they can take a job without having to undermine their ability to be good parents.

And I want to thank my friend Bob Cabe from Blue Cross. You need to know that in our former lives, we were both lawyers. And he's a very special economic development expert for me, because in 1981, I was the youngest ex-Governor in the history of America with very limited future prospects, and he and his firm offered me a job. So I am living proof that economic development works, thanks to Bob Cabe, and I thank you very much. And I want to thank, again, all these people for their wonderful work.

The story needs to go out across America. This is a good investment. This is a good deal. We will help you. We will help you. We have institutions to help you. We have tax relief to help you. And more and more, our financial institutions are coming up with the money. But America needs to wake up and recognize that the best new market for American products and for new American investment is right here in the U.S. of A.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Waterfield Cabinet Co. In his remarks, he referred to Robert C. Koerber, president and chief executive officer, and Cora Porter, assistant plant manager, Waterfield Cabinet Co.; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; David J. Bronczek, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Federal Express; Jack W. Haugslund, executive vice president and chief operating officer, Greyhound Lines, Inc.; Lt. Gov. Ronnie Musgrove, State Attorney General Mike Moore, and former Governors Ray Mabus and William Winter of Mississippi; former Gov. Charles (Buddy) Roemer of Louisiana; Wil-

liam J. Bynum, president, Enterprise Corporation of the Delta; Muhammad Yunus, founder and chief executive officer, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh; Catherine P. Bessant, president, Community Development Banking Group, Bank of America; J. Wayne Leonard, chief executive officer, Entergy Corp.; and Robert D. Cabe, executive vice president for legal, governmental relations, and community services, Arkansas Blue Cross & Blue Shield. Former Governors Mabus and Roemer were vice chairs of the now-defunct Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission.

Remarks on the New Markets Initiative, in Clarksdale July 6, 1999

I will be very brief. It's hot. You've waited for me a long time, and I appreciate it. I'm glad to be back here. I'm glad to be in the Delta. I'm glad to have brought business leaders from all over the country here today.

We are trying to send a message to America that good people live here. They have not fully participated in this economic recovery that has swept our country and lifted up America's economy as strong as it's ever been, and we can't rest until every American who wants to work has a chance to get a good education, a good job, and raise a family in a strong community.

And what we're proposing to do is simply to say to the investors of the country, take a

look at the Delta, take a look at these other places in America that haven't grown as they should have, and we will give you the same tax and other incentives to invest in American new markets that we give you today to invest around the world. I think we ought to give people the same incentive to go to the Delta. That's the message. You help us get the message out.

Good luck, God bless you, and thank you for making me feel welcome. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:09 p.m. at Clarksdale Airport prior to departure for East St. Louis, IL. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Community in East St. Louis, Illinois July 6, 1999

Thank you. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I used to think that I was reasonably astute at public affairs, but I don't have any better sense than to get up here and try to speak behind Mayor Powell, Cathy Bessant, and Jesse Jackson. I don't know how smart I am today. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to all of you, it is wonderful to be here. Madam Mayor, thank you for making us feel so welcome and for your sterling leadership. I'm delighted to be here with Jackie,

your hero and my friend who is all of our heroes. Thank you.

Thank you, Dave Bernauer, for this wonderful Walgreens store. I'm going to go in and shop in a minute—add to the local community. Thank you, Mel Farr, for bringing jobs and opportunities and cars, even in 2 months' installments, to every community in this country. *[Laughter]* Thank you. Thank you, Reverend Jackson, for believing that we could keep hope alive in every

city and rural area in this country and it could be good business to do so.

I want to thank some others who are with us here today: Joe Stroud of Jovon Broadcasting; my good friend Al From, the Democratic Leadership Council; David Wilhelm, the former Chairman of the Democratic Party from Illinois, who is here with me today. I want to thank Senator Durbin and Congressman Costello, two of the ablest, finest people in the United States Congress.

I want to tell you that they are joined here today by other Members of Congress, including Congressman Jim Clyburn, who came all the way from South Carolina; Congressman Paul Kanjorski from the State of Pennsylvania; and Congressman Dale Kildee from Michigan all of whom care about this community and communities like it all across America. I thank them.

And I want to thank your neighboring mayor, Clarence Harmon, for coming over from St. Louis, and your former mayor, Gordon Bush, for being here with me. And I want to thank Secretary Cuomo, Secretary Glickman, Secretary Slater, and all the other people from the administration.

We have had a great time these last 2 days, going across America. We are going to finish this day, first by shopping at Walgreens, and then we're going to get on an airplane and fly to South Dakota, where we will begin tomorrow at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota.

So from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to East St. Louis to Pine Ridge, it has been a wonderful trip. But let me ask you something. If you look around this crowd today, I have to make—this is a happy day, a happy day. But I want to say one serious thing off of this subject today, because of a remark that was made earlier by Cathy, that I believe in community development—emphasis, community.

You have been very good to me, to the First Lady, to Vice President Gore, and Mrs. Gore. You have supported our initiatives and especially the Vice President's leadership of all of our community development. But what's the first thing that makes it work? Look around this crowd today. We have people from all kinds of backgrounds, all different colors, all different religions. Everybody—all different ages, working for something good.

So this is the first chance, my first stop in Illinois since the tragic string of shootings in

Illinois and Indiana these last couple of days, that have come to end with the apparent suicide of the alleged gunman. Now, I don't want to say a lot, but I think it's important to note that while we have to wait for all of the details to come in, the early reports indicated that this shooting spree against Jews, Orthodox Jews, against the young Asian students, taking the life of a former basketball coach at Northwestern, an African-American, all were motivated by some blind racial hatred against anybody who didn't happen to be white.

Isn't it ironic that this occurred during the time we celebrated the birth of our Nation on the Fourth of July? That action was a rebuke to the very ideals that got us started. They're also a stern reminder to us that even as we celebrate this, even as we stand up against racial and ethnic and religious hatred in Kosovo, in Northern Ireland, and the Middle East and Africa, we've still got work to do here at home.

So I say to you, I want to get back to the celebrating, but I issue an appeal here from East St. Louis to every community and every citizen in this country: We must search the hearts of our citizens and search the strength of our communities, that Congress should pass the hate crimes legislation, but we should rid our hearts of hatred immediately.

Now, I want to tell you what got us going on this. In 1992, when I ran for President, I came to East St. Louis, and I said I wanted to create a country in the 21st century where there was opportunity for every citizen, responsibility from every citizen, and a community of all American citizens. I said that we ought to have a new role for Government, that Government couldn't solve all the problems, but walking away from them did not work very well, either; and that we had to focus on creating the conditions and giving people the tools to make the most of their own lives and to get together across lines that had divided them for too long.

Goodness knows, in the inner cities and the rural areas of our country, lines have divided those who worked hard but had no money and those who had plenty of money but didn't believe it could be very well spent in the inner city or in rural areas.

Now, if you look at what happened since, we see in this community both poverty and great promise: retail returning, new jobs, new residents, new hope, Walgreens putting up 400

stores across America, many of them in inner-city areas. But still, there are many unmet needs and unmet opportunities.

You heard what Cathy said about opportunities. Let me tell you, the economists talk about something in our inner cities called the purchasing power gap. Let me tell you what that means. That means most people in East St. Louis, even though the unemployment rate is higher than the national average, most people get up and go to work every day. And if you take the money that you earn here as against the money you are able to spend here because of the jobs that are here and the stores that are here, in America as a whole, there is 25 percent more money earned than spent in the inner cities. In Los Angeles, it's 35 percent; in East St. Louis, it is 40 percent. So you can handle this Walgreens and a lot more besides, and we want to see them coming here.

And we thank Bank of America for the library, and we thank those involved in the hotel, the bank, the homes being built near here. We also want you to know that we want to do our part. Secretary Cuomo's housing and urban development block grants, along with Bank of America and many department stores, are helping Jackie build the Jackie Joyner-Kersey Center near here.

So this is what Vice President Gore and I have tried to do with our empowerment zones and our community banks and our vigorous enforcement of the Community Reinvestment Act. It says you're supposed to loan money everywhere in America. That law has been on the books for 22 years, but over 95 percent of the money loaned under it, billions of dollars, has been loaned since the Clinton-Gore administration has been in office, and I am proud of that.

We made East St. Louis an enterprise community in our first round of empowerment zones and enterprise communities way back in 1994, and because you have done so well, East St. Louis is designated as an empowerment zone for our second round, which means more money being spent here by the Government, more tax incentives for the private sector to put businesses here and to hire the people from East St. Louis and give them good jobs.

Senator Durbin, Congressman Costello, and every Member of the Congress here is committed to creating that second round of empowerment zones and funding them this year.

We need help from Republicans and Democrats alike. This is not a party issue. All Americans benefit when all Americans work.

Now, let me tell you why else we came here today. We want to make two points which all the previous speakers have made. I just want to be very explicit. Starting with what the mayor said about location, location, location, accessibility—boy, that was a good rap, wasn't it? I like that. That was good. [Laughter] The first point we want to make is, when the Walgreens' president comes, or when an executive from Bank of America comes, or when Mel Farr comes, and comes to places like this or the Mississippi Delta or Appalachia, the other places we're going, is, hey, there are business opportunities out here. If you've got people who want to go to work and people with money to spend, and they're both in the same place, it's a good place to invest.

The second thing we're doing is promoting what you have heard referred to as the new markets initiative. Now, let me just tell you what that is. That's a bill we're going to put before the Congress that says that, if people invest in any high unemployment, high poverty area anywhere in America, inside or outside one of our empowerment communities, they can get a tax credit for the money they put up, and they can go to the bank and borrow money and have it guaranteed, a guaranteed loan by the Federal Government, which will lower the interest rates, which will mean it will be much cheaper for people to invest in communities like East St. Louis than it otherwise would be.

Now, the Government is not going to do it, nobody is going to put any money here if they think they're going to lose it. If you put up \$100 and you invest it and I give you a 25 percent tax credit, if it's a bad investment, you still lose \$75. But it makes it more likely that people will do it. It makes it more likely that they will take a look. It makes it more likely that you will build the kind of relationships which will make people know you and trust you and want to build a common future with you. And that is what we're trying to do. It is not a handout, but it is darn sure a hand up, and you are entitled to it.

And let me say to all of you, it is something that is good for the rest of America. We've had almost 19 million new jobs; the longest peacetime expansion in history; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates

ever recorded in this country to date. But the unemployment rates are still higher than they are for the rest of the country. Incomes are rising, but they're still lower than they are for the rest of the country. There is room to grow, room to learn.

Look, we're all going to have to work hard at this. Nobody's got all the answers. There is no magic wand. But we know one thing: People make these investments one at a time, just like Mel Farr sells his cars one at a time. You can only build one Walgreens on this spot, and somebody had to come up with the money. Somebody had to make the decision. Somebody's got to hire all the people that work here. Somebody's got to train them. Somebody's got to make all these decisions. But what we can do is to create an environment in which more people will want to hold hands with you and walk into the 21st century, so that nobody is left behind, and we all go forward together.

You know, in 1960, *Look* magazine said East St. Louis was an all-American city. It was because of stockyards and shipping yards. It was because of private enterprise. The Government can help, but private enterprise will make East St. Louis that all-American city again, if we go forward together.

And I just want to make one last point to everybody else in America who's looking at this. I spent a lot of time as your President, now, trying to figure out, how can I keep this economic good time going? When we started, nobody believed we could have an economic expansion that would go on this long. When we started, no conventional economist believed you could have unemployment rates under 4½ percent nationwide without having inflation and high interest rates which would wreck everything. When we started, no one thought so.

But, you know, all of these young, technological geniuses are figuring out all this new computer technology, and it's rifling through

what we all do, and it's making us more productive. And we're doing a good job.

But now I say to myself every day when I get up, now, what can I do to keep this going? The only way to keep it going—more growth with no inflation; more jobs and higher wages without bringing it to a halt—is to have new people working and new people buying, new people producing.

Where are those people? Those are the people you move from welfare to work. Those are the people who are disabled, and we're going to let them keep their health insurance when they go into the workplace, so they can move into the workplace. And most important of all, those are the people in the inner cities and the rural areas, on the Native American reservations that have been passed by, by this recovery.

America has been blessed by this economic recovery. Now we are determined to see that all Americans are blessed by it as we move into the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:27 p.m. outside Walgreens at the State Street Shopping Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Debra Powell and former Mayor Gordon Bush of East St. Louis; Catherine P. Bessant, president, Community Development Banking Group, Bank of America; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; athlete Jackie Joyner-Kersey, president, Elite International Sports Marketing; David Bernauer, president and chief operating officer, Walgreen Co.; Mel Farr, Sr., president, Mel Farr Automotive Group; Joseph Stroud, president, Jovon Broadcasting, Inc.; Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis, MO; and murder victim Ricky Byrdsong, former head basketball coach, Northwestern University, and his alleged killer, Benjamin Nathaniel Smith. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Ron Insana of CNBC's "Business Center" in Clarksdale, Mississippi July 6, 1999

New Markets Initiative

Mr. Insana. Mr. President, this trip and your new markets initiative in some ways have already been compared to Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, Bobby Kennedy's swing through Appalachia. How will this program work where some of the other Government programs on poverty have failed in the past?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it's important to recognize that this is different because we don't say the Government can solve all these problems, but we do say the Government can no longer ignore them. And, in fact, we've been working on them for 6½ years, ever since I took office.

This is a classic example, this approach to new markets, of the New Democratic or Third Way philosophy that I articulated back in 1991 and 1992. That is, Government's role is to create the conditions for success, give people the tools they need to succeed, and then in effect, empower people to make the most of it.

But we recognize, if you look at—go back to the War on Poverty, it did a lot of good in terms of giving children preschool and feeding hungry children and giving them access to health care. But in the end, if you want these communities to be self-sustaining, they have to get private-sector capital with private-sector jobs, and they have to prove that they can compete for it, they can win it, and that people can actually make a profit investing in these places and that it will be profitable to put people to work.

And because I believe that very passionately, especially now—you know, there was all this big discussion in business circles and the people that watch your program, there was all this big discussion over the last few weeks about would the Fed raise interest rates or not. And it was like the fifth reincarnation of how much can we grow and how low can unemployment get before we have this big explosion of inflation which then we'll have to clamp down, which will then kill the recovery, so everybody's been trying to avoid it.

Well, I think about that all the time. And it seems to me that the way to keep America's

economy growing without inflation is to sell more products overseas and find more consumers and workers at the same time here at home. And there are only—there are a couple of options. You can bring more people from welfare or from the ranks of the disabled into the work force, or you can go to these areas where you invest in them and you get more consumers and more workers at the same time. And I think this is terribly important.

Mr. Insana. What specific items will be included in the legislation to advance those goals? What kind of tax credits?

The President. Well, the big ideas in the legislation are a tax credit of up to 25 percent for people who invest in vehicles that will be creating businesses or expanding businesses in high-unemployment, underdeveloped areas. In addition to that, once you get into those vehicles, then you would be eligible to borrow \$2 for every \$1 invested and have the money borrowed be subject to a Government loan guarantee, which would mean the interest rates would be much, much lower. So by those two things, you lower the relative risk of investing in these new markets.

But we've seen—you heard the person from Bank of America say today, we heard the gentleman from a local bank in Kentucky yesterday or the people from Aetna or these other companies say, "These are good investments; we can make money here." So if you lower the relative risk of getting in, in the first place, and in effect, try to provide for the whole Nation what now you can find in the empowerment zones that the Vice President's worked so hard to manage over the last 6 years, I think we can get a lot more growth here.

Republican Proposal for Economic Recovery

Mr. Insana. Now, House Speaker Dennis Hastert sent you a letter over the weekend attacking poverty from a slightly different approach with respect to more tax-cut-type incentives. Do you have common ground with him where you can fashion some—

The President. Well, I want to have a chance to evaluate it. It would seem to me, though,

that we would have—this is something that Democrats and Republicans all agree on. I mean, our approach is a completely private-sector approach. We do have, in addition to the big tax cuts I talked about, we have a venture capital approach where we want to try to do a little more to get real venture capital out there. You heard the lady testify today that she went from being an employer to a business owner, and she had no equity, so she had to have venture capital to start. So we do that. And we have a little bit of technical assistance to help communities and businesses that don't have any way of getting the information they need.

But apart from that, I think we ought to be able to find common ground. I can't imagine that Republicans wouldn't want to do this. This has got to be good for Republican businesspeople, to have a better chance to invest in areas where you can have more growth without inflation.

Interest Rates

Mr. Insana. Now, last week some congressional Democrats, led by Barney Frank, came out and suggested that, if the Fed raised interest rates, something you mentioned a minute ago, that it would hurt the poor, people you've been visiting here over the last couple of days. Is that what the Fed's doing, or is the Fed extending a noninflationary economic environment by tapping on the brakes a little bit?

The President. Well, I think that plainly that's what the Fed is trying to do. And I've made a real practice of trying not to comment on interest rate changes and trying to let Chairman Greenspan and the Fed do their work, and I would do mine.

But again I say, look at what we've done here. I think if you just look at Chairman Greenspan's own testimony, we've all been somewhat surprised that we could grow as much as we have, have unemployment as low as we've had, and have virtually no inflation. And it's a tribute to the productivity of the American businesspeople and the explosion of technology, and it's rifling through every sector of the economy and giving us more high productivity-driven growth without inflation than anyone dreamed.

The trick is if—to go back to what Barney Frank said—what he wants is to keep the economy going, to keep the growth going until middle and lower middle income working people

can get their wages up to overcome the stagnation of the 20 previous years and until we can get more people caught up in the areas where the recovery hasn't occurred. That's why, it seems to me, the most important thing to do is to have initiatives like this which give you concrete examples of how you can have growth without inflation.

Tax Cuts

Mr. Insana. Now, Republicans would argue that one other way to extend the recovery here would be to cut taxes even further. And you hinted last week in USA Today that, if you got what you wanted on Medicare reform and prescription drug benefit subsidies, that you might go along with an expanded list of tax breaks. Can you elaborate on that? What would you accept in exchange for a Medicare deal?

The President. Let me make it clear. What I said was that, obviously, we would be working together on all the appropriations issues and expenditure of money if we did first things first. But I think that it's quite important that the Republicans say how they're going to pay for all these things. You know, they say they want even larger increases for defense than I do, and I've proposed substantial increases. Then they want huge increases in tax cuts. Do they propose to keep us in debt? Do they propose to basically eviscerate the education and health and environment budgets of the country? What is their proposal?

Of course, we will negotiate, but we ought to think about first things first. Let me just say this: I think we proved in '93, when we didn't have a single Republican vote and the Vice President had to break the tie in the Senate, that we were right and they were not right about what would be the best economics for their constituents. That is, when we passed that '93 economic plan, there is no question that it sparked a huge drop in interest rates, a huge increase in investment, and an explosion in economic activity. And it had a lot more positive impact on the markets and on business investment and on job creation than a tax cut, which perpetuated a deficit, would have had.

Now, in 1997, we reached agreement on a bipartisan balanced budget deal which kept that philosophy going. We continued to invest in

education and technology and research. We provided tax cuts to families and for college education. We did it in a balanced way, and what's happened? Now we've got this surplus.

I will say this: The most important thing we can do for the long-term health of the economy is to say to the whole world, we're going to make America debt-free in 15 years. If we did that, what does that mean? Much lower interest rates, higher business investment, lower credit card, lower consumer, low homeownership rates, higher wages.

So will we negotiate? Will there be a negotiation? Of course there will be. But let's do the first things first. Let's keep America economically strong. We've got 6½ years of evidence now about what works. Why in the world would we take a U-turn and run this deficit back up or just pull out of the education business?

Mr. Insana. Let me ask the question more simply than the way maybe an individual might, which is, if I overpay my taxes every year, I get a refund; if I overpay for 15 years, why can't I get a really big refund and get that money back in the way of a tax cut?

The President. Well, how do you define overpay?

Mr. Insana. Well, if you're running a surplus, I mean, Government has more money than it can use.

The President. That's right. But Government has more money than they can use for 15 years after quadrupling the debt in the 12 years of the Reagan-Bush years. I mean, we tried it their way. We tried it their way. We tried all the supply-side economics. Every year—every year—they came in and said, "Oh, we're going to get rid of the deficit this year." And every year, it got bigger and bigger and bigger. You go back and look at what they said, my predecessors said was going to happen to the budget and what, in fact, had.

You know, sooner or later, results should account for something. Sooner or later, we should stop having this debate as if there is no history, no evidence, no facts, no results. Now, we've produced an economy with 19 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, and if we get out of debt, the average person will get much more than they would from an extra tax cut.

Second, I am for a sizable tax cut. I have proposed a sizable tax cut. I also supported the previous tax cuts, the \$500 child credit, the col-

lege credit which is \$1,500 a year. I supported all these tax cuts. But first things first. If we take this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, then average people are going to have more money in their pockets than if we keep the country in debt and give them a tax cut now because we've got an election in a year and a half.

Stock Market and the National Economy

Mr. Insana. Can I stick in one final question? As we speak right now, the stock market again is at a new all-time high; the Dow, the NASDAQ, everything's going very well on Wall Street. Do you worry at all about a bubble in the stock market or the economy today?

The President. Well, I think every person who's thoughtful, who knows that nothing lasts forever, wonders how this will all play out. I think every thoughtful person does. But I think what we should do is to make the most of this and to make no move which would turn it into a bubble prematurely.

But it seems to me again, we can have a tax cut, but if I announced—just suppose, think about this—suppose you had an announcement—you don't expect this to occur—where Speaker Hastert and Senator Lott joined Mr. Gephardt and Senator Daschle and me, and we said, "Look, here's our program. Here's what we're going to do to save Medicare; here's what we're going to do to save Social Security. We're going to make the country debt-free in 15 years. We've got some more money for education, and we've got to take care of defense, and here's a sizable tax cut. This is our program." I believe that would lengthen the period of this recovery. I think it would minimize the chances of a bubble.

If, by contrast, we went out and said, "Hot dog! Right here before the next election, we're going to give you a \$1 trillion tax cut. Unfortunately, our deficit will be bigger, and we won't get ourselves out of debt. And unfortunately, we'll have to cut education spending and research. But we just think this is more important, and I know it didn't work the last time, but somehow we think it will work this time—even though it didn't work. We tried it for 12 years, and it never worked. Somehow, we think, poof, magically it will work this time"—I believe that my course of action is better for the American economy than that latter course of action.

Mr. Insana. Mr. President, we appreciate your time. Thanks for joining us.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 12:16 p.m. on July 6 at the loading area of the Waterfield Cabinet Co. for broadcast later that evening. In his remarks, the President referred to Catherine

P. Bessant, Community Development Banking Group president, Bank of America; and Alvin T. (Kit) Stolen III, president and chief executive officer, Bank One Kentucky/Lexington Market. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 7. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks in a Discussion at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota July 7, 1999

[*The discussion is joined in progress.*]

President Harold D. Salway. But we're durable people, have a lot of pride, have a lot of dignity.

President Clinton. How do you stay warm in the winter?

President Salway. Well, we're conditioned. We're conditioned—a lot of buffalo robes, a lot of good, hard work, too. This is how a lot of people live, though. This is about the average conditions of most homes throughout the reservation, and some are really bad yet.

President Clinton. Would you say the biggest immediate need you have is for better housing?

President Salway. Housing and what new markets is going to do, create jobs. Not enough people working here on Pine Ridge, so that causes a lot of potential impacts.

President Clinton. If there were jobs in the near vicinity, some sort of small manufacturing or something like that, do you think all the people who could work would do so?

President Salway. Yes. We have one of the highest unemployment rates for—a lot of people going to work, being more responsible with their time would uplift the lives of the entire family in a lot of ways.

President Clinton. Where's your tribal college?

President Salway. Probably about 40 miles northeast of here, toward the center part of our reservation. Our reservation is about 135 by 84, 85, thereabouts. A pretty large reservation.

President Clinton. How close do the jobs have to be in order not to be too burdensome to go to and from work?

President Salway. We don't have a transportation system, so most people have to carpool

into Pine Ridge. Pine Ridge is kind of like the capital of the reservation, if you will. Most people transporting in and out, transit to come to work from IGS and BIA and tribal government. That's the greatest portion of employment. Not too much microenterprises for development.

Housing is one of the largest employers on the reservation. But the need is so high that it naturally is one of the higher employment areas.

President Clinton. Andrew, why don't you just say what we've been talking about, say what you were saying about the housing.

Secretary Andrew M. Cuomo. As the President was saying, one of the greatest needs is housing, just provide the basic living conditions where people can improve themselves. And then homeownership—very little homeownership on the reservation—and homeownership, given the conversation we've had this past week, is really the first access to capital strategy, when you think about it. Because when you own and you have equity in your home, then you can start to get loans, you can start to get financing and start to get credit to open a business or pay a tuition, whatever you'd like to do.

So our efforts are, first, try to improve as much housing as we can. We're doing that through the Housing Authority. We've set up a not-for-profit with the reservation for the first time so the tribe can do business as a tribe and also as a not-for-profit organization.

And then, homeownership, homeownership, homeownership. The people who are at the conference today—I was telling the President the numbers are up to about 800 people from across the country who come to this housing conference, 100 tribal presidents. And we have the

mainstream homeownership, housing bankers who come to the conference, and we're going to start, for the first time ever, in a big way, homeownership on the reservation linked to economic development, because it's also an empowerment zone. We're going to sign officially the papers at the next event.

So we have the empowerment zone doing the economic development piece and housing and the homeownership with the private mortgage market coming forward.

President Clinton. Frank?

Franklin D. Raines. Well, we're trying very hard to bring private capital into the reservation. It's been a—working with this reservation, now signing an agreement with one of our major lenders and with the tribe to cut through a lot of the legal problems that lending—when you've got trust lands involved. And we think we can make progress there.

We think that it's important that, in addition to the HUD programs that are so important, that we also get mainstream lenders in the conventional lending here. We've done a fair amount. We've bought about 70 percent of the HUD loans that were made—Fannie Mae has financed on this reservation. But we're going to be committing not only to purchase new housing but \$3 million of venture capital funds to encourage production of housing on this reservation. All this is part of a \$500 million initiative that Senator Daschle and Senator Johnson and I announced yesterday. That's covering the whole State, but there is a portion that is going to be just here, and we're intentionally keeping it, without us saying exactly where it's going to go.

We're going to work with the tribal government to ensure that we can either put it in a multifamily or single-family or combinations of housing and retail that will make it possible to bring more and more private capital onto the reservation.

Housing is the one part of the private capital system that is really working in full speed and is available to come into the toughest areas. It's harder to get funding for businesses and things, but we could do for housing.

President Clinton. Let me ask you something. A lot of the people here, you said, have more than one family in the home. Now, if they had the choice, would you prefer a single-family home for every family that was more modern, or more modern but larger where you could

have—more than one family could live together, but they'd have enough room to have their own rooms. Which would be preferable?

President Salway. Probably single-family homes because all the families crunched into one house causes a lot of other—

President Clinton. Problems.

President Salway. —problems. Yes. Social situations.

Geraldine Blue Bird. Mr. President, with regards to that, my house, the square footage of this is really short for the amount of people that I have here. So, with all my kids and my grandkids, when it comes to the living room area here, they're just stepping on them and bumping into them. And my—Philip is in a wheelchair, and he wants to have room, and then I have a stool sitting in the center—short footage area. And places like this are small.

President Clinton. How many people live in here with you?

Ms. Blue Bird. In this house, there are 11. And in this house—between the two houses, there's 28. You met part of them here.

President Clinton. So you have 11 living in here and 17 in the other place.

Ms. Blue Bird. About like that. Yes. Because I've got them sleeping in here in the living room, I've got bunks in there. Between these two areas here, I have five bedrooms.

President Clinton. And 28 people sleep?

Ms. Blue Bird. And I have five bedrooms. So this is what I'm talking about. What you said, with that many people in a small area, that does cause problems, like here. My own personal opinion is I'd like to see us get jobs, because really to have—to get one of the homes that are coming up, you need to have an income. But right now we're living on—well, here on this street, I can safely say about 85 percent of us, here on this street alone, are living on Social Security, SSI, and welfare. That's one income once a month. And that's what we use.

My boys, as you have seen, have applied for jobs. They have applications all over. I've even got one boy that went to the service. We've been using his veteran's benefits. It's hard to get a job here because there isn't one. When you get a job here, you hang onto it, because you get an income. Money every 2 weeks is better than money once a month.

President Salway. And that causes problems. Everybody struggles for those very, very minimum jobs you have. So it causes a lot of conflicts.

President Clinton. Over the jobs?

President Salway. Over the jobs. So few.

NOTE: The discussion began at approximately 10 a.m. outside the home of Geraldine Blue Bird during a walking tour of the Igloo Housing neighbor-

hood. The discussion participants included President Harold D. Salway of the Oglala Sioux Tribe; and Franklin D. Raines, chairman and chief executive officer, Fannie Mae. Pine Ridge Indian Reservation resident Geraldine Blue Bird referred to her father, Philip Brings Him Back. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a partial transcript of this discussion. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this discussion.

Exchange With Reporters at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation July 7, 1999

Q. Mr. President, what did you learn from the Igloo neighborhood this morning?

The President. Well, the woman who was speaking with me, Geraldine—some of you had to leave before she talked—there are 11 people living in her house and 17 members of her family living in the trailer next door connected to her house; 28 people there with five bedrooms between them.

And she talked about how hard it was with no jobs to make ends meet and how she had to buy all the children's school clothes on installment, on layaway. And what she did was she had to find money for the children who were on the cross-country team—just to be able to do the most basic things in life.

And she said, yes, they did need new housing, but the most important thing they needed was a way to make a living. Keep in mind—this is unbelievable—this country has had an unemployment rate of under 5 percent for 2 years; the unemployment rate here is almost 75 percent. We have to find a way not only to fix this, the very difficult housing circumstances, but to get them jobs.

We'll talk more about it.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 10:30 a.m. at a new housing complex on the reservation. In his remarks, the President referred to Geraldine Blue Bird, resident, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to the Community at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation July 7, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President, and thank you to all of you here from Pine Ridge and all the other tribal leaders who are here for HUD's Shared Vision Conference. I am profoundly honored to be in Pine Ridge and in the Lakota Nation. In fact, to try to demonstrate my appreciation and respect, I would like to try to say something in Lakota. *Mitakuye oyasin.* [We are all related.] My neighbors, my friends, we are all related.

Consider those who have come here today to join hands with you, along with Secretary

Cuomo, Secretary Glickman, your great congressional delegation, our Democratic leader Tom Daschle in the United States Senate, and Senator Johnson, Congressman Thune. You don't know this, but we have Members of Congress from all over America who have some here to express their support and their commitment to join you in building a better tomorrow: Congressman Ed Pastor from Arizona; Congressman Dale Kildee from the State of Michigan; Congressman Jim Clyburn from South Carolina; and Congressman Paul Kanjorski from Pennsylvania,

he has come all the way from Pennsylvania to be here.

I want to thank the other people from the administration, especially Assistant Secretary of the Interior Kevin Gover and Lynn Cutler in the White House, who work with all of our Native American leaders around America, for what they do. I want to thank the CEO of Fannie Mae, Frank Raines; the CEO of Norwest, Mark Oman; the PMI president, Roger Haughton; Mortgage Bankers Association President Don Lange; Champion Homes CEO Walter Young for all the work that they are prepared to do in building a better future, and they're here today.

I want to thank my good friend Jesse Jackson, for never letting us forget our common obligations. I thank the other members of our delegation today: Bart Harvey from Enterprise; Al From from the Democratic Leadership Council. I'd like to thank the young AmeriCorps volunteers who are here today for all the work they do.

I would like to finally say a word of appreciation to all the people who live here on this reservation, who welcomed me into their homes, who talked to me today as I walked down their streets. I thank especially Geraldine Blue Bird, who Secretary Cuomo mentioned. She let me sit on her porch, and she told me how she tries to make ends meet for the 28 people that share her small home and the house trailer adjoining.

I thank the children who stopped their playing and shook hands with me and listened to me while I encouraged them to stay in school and to go on to college and to live out their dreams. I want to bring you greetings from two people who are not here: first, from Vice President Gore, who has headed our empowerment zone effort that Pine Ridge became a part of today; and second, just a little over an hour ago, I talked to the First Lady, and Hillary has spent more time in Indian country than any First Lady in history. She is intensely committed to this effort, and she asked me to say hello to you.

President Salway said today I was the only President ever to come to an Indian reservation for a nation-to-nation business meeting. I remember back in 1994, I invited all the tribal leaders in America to the White House, and it was the first such gathering since the presidency of James Monroe in the 1820's. Now,

I know that Calvin Coolidge came to Pine Ridge in the 1920's, and that President Roosevelt visited another Native American reservation, but no American President has been anywhere in Indian country since Franklin Roosevelt was President. That is wrong, and we're trying to fix it today.

I was profoundly moved by the pipe ceremony, just as I was when your congressional delegation took me last night not only to Mount Rushmore but to the Crazy Horse Memorial and to the museum that is there with it.

But I ask you today, even as we remember the past, to think more about the future. We know well what the failings of the present and the past are. We know well the imperfect relationship that the United States and its Government has enjoyed with the tribal nations.

But I have seen today not only poverty but promise, and I have seen enormous courage. I came here today for three reasons. First of all, to celebrate the empowerment zone and the housing projects that are going on here now. Second, to talk about my new markets initiative and what else we can do. But third, with the business leaders who are here—and I've already introduced them, but I'd like to ask the business leaders I just mentioned to stand up—we want to send a message to America that this is a good place to invest. Good people live here. Good people live in Indian country. They deserve a chance to go to work.

You've already heard President Salway and Secretary Cuomo recite the statistics. It's a hot day out here, and I know you're suffering in the Sun. But I want to send a message to America. So I just want to say a few things, and I want you to think about this. Think about the irony of this. We are in the longest period of economic growth in peacetime in our history. We have in America almost 19 million new jobs. We have the lowest unemployment rate ever recorded for African-Americans and Hispanics. For over 2 years our country has had an unemployment rate below 5 percent. But here on this reservation, the unemployment rate is nearly 75 percent. That is wrong, and we have to do something to change it and do it now.

When we are on the verge of a new century and a new millennium, where people are celebrating the miracles of technology and the world growing closer and closer together and our ability to learn from and with each other and make business partnerships with each other all across

our globe, and there are still reservations with few phones and no banks, when still three or four families are forced to share two simple rooms, where communities where Native Americans live have deadly disease and infant mortality rates at many times the national rate, when these things still persist, we cannot rest until we do better, and trying is not enough. We have to have results. We can do better.

Our Nation will never have a better chance. When will we ever have this kind of opportunity where unemployment is low, inflation is low, there's a lot of money in our country, the value of the stock market has tripled and then some? Business people are looking for new places to invest, and people who have done well feel a moral obligation to try to help those who are less fortunate, who have not fully participated.

And we see it from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the inner cities of our country to the Native American communities. If we can't do this now, we will never get around to doing it. So let us give ourselves a gift for the 21st century, an America where no one is left behind and everyone has a chance.

We will do our part. You have suffered from neglect, and you know that doesn't work. You have also suffered from the tyranny of patronizing, inadequately funded Government programs, and you know that doesn't work. We have tried to have a more respectful, more proper relationship with the tribal governments of this country to promote more genuine independence but also to give more genuine support, and the empowerment zone program, as the Vice President and I designed it 6 years ago, is designed to treat all communities that way. We're not coming from Washington to tell you exactly what to do and how to do it; we're coming from Washington to ask you what you want to do and tell you we will give you the tools and the support to get done what you want to do for your children and their future.

President Salway and a number of tribal leaders came to me at the White House a couple of months ago. You may have heard in the national press that I repeatedly referred to this profoundly emotional meeting. I have given a great deal of thought to what was said then and what I heard now. We can do better. I would like to mention just a few specific things, for you have all heard years of pretty words.

There is no more crucial building block for a strong community and a promising future than

a solid home. Today I want to talk about a number of things the Government and the private sector are going to do to increase homeownership. Our whole team visited those new homes that are being built not far from here. We talked to the families that are moving into those homes. I had a little boy take me through every room in the home, tell me exactly where every closet was, tell me what his sister's room had that he didn't have, and why it was all right, because she was older and she needed such things. This is important.

So what are we going to do? Private lenders, like Bank of America, Norwest, Bank One, Washington Mutual, are going to work with the Mortgage Bankers Association and HUD to more than double the number of government-insured or guaranteed home mortgages in Indian country in each of the next 3 years.

Right here in Pine Ridge, Fannie Mae, under Frank Raines' leadership, has set aside millions of dollars to help you buy those homes at below market rates, and they are spending hundreds of millions of dollars all across this country to help people just like you become homeowners for the first time. And Secretary Cuomo's Partnership for Housing is giving financial incentives and counseling to help families figure out how to actually get this done, how to buy their own homes and pay for them.

But, as I heard over and over today, even if we went in and tried to repair or rebuild or build new homes for every family here and in every Indian community throughout the United States, we must have jobs if we want these communities to work. Adults need to have something to look forward to every morning when they get up, and if they want their kids to stay in school and stay out of trouble and look to tomorrow, their lives have to be evidence that looking to tomorrow pays off. It is appalling that we have the highest growth rate in peacetime in our history, that we have an unemployment rate below 5 percent for 2 years, and the unemployment rate on this hallowed reservation is almost 75 percent. That is appalling, and we can do better.

No community in America can grow, however, without basic blocks. No community in America should be without safe running water and sewer systems. So the Department of Agriculture will put nearly \$16 million in water projects throughout Indian country, including two right here in

Pine Ridge, that will also help you get jobs as well as improve the quality of life.

As you can see, in this Big Sky Country, it is rather warm, and it gets windy from time to time, as the natives will attest. The Department of Energy will help you harness the power and profits of wind and solar energy to save money and make money; Owens Corning and North American Steel Framing Alliance will provide skills training and the promise of quality jobs; and Citibank and Gateway Computer Company will work with Oglala Lakota College and other schools to help Native American students get the computer skills that will allow them to get 21st century jobs; and our Federal Communications Commission will work with you to improve telephone service throughout Indian country, an absolute prerequisite for getting any new business in here.

And let me just say that one of the things that we have learned is that the computer and the Internet make it possible for many people to do many kinds of work in any community, anywhere in the United States, indeed increasingly, anywhere in the world. The fact that this reservation is a long way from an urban center would have been an absolute prohibitive barrier to a lot of economic development just 10 or 15 years ago.

The explosion of computer technology and the Internet, if you know how to use it and you know how to deliver for others with it, has literally made the distance barrier almost insignificant for many kinds of economic activity. So I want to implore you to use your tribal college and work with these companies and make the most of the skills they are offering, and we can get the jobs to come here once you can do them.

Finally, we must seize the vast potential of tourism right here in Pine Ridge by building a Lakota Sioux heritage cultural center. Every year, millions of families travel long, long distances to see Mount Rushmore, 2.7 million last year. The Crazy Horse Memorial, about a million and a half, even though only the head has been finished. The Crazy Horse Memorial last year had a million and a half visitors—only the head has been finished. I went there late last night; and the Badlands National Park.

Now, if you look at that, you have to ask yourself: How can you have—how many people, if you did everything right down here, if we built this cultural center, of all the people that

go to see Crazy Horse, of all the people that go to see Mount Rushmore, of all the people that go to Badlands National Park, how many would come here? I'll tell you: a whole lot. An enormous percentage, if you give them something to come and see. That is nothing more than the simple, profound, powerful story of your eloquent past and your present, of your skills and your heritage, and your culture and your faith.

These commitments that we are making today are just the beginning. Thirty-one years ago this spring, Senator Robert Kennedy came to Pine Ridge. Many of you probably still remember that visit—Senator Kennedy, seeking medical care for his child, lying sick in the back of an abandoned car, refusing to sit and begin an important meeting until all of the tribal leaders had their proper seats.

You may remember his message of hope. Let me say that all across America, people were watching that. I have to say, on a purely personal note, one of the most touching things about this day for me is that the wife of our HUD Secretary is Robert Kennedy's daughter, and she is here today, and this is a proud day. I'd like to ask her to stand. Kerry, please stand. Thank you. Give her a hand. *[Applause]*

We lost all those years. There were a lot of reasons, and a lot of things are better than they were 30 years ago. But this is the first time since the early 1960's when we had this kind of strong American economy, and we have no excuse for walking away from our responsibilities to the new markets of America.

I have asked the Members of Congress to go back and pass legislation that will give major tax breaks and government-guaranteed loans to people who will put their money in Indian country, to lower the risk of taking this chance. We are going to do everything we can to make your empowerment zone work. But remember, there is nothing that we can do except to help you to realize your own dreams.

So I say to every tribal leader here: The name of the conference you are attending is Shared Visions. We must share the vision, and it must be, fundamentally, yours, for your children and their future. If you will give us that vision and work with us, we will achieve it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon on the field at the Oglala Community School. In his remarks,

he referred to President Harold D. Salway, Oglala Sioux Tribe; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Bart Harvey, chairman and chief executive officer, The Enterprise Foundation; Al From, president,

Democratic Leadership Council; and Geraldine Blue Bird, resident, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Remarks to the Community at Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City, South Dakota *July 7, 1999*

Thank you very much. Senator Daschle, Senator Johnson, Congressman Thune; can I pronounce the colonel's name right? Przybyslawski. How's that? [*Applause*]

Let me say that I am also very grateful that we have been joined on this tour by several Members of Congress who are with me: Representatives Clyburn from South Carolina, Kanjorski from Pennsylvania, Kildee from Michigan, and Pastor from Arizona. And I bet there are people in this audience serving in our Armed Forces from all those States and more, and I thank them for coming as well. I thank Secretary Glickman, our Secretary of Agriculture, and Reverend Jesse Jackson, for being here.

I came here today to say that we are profoundly grateful to the people of Ellsworth and the people of western South Dakota for making all of us feel so welcome in your beautiful home State. Last night I was fortunate enough to have a chance to tour two of the proudest monuments in all of America, Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Monument. And earlier today, as has already been said, all of us went out to the Pine Ridge reservation. We saw what you know are the profound needs of Indian country, but we saw a great deal of promise, as well.

I'd also like to say that I am well aware, as a man who lived his life in a farming State before I became President, that the farmers and ranchers of South Dakota have not had an easy time lately. Wheat and livestock prices are low. They've been low. We have shown a commitment to see our farmers through these tough times, and we will continue to keep that commitment. And I thank them for what they do.

Most important, I want to thank the men and women of the 28th Bomb Wing. Now, I understand you're celebrating a Warrior Pride

picnic today, honoring all those who have been deployed in the past year in Europe and around the world, and I've been told that this picnic will really get into high gear when I get off the ground. So I won't talk long.

I do want to say, again, to each and every one of you individually, how profoundly I and your fellow countrymen and women are for your service in Kosovo: more than 30,000 sorties over 79 days, not a single pilot lost in combat; 19 NATO Allies working as a team through the longest and most difficult military engagement in the history of our Alliance. The men and women of Ellsworth were a major force behind Allied Force. Many of you are part of the 2d Air Expeditionary Group, the War Eagles of the 77th Bomb Squadron deployed out of Fairford, sending pairs of B-1's over targets in Kosovo twice a night.

I want you to know that not very long ago, my wife and daughter and I visited a refugee camp in Kosovo full of children. The camp was in Macedonia, but it was full of Kosovar children who had literally seen the worst things that human beings can do to one another. I shudder to think how we would feel if our little children, those who are here today, had to witness those kinds of atrocities.

But they never gave up hope, in large measure because they knew the United States was on their side. I wish every one of you in uniform could have heard those children in the camps, chanting, "U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.!" Thanks to you, they're rebuilding their lives. Already they have braved landmines and other dangers so that 600,000-plus of the refugees have already gone home. They said it couldn't be done; it is being done because of you. And I thank you. The world is in your debt.

I just want to say one more time that our allies in Europe, on which so much of our security depends, told me over and over and over again how grateful they were that America was there to stop the slaughter of people because of their religion or their ethnic groups. The killing of people has no place in the 21st century if it means innocent civilians are going to be slaughtered because of their race or religion. It is against everything America stands for, and we've stopped it. You should be very, very proud.

Now, let me just say one other thing. A lot of times the spouses, the children, and the extended families of our bases don't get the credit they deserve. But I am well aware that nothing could be done without your support, and I want to thank you.

The last point I'd like to make is that this whole trip we're taking—to the hills and hollows of Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the Pine Ridge reservation; we're now going to Phoenix and on to East Los Angeles—is designed to remind Americans that even though our country is now blessed by the longest economic expansion in peacetime in our history, not all Americans have been blessed by it, and

we have to have a commitment to treat each other fairly and give everyone a chance.

I also want to say that was a big part of why the United States Congress, with an overwhelming bipartisan vote, recently voted to raise the pay of our men and women in uniform and improve the retirement, and I appreciate that as well.

I look around here and—all of you in uniform—I see men and women. I see people of all different faiths, races, and ethnic groups. You represent the kind of world we're trying to build for tomorrow, for these children to grow up in, and because you do what you do, we have a very good chance to build it.

Thank you. God bless you. God bless America. Thank you very much. And I want to thank the band for the music. Will you play me a little more? One more piece. I loved it. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. on the tarmac. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Anthony F. Przybyslawski, USAF, commander, 28th Bomb Wing; and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Small Business Development in Phoenix, Arizona

July 7, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. First, I want to thank Ed Pastor for making me feel so welcome and for being my friend and doing a wonderful job for you back in Washington, DC. He has the respect of every Member of Congress, and when he talks, we all listen.

I want to say to all of you that I am honored to be back in Phoenix. Arizona has been very good to Hillary and to me and to the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, not only in voting for us in the last election but in proving that the philosophy of government and the policies we've followed can bring us together and make us a stronger country. So I want to begin by saying a simple "thank you."

I'd like to thank the people who have come here with me today. Congressman Pastor mentioned Congressman Kanjorski from Pennsyl-

vania, Congressman Clyburn from South Carolina, our Small Business Administrator, Aida Alvarez, and my Deputy Chief of Staff, Maria Echaveste; they are all here and others. I thank them.

I'd like to thank the Reverend Jesse Jackson for coming on this tour with me, along with the business leaders; thank you. I know there are some public officials here. I think Janet Napolitano, your attorney general, is here; she met me at the airport. Jim Hill, the State treasurer of Oregon, is here. Thank you both.

I'd like to thank the business leaders here with me: Leo Guzman, Marianne Spraggins, Gene Humphrey of Enron, Steven Burd of Safeway, John Corella of Corella Electric, Myrna Sonora of KTVW 33—some of you probably watch that—[laughter]—Mike Welborn of Bank

One, Andy Gordon of Arizona Multibank, Frank Ballasteros of MICRO, Leonard Moreno of Moreno Welding, Yolanda Kaizer of Builder's Book Depot; and obviously, I'd like to thank our host, Josie Ippolito, and all the other wonderful women in this remarkable family that own this group.

Ed already said why we're here, and I'm here mostly to listen to the people here. But I want to make a very important point. I want you to know why we are here. We are here because we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, almost 18 million new jobs since I took office, the lowest unemployment rates among Hispanic-Americans and African-Americans ever recorded. Our country has been really blessed by these good economic times. It has contributed to giving us the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, declining rates of teen pregnancy and drug abuse. We have 90 percent of our little children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of our country.

But we know, as blessed as America has been, not every American has been blessed by this recovery. All you've got to do is drive down the streets here in south Phoenix to see that. So what we are doing is going around the country to say we can do better, that morally, now that we're doing so well, we have an obligation to give every American who is willing to work for it a chance to walk across that bridge into the 21st century with us so we go forward together, leaving no one behind. And not only that. It's good economics.

A long way from south Phoenix, I have to worry every day about how I can keep creating jobs so you have more people to buy these wonderful products you are producing. I mean 840,000 a day. That's a lot of people, you know. Of course, not everybody eats as many at one sitting as I do. *[Laughter]* So, I mean, it's a lot of people. So I think about that.

How can I do that? Well, we can sell more of our products overseas, which we're trying to do. We can take more people off welfare or disabled people and help them get in the work force, which we're trying to do. But the easiest way to keep America's economy going strong is to get more investment, create more jobs, and create more consumers in the neighborhoods, in the cities, and in the rural areas, and on the Indian reservations which have not yet

felt this recovery. That's what this whole thing is about. How we can do this together?

And I'm here to make three points: Number one—and I want to give some specifics in a minute—we've been working at this for 6½ years with our empowerment zones and our enterprise communities and our community development banks—you have one here—with the vigorous support of the Community Reinvestment Act.

Number two, therefore, American business needs to know that there are good opportunities right now in inner cities and in rural America. This is not about charity; this is about how to make money by helping people who are willing to work for themselves get the chance to do it, to start those businesses or become good employees. That's what this is about.

Finally, it's about supporting our new markets initiative, which seeks to make it easier for people to get equity capital to start or expand their businesses in any poor neighborhood or underdeveloped area anywhere in the United States of America. So that's why we're here. And that's the message you're sending out here in south Phoenix to every community in America where there are good people who need investment and jobs.

Now, let me say that there are a lot of good things that are happening, and I want to thank some of the people who are here. I want to thank Safeway for the new store at 16th Street and Southern Avenue, and the new shopping center that it will anchor. That will create a lot of jobs, and interestingly enough, we're trying to highlight this everywhere. Because in almost every city in America, even with high unemployment, there are obviously a lot more people working than not working, and there is more purchasing power in our cities than there are stores to take it up. So we thank Safeway.

I also want to thank Univision, because they are about to build a new multimillion-dollar broadcast facility for its local station, KTVW 33, and they're going to build it right here in south Phoenix, and that will help your economy to grow. Thank you. Thank you, Myrna Sonora.

I want to thank the community development institutions like Arizona Multibank, the micro-enterprise organizations like MICRO. That's a fancy way to saying they loan small amounts of money to people to start small businesses who couldn't get the money anywhere else, and guess what? They usually make good loans, and

they make money doing it, by giving people a chance who couldn't get a chance anywhere else.

I want to thank Arizona Multibank for launching Magnet Capital, which is a new venture capital fund, backed by the Small Business Administration, that will give lower income entrepreneurs the equity they need to grow and expand. So thank you very much, Mr. Gordon.

Now, there's lots of other things that all you have to say. Just remember, we came here for three reasons. One is to show the business community of this country that we have the kind of partnership between government and the private sector that makes it more attractive to invest in places with higher unemployment and with too few businesses. Two, to make the point that there is a huge amount of opportunity out here right now, and the more American business knows about it, and the more they invest in it, the better they'll do. And three, we have a proposal before the Congress to go nationwide to give big tax breaks to people to help provide equity capital.

And I want you to know what I'm doing. I'm basically asking the Congress to give investors like those on this stage with me today the same incentives to invest in south Phoenix that we give them right now to invest in the developing countries of Latin America and Africa and the Caribbean. I want to do that, but you should have the same incentives here.

So thank you all for coming, and Congressman, the floor is yours. You want to introduce the folks who are going to talk? I think maybe you're going next, our hostess.

[At this point, the discussion began.]

The President. Thank you very much. Let's give him a hand. [Applause] I thought that was good.

If I could just make one point. One of the things that I learned traveling around the country in 1990 and 1991, before I decided to run for President, was that the crime rate was going down in areas where more police were on the street and in the communities and working with their neighbors, not just because they were catching people quicker, but because it was actually preventing crime from occurring in the first place.

In the last 6½ years, we have funded 100,000 more police officers for our streets in small towns and rural areas as well as big cities, and

in the budget I now have before the Congress, we're trying to get another 50,000 targeted at the highest crime areas in the country.

So that will help. That's something that we didn't come here to talk about today, but if I can persuade the Congress to do that, that will obviously help you and others like you to locate more stores and to have more substations, and it will also bring the police in closer contact with the community and increase confidence and good feeling. So I thank you very much for that.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. I want to thank you for the work that you have done. You know we were just together over at Chicanos Por La Causa and the work you did to help them set up their micro lending program. The Vice President, who has supervised all of our community economic development efforts for the last 6 years, announced this new SBA initiative with Aida not very long ago.

But I just want to emphasize to you, we were in the Mississippi Delta yesterday—it was also 100 degrees there—and we were in a little factory that makes picture frames, that had been going into bankruptcy. And we met a young man that thought he could turn it around, and he had opened the place back up in a place with terribly high unemployment.

But one of the people I met there was a woman who had worked for a small business that was doing okay, but the person running it in this little town, for family reasons, couldn't go on, and she was the only person qualified to take over this business. Otherwise it was just going to disappear. But she made very low wages for a person who owns a business, and she had no money in the bank, and because she was able to get some equity capital from someone as farsighted as you, her little business, in a year, went from 5 employees to 11 employees—instead of 5 people losing their jobs—and a woman that never made more than a few dollars an hour in her life is now a successful small business owner. That is that sort of thing we ought to be doing more of in America. And if we did more of it in places like south Phoenix, the unemployment here would not be higher than the national average, and the incomes would not be lower. So I thank you very much for what you're doing.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. I'd just like to make two points if I might, by way of completely agreeing with what you just said. First of all, for people who think we don't need these SBA programs anymore because the economy's doing so well, I would remind you that the SBA is a permanent example of the kind of approach that I believe we should be taking in the Government. The SBA basically gives people the tools to make the most of their own lives. They make the market more likely to work in places where it otherwise wouldn't work. And for people who don't think it matters—you know how much all these telecommunications companies are worth now and what's happened to the stock market in the last 6 years. It's more than tripled, 30 percent of our growth coming out of high tech. Intel and America Online—huge companies worth billions upon billions of dollars—started with SBA loans. And so I think, you know, that's enough to rest our case.

The second thing I would tell you is, there are—not all the business people that have been on this trip are right here in Phoenix, and not all the business people who wanted to go on this trip can go. But there is a phenomenal amount of interest in this, and I must—I want to give credit to Reverend Jesse Jackson. His Wall Street Project has been working on this for years.

I mean, there is a much higher level of awareness among American business leaders that there is money to be made and a better society to be made at the same time in these neighborhoods. So I don't think you have to worry. I think when we can finish this tomorrow afternoon in East L.A., you will see a much higher level of commitment and interest in corporate America than we had before. Thank you, Mr. Corella. You're great.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. First of all, I want to thank Gene, because really, Texas is a classic example; it's almost exactly like Arizona and Phoenix. The unemployment rate in Phoenix as a whole is less than 3 percent. The unemployment rate in this section of Phoenix is twice the national average, maybe a little more. You have the same thing in Houston.

I just want to illustrate—use Enron, which is a fabulous and very large energy company,

to illustrate a point that he made, that I think we should emphasize because it goes back to something John made. One of the reasons we're taking this trip here is that one of the—is that even in business, even with a market economy, where people are always supposed to act in their own self-interest, people cannot do what they don't know, and people cannot have a relationship with people with whom they are not acquainted.

And one of the things that Enron did, saying that he worked through a local community investment group, is to have—to literally build networks of relationships between big businesses and people that they would otherwise never, ever, ever come in contact with.

And so, I say again, I think—you heard what Steve said about Safeway figuring out there was a market here. Once you begin to establish these networks of relationships, and once they become a part of the fabric of American life, then we can build an economic, a normal economic infrastructure in these distressed areas so that the next time a recession comes along, we won't be hurt so badly here. And then when the pick-up comes, everybody will benefit instead of just a few.

So I can't thank you enough. But I do want to emphasize what—Gene Humphrey was a little too modest here. We do have a substantial number of business leaders heading companies more or less in the size range of Enron, who are helping. But we are nowhere near where we need to be. We need hundreds, we need thousands of people with the kind of commitment that he's manifested, because without these relationships, the decisions cannot be made to put the money there.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. I'd like to ask a question. I'd like to ask Frank or Andrew a question. What is the average size of a microenterprise loan that you give?

Andrew Gordon. For the last 10 years, Mr. President, it has been under \$2,500. And those \$2,500 make a difference. Our default rate, after lending over \$7 million in Arizona, sir, the default rate is less than 4 percent.

The President. Let me say that this is—give him a hand—[*applause*]*—this is a fairly typical experience worldwide.*

I got interested in this 15 years ago, when I met a man who was trained in the United

States and went home to Bangladesh and founded—one of the poorest countries in the world—founded a community bank making microenterprise loans to poor village women, average about—then—probably \$20. Today, they average about \$50. But that's a lot of money, in American terms, given the size of their economy, and they had a 96 percent repayment rate. Now he's made millions of these loans, in a country with 100 million people. So I'm—one of the things I'm quite proud of is that now, under our administration, we now fund 2 million microenterprise loans every year in poor, poor villages in Africa, in Asia, in Latin America.

But again I say, if it's good enough for us to do for them—which we need to do, so those countries can keep their democracies alive and be good citizens and not cause wars and have a decent life—it's certainly good for America. And my only regret is that we don't give ten times as many of them every year. And if we have institutions like Arizona Multibank and MICRO everywhere—we have the networks out there, again, to make the contacts—I think there's really very little limit to what we can do in getting more money for microloans, because they plainly work.

Is the average person, the average size of the business a single employee, self-employed? Or is it two?

Mr. Gordon. It's a sole proprietor, sir.

The President. Sole proprietor?

Mr. Gordon. Sole proprietor. Although they do get help from their family. It's just—it's a family business. It's not only that self-employed—but that's what makes it, it guarantees its success, because of the support.

The President. That's why they repay the money back, isn't it?

Mr. Gordon. Yes.

The President. Thank you.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. I'd like to say something about both these presentations. First of all, the way the new markets initiative works in terms of who gets the tax credits and who qualifies, the way this works is, people that invest in a business enterprise can get up to a 25 percent tax credit for the money they put up, then they qualify, for every dollar they put up, for \$2 in bank loans that are government-guaranteed, and the government guarantee dramatically lowers the interest rates on the bank loan, so that

between the tax credit and the lower interest rates, you reduce the relative risk of investing in these areas to make it more attractive.

And existing businesses qualify every bit as much as new businesses do. It is the area, where do the people live? What is their per capita income? What is the unemployment rate? How much do we need the new investment here? So we could never get into—it would be a bureaucratic nightmare to try to make distinctions between existing and new businesses. Everybody's eligible. It's people we're trying to help and places we're trying to reach.

The only other thing I would like to say is to thank you for what Univision is doing here and for what Univision doubtless will do to publicize this meeting to the Hispanic world in America. As you know, I'm very close to Henry Cisneros, and I think that the American people should know that, next to the Vice President, the two people most responsible for everything we've done in this community development area over the last 6 years are the present HUD Secretary, Andrew Cuomo, and his predecessor, Henry Cisneros. So this is, indeed, something to celebrate.

So the only thing I want to say is when you start building that building down here, hire some of these folks and make sure it's a good deal. Thank you very much. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. in the La Canasta Mexican Food Products factory. In his remarks, he referred to civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Arizona State Attorney General Janet Napolitano; Oregon State Treasurer Jim Hill, president, National Association of State Treasurers; Leo Guzman, president, Guzman & Co.; Marianne Spraggins, senior managing director, Smith Whiley & Co.; Gene Humphrey, president and chief executive officer, Enron Economic Development Corp.; Steven Burd, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Safeway Inc.; John C. Corella, president, Corella Companies; Myrna Sonora, vice president and general manager, Univision 33/KTVW; Michael Welborn, chairman and chief executive officer, Bank One Arizona; Andrew Gordon, president, Arizona Multibank Community Development Corp.; Frank Ballasteros, chief administrative officer, MICRO; Leonard Moreno, president, Moreno Welding, Inc.; Yolanda Kaizer, president, Builder's Book Depot; Josie Ippolito, president, La Canasta Mexican Food Products, Inc.; Muhammad

Yunus, founder and chief executive officer, Grameen Bank, Bangladesh; and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry G.

Cisneros, president and chief operating officer, Univision Communications, Inc.

Statement on the Sierra Leone Peace Agreement

July 7, 1999

On behalf of all Americans, I congratulate President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah and Revolutionary United Front leader Foday Sankoh on the signing of a peace agreement today in Lome, Togo. The agreement offers the hope of ending nearly 8 years of terrible conflict in Sierra Leone and bringing peace and a brighter future for its people.

I thank President Eyadema and the Government of Togo for hosting the peace talks, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the U.N., and my Special Envoy, Reverend Jesse Jackson, for providing critical support to the peace process. Neighboring countries also provided refuge to hundreds of thousands of Sierra Leoneans who fled the conflict

and atrocities in their country. Their willingness to open their arms to those in need is an example that inspires us all.

We are committed to working with ECOWAS, the U.N., and the OAU to ensure appropriate support for implementing the agreement and beginning reconciliation efforts. We will work with the people of Sierra Leone and the international community to support the safe return of more than one million refugees and internally displaced people and the reconstruction of the country.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Imports of Lamb Meat

July 7, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to provide to the Congress documents called for by section 203(b) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended, pertaining to the safeguard action that I proclaimed today of imports of lamb meat.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. The proclamation and memorandum of July 7 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Interview With Ron Brownstein of the Los Angeles Times Aboard Air Force One

July 6, 1999

2000 Election

Mr. Brownstein. I enjoyed being out there today after spending so much time in the last few weeks with the Vice President and the Governor. And we have so much 2000 going on already, it seems a little odd, you know, in some ways. I mean, you've got—you and the Congress both have 16, 17, 18 months left, and you know, it's almost like we're in a fall. It just seems somehow premature to me. I don't know.

The President. It is, but I think part of it is the—that's—I think we're doing what we should do, which is to keep plugging at the policy stuff, because in fairness to all the candidates, the States, in their rush to maintain maximum influence, have continued to move these dates up. So I don't really see that they had any choice. And when they're out there doing it, you've got to cover them. But I think—

Mr. Brownstein. Is it harder to get things done in Washington?

The President. I wouldn't—that depends on how—the attitude of Congress, I think that—in both parties. Not necessarily. I think in some ways, it may play to the desire of every person in public life, including the Members of the House and the Senate in both parties, always to be relevant and to say, hey, I'm here, too. So in a funny way, it could increase our ability to act, both this year and next year. And as I tell the Republicans all the time—and the Democrats—if we solve everything, if we reached an agreement on Social Security, Medicare, if we committed to pay the debt off in 15 years, which is something that I think is a huge, still, sleeper opportunity for the American economy, think of all the things that would still be there for them to disagree about.

Working With Congress

Mr. Brownstein. Do you think you can reach an agreement? What do the prospects feel like to you now—agreement on entitlement and taxes?

The President. Prospects feel, to me, better than conventional wisdom would hold they are. What I have to be able to do is to convince

both parties that doing the right thing is usually the best politics—the people have hired us to work, and they expect us to work—and that there will still be this huge array of things over which they have genuine disagreements. We have big disagreements that are important on education, so that no matter what we do on education, a lot of the disagreements will remain, and a lot of the opportunities will remain, you know, for fertile debate.

We have these massive disagreements, on guns, that are huge, where there seems to be no reasonable prospect that the divide can be bridged. But to go back to what I'm doing now, it would seem to me that this is, from my point of view, with the whole New Democrat philosophy I try to articulate, the embodiment of everything I believe. But it also is consistent with what entrepreneurial Republicans believe, because this is not a Government program in any conventional sense, and it is designed to spawn private sector growth.

New Markets Initiative

Mr. Brownstein. What is the principal thing you're hoping to accomplish on this tour? Is it to push forward the legislation, or is it something else?

The President. I think the principal thing I'm hoping to accomplish, which I think will help to push forward the legislation, is to convince the critical mass of the economic and political decisionmakers in this country that there is both an opportunity and an obligation in the underdeveloped parts of this.

You'd be amazed. When I talk to businesspeople, I say, look, forget about the moral obligation and the people that deserve a chance in life, although surprisingly, a lot of these business executives feel that. They feel that they've benefited in their own personal holdings, their businesses have. The stock market more than triples; the economy's got the most peacetime expansion in history. If we get fortunate, it'll be the longest expansion in history, including wartime expansions, if we keep it going, you know, if we're lucky and prudent.

So I've been very touched that a lot of them feel the moral pull of this.

But what I say to them is that when I started thinking about this economy, seriously, probably 12 years ago now, and thinking about what it would take to make America work again, and then I tried to put the ideas together a decade ago, in 1989 and '90 and then in '91, I gave those speeches at Georgetown. Most conventional economists believe, even my own economists—Laura Tyson, who did a fabulous job for me—I remember sitting around the table at Little Rock in December of '92 and having her say, "Mr. President, most economists, including most Democrats, believe that if you get the unemployment rate much below 6 percent for very long"—do you remember that, Gene? We were at the Governor's mansion—

National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling. I remember Bob and I brought in Laura and Larry so that we could all tell you at once, and this was when we were in the—

The President. If you create more than 8 million jobs in your first term, and we get this unemployment rate much below 6 percent, we'll have inflation. The Fed will have to really raise interest rates; it'll break the back of the recovery. And I argued to the contrary because of two things. I thought if we had open markets and maximized the impact of technology, that it would tend to dramatically increase productivity and hold down prices, and of course, you know, that's what's happened.

And all over the country today, if you look at the most sophisticated labor unions, you don't see a bunch of strikes here, because we're having good times. People are saying, we remember the bad times; we know we're in the global economy; we want wage increases; but we want them to be consistent with the profitability and the productivity of the firm we're in. It's very interesting.

There's a whole—and I think part of this is reinforced by the fact that all the worker pension funds are in the market, and you know, there are a lot of reasons for all this. But I think that what's happened is we're now down to unemployment below 4.5 percent, with no substantial inflation. We've had some oil spikes and other spikes, but basically things are rocking along here.

But now we've reached a point where people are saying, "Well, at this level of labor force participation, is there a way to continue to grow

the economy without sending inflation up so much that the Fed will have to raise interest rates, and we'll break it?" So as a pure economic perspective—and I have argued repeatedly that there are only three options here—you either have to find new markets abroad, which I strongly favor, and I'm still working on trying to get our party together on a trade position; that's option one.

Option two is to take discrete but dispersed populations that are out of the labor force and bring them in. That's still people on welfare, but the welfare rolls have been cut in half, so the ones left are the hardest to place and the disabled. And we're going to do that; presumably, we are going to have a big bipartisan agreement on that, to let them keep their Medicaid health insurance when they come in.

I don't think you went to New Hampshire with me when I did the forum on this, but there's this former Olympic skier in New Hampshire who is now confined to a wheelchair, and I think he's quadriplegic. Anyway—but he's seriously injured. He's got \$40,000 in Medicaid bills. But he's got a job and makes \$30,000 a year. You and I as taxpayers, we're going to pay the Medicaid bills regardless, so we're better off with him making \$30,000, and it's a better society with people like that working. So you can do that.

Mr. Brownstein. That's the second way?

The President. Yes, that's the second way. But the third way is, by far, the biggest way, and that is to go into these areas where the whole economic base eroded sometime over the last 30 years—principally, the inner-city areas and the rural areas and the Native American reservations where we're going now, where arguably, there never was any really indigenous independent economic base—and try to actually do what is necessary to put in place a private sector. It cannot be done with Government spending alone, because there are a lot of things that governments can do, you know, the Head Start, the health care, the education, all that stuff, the infrastructure. But you have to get some free enterprise in there. There are not enough Government jobs to do that.

On the other hand, with Government neglect, it'll never happen. So we started this back in '93 with the economic plan, with the empowerment zones, doubling the earned-income tax credit, doing those things within the enterprise communities, both giving people tax incentives

to go into those areas and then tax credits to hire people. And then we had the community development banks, which have had, like all such things, mixed records of success, but on balance have done well.

Then we began to vigorously push the Community Reinvestment Act, which has probably had the biggest aggregate impact but that tends to be more widely dispersed. So how we got to this new markets proposal and—

Mr. Brownstein. Can I ask right there, how does this—I mean, I was going to ask you about, building on that record, the things that you have already done, what do you see this adding to what you have already done? What is the specific increment you're trying to bring here?

The President. I think it does two things. Number one, it is available nationwide and not just where the empowerment zones or the community development banks are or where there has to be a particularly committed community banker who loves the community investment act. It's nationwide available. That's the first thing. That's a big deal. If you look at the one in New York we've got, it goes into Harlem, in the Bronx. There are probably a million people in New York City alone living in neighborhoods with unemployment rates above 10 percent, untouched by the empowerment zone. I don't know, maybe there's more. But at least a million.

Mr. Brownstein. It broadens your reach.

The President. Nationwide; and we don't have to keep going back to Congress over and over and over again saying, "Give us 10 more empowerment zones"; and then everybody's got different spending priorities, or Republicans say, "We like tax cuts; we don't like the spending you do, and you don't have to do any of that." You put it out there, and you say, "Here it is, nationwide."

Secondly, what it is, is particularly a heavy emphasis on venture capital, because you get up to a 25 percent tax cut for investing in vehicles that make direct investments to put up the venture capital. And then you also lower the relative risk of bank loans by saying that for every dollar you put up in venture capital, you're eligible for \$2 in borrowing, Government guaranteed, which cuts the interest rate way down.

And keep in mind, all this stuff would be available within the empowerment zones, too, so everywhere, you're lowering the relative risk of investment enough to make it more appeal-

ing. But the reason I said that, the most important thing, was to impact the economic and political links to the opportunity here is. I mean, that's why we've taken a lot of these businesspeople, and we're having all these announcements about what we're doing with the—you know, right now—is that it is very important that people see these opportunities as they are and also see the problems. But at least see that there really is opportunity.

Now, if you believe, as I do, that there are a lot of people in business and in politics who think as well as we're doing now, we have a moral obligation to try to finally get some sustaining free enterprise into these areas, and you show that it's good business, and then you lower the relative risks, you've really done something. But the first thing you have to do is to make sure that there is enough accurate knowledge and communication out there to make the market work.

Any economist will tell you that all markets work based on—still work through human beings based on adequate knowledge. And I would argue that there is far less than perfect knowledge within the American investor community about the opportunities in these developing areas.

Mr. Brownstein. It sounds like what you're trying to do this week is almost a trade mission within your own country.

The President. I'm taking a trade mission to America this week. Which is why, you see, my one sure-fire applause line in all these speeches is we're going to give American business investors the same incentive to invest here they have in developing economies overseas. It's like a trade mission.

Community Reinvestment Act

Mr. Brownstein. You mentioned community investment act having the broadest impact—financial services bill going to conference. You have threatened to veto over the CRA provisions.

The President. Don't we have good CRA provisions now—

Mr. Brownstein. In the House.

The President.—in the House?

Mr. Brownstein. The Senate provisions you said you would veto?

The President. We're going to work hard for those House provisions. I don't see how—look, I know sort of ideologically where Phil Gramm

is, but you cannot look at the fact that we have the strongest economy in a generation, maybe ever. During the same period of time, when—this was a 22-year-old law, and over 95 percent of all the money loaned under it has been loaned in the time that we've been here with this administration.

You cannot make a factual argument that the CRA is so burdensome to bankers that it's somehow bad for America. It's been good for America, and it's been good for banks. So I feel very strongly about it.

Mr. Brownstein. I feel ground approaching, so I'm going to try to talk about a couple of other issues with you.

The President. So we're trying to get three things done. Number one, we want to highlight what we've been doing the last 6½ years and what the positive impacts are. Number two, we want to promote the new markets initiative because it's nationwide, and it's a heavier emphasis on venture capital and on direct investment, equity investment. And number three, we want to increase the awareness of the opportunities there in these areas because I think we have to build a different economic infrastructure in these areas. If we do that, the next time there is a recession, they won't be totally wiped out; they'll go down like the rest of the country, and then when we get out of the recession the next time, they'll come up like the rest of the country. But if they have no resources, they get hurt terribly in the recessions, because they have a lot of marginal employees, and then when we come out, they don't come out.

Basically, I think people have not thought through here that the economic infrastructure in most of these places literally disappeared somewhere over the last 30 years and hasn't been replaced for anything.

Now, it turns out to be in the self-interest of the investor in the corporate community to replace it. And these people are out there dying to work. Yes, there are all kinds of obstacles, special obstacles in every one of these places: transportation in Appalachia, the level of education, the skills, you've got to do more on-the-job training. There are all kinds of problems. But the opportunity there is significant, and if we have sufficient tax incentives and if the Government does our part in spending for education and training, too, we will, I think, at least make the relative risk of investment equal to what it would be in most other places.

Budget Agenda

Mr. Brownstein. Let me not jump around, but I would like to try to touch on a couple of other things and then come back to one other thing on the investment side. You mentioned before, you were a little more optimistic than conventional wisdom about the prospect, and there does seem to be a little change in the wind as the surplus numbers have gotten better.

Let me ask you first, do you think a broad-based deal would have to include a broad-based tax reduction beyond what you've proposed, and are there some that are more acceptable to you than others?

The President. I think what's most important to me, because I think this will clarify the choices to the Republicans as well as to our people, what's most important to me is to try to do the first things first. That is, I would like to lock in a commitment which would assure that even if we couldn't reach agreement on the next steps, we'd run Social Security out to 2053 and pay the debt off, the publicly held debt off in 15 years.

Then I would like to move to Medicare, where I really do believe we can make an agreement now. We know that. They will have to admit, those that don't agree with my prescription drug proposal, that I've done it in a fiscally responsible way that will not explode in the out-years. Then we can look at what we've got. I don't think they—if you look at what they say they are going to do, they say they're willing to go to basically a kind of a lockbox like I have, a real savings on Social Security, not something you can go back and raid.

If you do that and if you take the tax proposal they've got on the books now and then just fund my defense numbers—not theirs, my defense increases—we're already in the hole again running a deficit with a 30 percent cut in discretionary spending. That is, I don't think that all these numbers have been added up, and I think that if we really sit down and don't get—you know, I haven't attacked the money. I haven't gone out on a budget tirade or anything like that.

What I want to do is to really show them what I think the choices are and then discuss it with them and debate with them. But I think there can be an omnibus agreement, and I've already said I think there ought to be a tax cut. We can afford to give some of this money

back to the American people. My own view is, the most responsible way to give it back is in the USA accounts, because it gives hundreds of dollars a year from now on to working families in ways that will enable them to save for their own retirement.

Tax Cuts

Mr. Brownstein. Do you like the idea of raising the 15 percent bracket as a possible tax cut?

The President. You mean lowering the 15 percent?

Mr. Brownstein. Lowering the 15 percent—raising the income level that is taxed at 15 percent.

The President. We've got to look at all—the important thing to me is, if you do that, then you have to give up the retirement savings. And so I'll say again, let's do first things first. Let's figure it out. The way to do this is, before you decide what kind of tax cuts you want, is to figure out how much money have you really got for it, and then you can talk about what the best way to do it is.

Budget Caps

Mr. Brownstein. And how much have you really got—Bob Greenstein's group put out a study last week, which the Post immediately picked up an editorial, arguing that this big surplus number is premised on maintaining the caps on discretionary spending, which—

The President. Which are too tight.

Mr. Brownstein.—which are too tight. Do you think the caps should be lifted, and are we assuming, or are we spending the surplus that is exaggerated?

The President. If you look at what I did, if you look at my proposal, coming after the midsession review, we propose lifting the cap—I don't like the term “lifting the caps,” because that implies that we would again—that's like a tax investment. To me, lifting the caps is like doing a tax increase. That's like taking something that's doing a good thing that may have a bad result unless it is part of an overall plan.

Mr. Brownstein. As part of an overall plan, it might make sense.

The President. And in fact, what I proposed—look what I proposed in the midsession review. I said, “Okay, let's have a hard Social Security lockbox, take Social Security off budget, get rid of that, do it in a way that pays the debt off

in 2015, and takes all the interest savings from the declining debt and puts it into Social Security. Two, here's my Medicare fix, and it will pay for taking Medicare out to 2027, plus almost all the prescription drug benefits, and you need a little bit of a surplus to pay for 2027 prescription drug benefits, plus reform. Here's my defense number. Here's what my tax cut costs. And here's what you have left to pay for education and children, because you don't want the budget to get too far out of balance between the old and the young for education, for children, for medical research, for the environment, and other essential Government services.”

So I've proposed, in effect, and things that the Republicans like, transportation, all that kind of stuff. I've proposed some increased spending over a decade, a substantial tax cut, and a fix for Social Security and Medicare. If they want a larger tax cut within that, and they are still committed, then they're committed to a legitimate Social Security fix, that is not something where you can wind up, raid it again to pay for your tax cut.

Then I think that we ought to be able to sit down and say, let's put all these pieces out here and move them. But you can move the pieces around, but the final puzzle has to look more or less the same. In other words, I don't think a lot of them—this is ironic, you know; it's almost like the parties have switched places on this—I'm not sure a lot of them believe it's as important as I do to try to make the country debt-free by 2015.

See, I think, to me, that's a bigger tax cut than we could ever give. It's a bigger tax cut; if you're talking about disposable income in the hands of the taxpayers, it would be worth more than even their tax cut. See, if we adopt their tax—let's just say we adopted their tax cut. I am convinced, as a practical matter, you would wind up with substantial deficits, higher interest rates, less savings, and higher out-of-pocket costs for everything from business loans to home mortgages to college loans to consumer loans to car payments.

And if that's true—and I think that experience, by the way—I think, you know, I've got some experience on our side, on my side of the argument now. I mean, look how much the average middle class person has saved since 1993. What tax debts do we get? Well, if you're under \$30,000 a year and you've got a family, you've got some benefit from the earned-income

tax credit. If you have someone in college or you're going to college, you've got a big tax cut there. If you have a child, you've got the \$500 tax cut there

But 100 percent of the people that have any indebtedness—and keep in mind, we've got two-thirds of the folks now who own homes now, and almost all of them have mortgages—

Mr. Brownstein. The interest—

The President. A hundred percent of them have got—they've got mortgage savings, credit card savings, car payment savings, and anybody that's got any kind of debt has saved money because we have chosen to get down to balancing the budget and then moving into the surpluses. Now, if our country were debt free, consider the potential advantages for the average citizen or even the low income worker.

Assuming we still had sufficient funds to pay our obligations to the poor and to fulfill the basic Government functions, you would have higher business investment, less inflation, more money for real wage increases, and lower credit costs for all consumer items. Furthermore, if there were another global financial crisis, and we tried to change the rules to minimize this happening again and what would happen in Asia. But no one can be absolutely sure because there's still a lot of leveraged money out there in the global economy.

The next time that happened, the United States would not be competing for money in a very difficult environment. That would mean that our trading partners could get funds more readily at lower interest rates and it would cushion the shock of any downturn. That would also be good for our export-dependent industries. We've had—gosh, our agricultural sector and our airplane, our commercial airplane sector have really been hit hard by this financial crisis in Asia. So it would be better for us in that way, and it would be better for our trading partners.

I believe that in a global economy, an economy that's as globalized as this one, the richest countries—the richest countries are better off almost imagining themselves as States do now in the American system, and the more they can be debt free, the better off they're going to be.

Recovery of the Nation and Gore Candidacy

Mr. Brownstein. Can I ask—I'll be thrown out of the "Society of Political Reporters" if

I don't ask your sense of—great economy, Dow up, crime down, welfare down; yet, right track, sense of satisfaction with the direction the country is following. The Vice President, even though it's the year before, is trailing substantially. What do you think's going on? Is there a desire for change at the end of your two terms, tail end?

The President. I think there's a constant desire for change. But I think what you'll see by next year is that the Vice President will be the candidate of change. People will have to decide whether they want the change going on. The rhetoric of compassionate conservatism—half those speeches sound like I gave them in '92.

So I think we have to—when we get down to the specifics and people get to focus on the nature of the change, I think that the Vice President will do fine. So I feel good about that. And by the way, I think the right track numbers are coming back up.

I think—I don't want to get into polling and political commentary, but the combination of the conflict in Kosovo and the extraordinary shock to the country's psyche that Littleton proposed were the main things that changed the right track/wrong track—

Mr. Brownstein. Are you comfortable with the position the Vice President is in at this point?

The President. Yes. I think—and in historical terms, if you look at parallel elections, you go back and check, where was Nixon, where was Bush, where were these people, I think as long as he's out there articulating the vision and saying what he'll do if he gets elected and as long as he feels good about it, I think he's doing fine. I think it's good.

"Compassionate Conservatism"

Mr. Brownstein. I don't suppose I can talk with you in the limo? Can I ask you one last question? The other thing that's been going on, in addition to—I'm interested in your thought about what "compassionate conservatism" means to you. As you say, some of those speeches sound like—they talked about opportunity, community, responsibility at various points. Is it an homage to what you're doing, or do you see it as something that is fundamentally different than the New Democrat agenda?

The President. Both. Yes, that is, I think that based on what I've seen, it captures the rhetoric, and it's very flattering in a way, you know? Because it replicates the rhetoric. But I think—and it, on some issues, seems to have discarded

some of the harsher aspects of the Republican revolution of the last 5 years, immigration, for example.

But on other issues, it's either blurring, like, where are they, really, on affirmative action and choice—not really clear—and on some places, you know, downright hostile to the position that I believe is sort of the Third Way position, including on civil liberties, like the hate crimes legislation or on consumer protections like the Patients' Bill of Rights or, most profoundly, on these gun issues.

So the question is, are the architects of the revolution in 1995, the contract on America, the heirs of Newt Gingrich who are still basically in control of the Congress, all of whom were early—almost all of whom, almost 100 percent—early endorsers of Mr. Bush, is this an umbrella under which they can be protected from the rainstorm of public opinion until they get to where they can do what they want, or is it something different? I think the record is decidedly mixed on that.

Childhood Poverty

Mr. Brownstein. I was going to ask you about Bradley criticizing you on child poverty, not doing enough to reduce childhood poverty. That was the—

The President. I don't think anybody's done enough to reduce childhood poverty. You have to keep going. But if you look at the minimum wage, doubling the earned-income tax credit, and what we've done—we've immunized 90 percent of the kids for the first time in history, and we've got the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded and the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded—I think we've made more headway than anyone imagined we could when we started.

But it's a very difficult problem.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 8 p.m. en route from East St. Louis, IL, to Rapid City, SD. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 8. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks in a Discussion on Youth Opportunities in Los Angeles, California July 8, 1999

The President. Thank you. Please sit down. We're running behind now. I've got to get to be more businesslike. Since Alexis has been so fulsome in her kind comments, that was an example of Clinton's second law of politics: Always be introduced by someone you've appointed to a high position. [Laughter]

Let me say to, first, our host here in Representative Maxine Waters' district, we're delighted to be here. I want to thank all of you who made it possible for us to come to this beautiful facility. Let me say I am doing something today I never thought I would ever do, for those who have been on the tour with me; I came to Los Angeles to cool off. [Laughter] It was 100 degrees in Washington when we left; it was 100 degrees in Appalachia; it was 100 degrees in the Mississippi Delta; it was 100 degrees in East St. Louis; it was only about 94 on the Indian reservation yesterday; and it was over 100 in south Phoenix. So I came to Los

Angeles to cool off, and I thank you very much for that.

I want to thank Secretary Daley and Secretary Slater who are here; and Reverend Jackson, thank you for making this tour with us and all the business leaders who have been with us. I want to thank Congresswoman Millender-McDonald. We were just over at the transportation academy in her district, and I enjoyed that very much. Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez, thank you for being here. Congressman Xavier Becerra; and Congressman Paul Kanjorski, who came all the way from Pennsylvania, has been on every step of this tour, and I thank him.

Governor, thank you for making us feel welcome, and Yvonne Burke, thank you, and I'd like to thank all the business leaders and all the leaders from entertainment and athletics and other things that are here today.

I will be very brief because I want to hear from the young people here. I have believed from the beginning of my tenure as President that, in order for the American economy to really work and in order for the American society to work, every American should believe that he or she had a chance to be a part of it. And we've worked on this for some time. And you heard Alexis talking about the economic statistics: we now have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded. But everyone knows that there are still substantial numbers of people in our distressed urban and rural areas and on our Indian reservations that basically have not been part of this recovery.

In Watts, for example, the unemployment rate has dropped by almost 50 percent but is still three times above the national average, just for example. And so it seemed to me, several months ago—and I talked about this in my State of the Union Address way back in January—that there was a way to tap the enormous feeling that a lot of our business leaders have that they've done very, very well in a stock market that's more than tripled in 6 years and a strong economy and that they ought to give something back with the idea that it would actually be good economics to give something back.

Those of you who follow the business news know that, every time the Federal Reserve meets, there's all this tense speculation: Will they raise interest rates or not? Well, what does that mean to these young people here with their yellow T-shirts on? It is that most economists believe that there is a limit to how low the unemployment can go and a limit to how high the economic growth can go, before you have so much inflation that you have to stop it, which kills the economic recovery.

Now, how can you keep it going? How can we keep this recovery going, never mind all these kids we're here to hear about, just for those of you who have done well in the stock market? How could you keep it going? The easiest way to keep it going is to go to places where there aren't enough jobs and there aren't enough consumers, and create more of both: create more business owners, create more workers, create more consumers. That's all growth completely without inflation.

It allows America's economic expansion to continue, so there's a real sense in which, every time we hire a young person off the street in

Watts and give him or her a better future, we are helping people who live in the ritziest suburbs in America to continue to enjoy a rising stock market, and it proves beyond any doubt that we are all in this together, that we're all better off when the least of us do well.

And also, we have a chance here that we've never had before, at least in my lifetime, certainly not since the American economy began to unravel in the late sixties. We have got a chance to actually build an economic infrastructure in the inner cities and in rural America that will restore something like a normal economy to places.

There will always be—some times are pretty good; some times won't be so good. But what we want for every American is to live in a community where at least he or she has the same shot everybody else does.

Now, the first 3½ days, what we spent focusing on is how to get money into isolated places. That's basically what we've been focusing on. And we talked a lot about the things we've been doing since 1993. We've had wonderful business leaders from all over America, by the way, of both parties—this is not a partisan issue anyplace but Washington, DC, and I hope it won't be there—saying, "Hey, this is good business. This is a good deal. We want to be a part of it." And we talked about this new markets legislation I have proposed which would give tax credits and government-guaranteed loans to people who would invest to give equity to people to start businesses in the inner city and in rural America.

And basically what I've asked the Congress to do is to give businesspeople the same incentive to invest in America they get to invest today in poor communities in Latin America or Asia or Africa or the Caribbean. I don't want to take those opportunities away. I just want American communities to have the same shot at the future.

So now, what we're here today to say is that, even if we do all that, in the world we're living in, there is a high premium in an information society placed on knowledge, skills, what you know today, and what you can continue to learn. One of the young people I saw today is about to join the United States Army, once in a gang, was working a computer program in which he was able to match someone in Russia who wanted to buy tires with someone in Colombia who

wanted to sell them, and he could get a commission off of it in between. Well, I just give you that as one example. I saw a lot of other—I saw two young people who were designing automobiles that would be less wind-resistant and, therefore, would operate at higher rates of efficiency.

Another young man who was mixing sound, so that if I—he told me, if I sang a song flat into his microphone, he could tune it up so I'd sound just fine. *[Laughter]*

All these things make this point, and that's why we're here, to finish, in a way, with the most important thing of all: We can put in place the financial networks; we can create a lot of jobs; but our young people—and 60 percent of the young people, men and women, young men and women in the most distressed areas of America are neither in school or at work still. And so we can do all of these things and provide these investments, but if our young people don't have the opportunity to learn and to continue to learn and to continue to get training for a lifetime, we won't be able to do it.

The first place I went in Appalachia, 57 percent of the people who live there never finished high school. It's very remote. But there's a man there that expanded a firm that does business with all the high-tech companies in the country from 40 to 850 employees by having all of his present employees do a continuous job training on every new person they try to take out of the hills and hollows of Appalachia.

So there is no place, even in rural America, that can escape the reality that we must train and educate our young people if we really want this to work. So that's what we're here about.

I thank Secretary Herman for this youth opportunities initiative, and all of you who are participating. So Alexis, why don't you take over, and let's hear from our folks.

[At this point, the discussion began.]

The President. Let me just say, Mel Farr, who is a former all-pro football player from Detroit, is becoming the largest automobile dealer in America, and it's just worked out. One of the announcements we made earlier on our tour is that he has a lot of big financial institutions who've agreed to buy his car loans in bulk, which will enable him to expand all across America and put minority-owned dealerships in every community in this country.

And for people who have modest incomes, you know, he has adapted this sort of car leasing proposal; you remember, this started a few years ago when people stopped buying cars and started leasing them and leased them 3 years. Mel will lease people cars, give you leases for as short a period as 2 months. But if you don't pay, you can't make off with the car; he's got a device that will turn the car off. *[Laughter]* So he soon will be responsible for the widest distribution of car ownership in America with the largest number of cars that won't run. *[Laughter]*

This is actually a brilliant thing, because he's giving people a chance to have cars they never could afford otherwise. He's recognizing that people who don't have a lot of cash income have to live from month to month; and he's doing it in a way that is giving people a chance to run dealerships who never could have run them before, and they will all train people and hire the kind of people that Toyota center is training.

So thank you, Mel, for a brilliant thing you're doing.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Thank you. Let me just briefly say in closing, first of all, I want to thank all those who have participated and those who are here who have not said anything but, by the power of their example, are doing a great thing for our country. We have advocates here; we have investors; and we have those who are examples, particularly these young people who have spoken.

To me, this is the best of all endeavors because it is the morally right thing to do and it is in the self-interest of every American who participates in it. I believe—I listened to these young people, and I read the notes on their lives before I came here. You know, things happen to people in life, and the good things and the bad things, especially to our children, are not evenly distributed. And yet, among all the poor people in America, there are people who could help us find a cure for AIDS, a vaccine; there are people who could help us to—I talked to one of the young men earlier who developed composite parts for cars that would be as strong as steel and weigh a thousand pounds less and get 80 miles a gallon, or 90. There are people who could solve every problem out there. The

talent and the human spirit are evenly distributed across racial and income lines.

But things happen to people, and things happen to communities. In our inner cities and a lot of our rural areas, the economic bases that once made them organized, thriving, and successful evaporated, and we did a lousy job as a country of replacing that. We were slow off the uptake. And in other places, like our Indian reservations, arguably, there never was an economic basis that would be self-sustaining.

So what we do here is to say that this is not something the Government can do alone, but the Government should do its part. And this is not something the private sector can be expected to do unless we provide the training and the support for the young people and provide the framework within which we lower the risk of these investments as much as is prudent.

But we have to remember the human element in all this. We were in East St. Louis yesterday, visited a Wal-Mart store in one of the most distressed inner-city areas—I mean, Walgreens store, this beautiful Walgreens store—30 employees. The manager of the Walgreens store was a 24-year-old African-American girl that grew up in that community and got out of college and was just good at what she did, and that company believed in her enough to give her a chance at the age of 24 to run a store with 30 employees. An example. You're an ex-

ample. You're an example. You're an example. All of you are examples.

The rest of us, who basically had a lot of luck and good fortune in life—you know, we all like to believe we were born in log cabins we built ourselves, but most of us were helped along life's way and we had a lot of luck to get where we are, and most of us, with all the bad things that happened to us, end life ahead of where we would be if all we got was what we just deserved. And we should remember that.

And we should think about these children and remember that it is in the interest of America—the talent and the gifts and the richness of their souls and their spirits are evenly distributed. But things happen to them or things happen to the place where they happen to be born or where they happen to live now, and we can make it better. If we can't do it now, with this economy as strong as it is, we'll never get around to doing it.

So when we leave here, we should remember that, and we should do it. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon in the Founders' Library at Southwest College. In his remarks, he referred to civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Gov. Gray Davis of California; Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Los Angeles County supervisor, second district; and Walgreens manager Angela Tennon.

Remarks to the National Academy Foundation Conference in Anaheim, California

July 8, 1999

You know, Hazel, you might consider just skipping that hotel business and going right into politics. [*Laughter*] I want to thank all of you for your welcome, and I thank Hazel and her fellow winners behind us for reminding us of why we're here. Mayor Daly, thank you for making me feel welcome, and Secretary Daley, Secretary Slater. Representative Sanchez, we're delighted to be in your district and to be here with other Members of Congress who are here.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to my wonderful friend, our former Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, who is here with us today and supporting this endeavor.

Since this is the last event for me in this weeklong odyssey across America to our—what we called America's new markets, I'd like to say a special word of thanks to the folks on the White House staff who made it possible, including my National Economic Adviser, Gene Sperling, without whom this never would have occurred.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to Reverend Jesse Jackson, who worked with Sandy Weill on the Wall Street Project, went to Appalachia before it was fashionable, who always believed that poor people were smart, wanted to work, and had a right, a moral right

to be part of America's future. Thank you, Jesse Jackson, and thank you, Sandy Weill, for the Wall Street Project, which attempts to marry the investment capacity of Wall Street with the human capacity of all those places we've been visiting. Thank you for the National Academy Foundation, thank you for being a good friend to me and to all these young people and so many others, and thank you for inviting me to this annual conference.

This is really quite an appropriate place for me and those who have traveled with me this last week on our new markets trip to end our journey, reaffirming your commitment and ours to prepare all our children for the new century. Over the past 4 days, as I have traveled across America, we have sought to shine the spotlight on places still unlit by the sunshine of our present prosperity. A number of you have been along for what has truly been a remarkable ride.

We've seen the power of people in public and private life to work together in the Appalachians and in the Mississippi Delta. We've seen the spark that retail investment can bring in the first shopping center built in decades in East St. Louis, Illinois. We've seen the impact in the most basic infrastructure and housing opportunities, even in the remote regions of Indian country in South Dakota, still the most left-behind part of America.

In south Phoenix yesterday, in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees, we saw the enormous benefits of community reinvestment initiatives. And here, earlier today, we saw what education and job training can bring to young people in Watts, people who are normally identified with distressed neighborhoods, showing me how to design automobiles on a computer or to conduct sophisticated business transactions between two different countries with young Americans 17 years old picking up a commission for being the middleman.

I took this trip for three reasons. First, I wanted every American businessperson, every American investor to see that there are enormous opportunities out there today in the areas that have been left behind by our economic recovery.

Second, because I wanted to highlight the tools that have already been put in place to encourage more people to invest in those communities: the empowerment zones and the enterprise communities which Vice President Gore has so ably led for 6 years now; the community

development financial institutions that we have supported; the Community Reinvestment Act, which has led to billions of dollars of reinvestment in our developing neighborhoods; the education and training initiatives designed to give all of our people a chance not only to have good, basic skills, but to keep on learning for a lifetime.

And third, I wanted to highlight our new markets initiative, a piece of legislation simply designed to give American investors who are willing to take a chance on new and expanded businesses in distressed urban and rural communities access to the same kind of tax credits and loan guarantees—to lower the relative risk of their investment—in America that they can get to invest in poor communities from Africa to Asia to Latin America to the Caribbean. I'm for those investments, but I think America's communities should have access to the same capital with the same incentives.

The idea behind this, obviously, is that the Government cannot do this alone, but business cannot be expected to go it alone. When government provides the conditions and tools, acts as a catalyst to bring the power of the private sector to benefit all of our citizens, and provides the investment and the education and training of our young people, this is not only good economics, it is the right thing to do. We can build one America where nobody is left behind when we cross that bridge into a new century, and if we do, we'll all be better off.

The CEO's and national leaders I have traveled with, we've heard it every stop: "Look, we just need a chance; our kids need education; our adults need training; and we need somebody who believes in us enough to give us a chance."

I'll never forget the woman we met in the Mississippi Delta, who was working for a very small business in a depressed community that had five employees. She made a very modest wage, and the owner of the business just decided to close up. He said to her she was the only person capable of running the business. But nobody would give her a loan because she'd never had any money in her life; she had only worked for modest hourly wages.

Because there was a community investor willing to take a chance on her, she got investment capital. She bought the business. Two years later she went from 5 to 11 employees, and she has just about paid her loan off. There are thousands of stories like that waiting to be written in

America in every community that is still depressed.

So we want to encourage that, and that's why so much of this trip is focused on how to get financing. A remarkable businesswoman from New York, Marianne Spraggins, went on this trip. She's trying to set up a vision fund with \$250 million in private sector capital to give venture capital to these kinds of places. If we get our way, the people who invest in that fund will be eligible for a 25 percent tax credit for putting that money into high unemployment areas, and they'll be eligible to borrow \$2 for every \$1 they put up in that fund and have it guaranteed by the Government so we lower the interest rate. That's the Government's contribution. But somebody still has to make the investment to put these people to work.

So most of the capital we've been talking about these last several days has been money. We see in the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota a remarkable grandmother, providing schoolclothes for her grandchildren, having to literally buy the tennis shoes her grandchildren wear to school on the installment plan all summer long while the shoes are kept in layaway, so the kids will have them. Then there were 11 people living in a house with about 800 square feet, another 17 in an adjoining house-trailer with about 900 square feet. We need money; those people need housing.

We also saw American Indians, that have been waiting for 9 years, moving into their first homes. A little 5-year-old boy, 6-year-old boy took me by the hand and led me all through his new home and showed me his sister's room and explained why it was okay that she had a bigger room than he did. [Laughter] She was a teenager, and teenagers needed things like that—[laughter]—the pride that they felt, these people, this mother who had worked all her life and finally getting a decent home for her children to live in.

So a lot of this is a money problem. I used to joke with a lot of my friends—I still say this—that I had about 9 or 10 rules of politics that I kept in my mind all during my career running for office, and rule number two was: when anybody stands up and tells you it's not a money problem, they're talking about somebody else's problem, not theirs. [Laughter]

So money is a big issue here. But there's another kind of capital that in some ways is even more fundamental: human capital, people.

When Hazel stood up here, and you clapped for her, you were clapping for the astonishing development of human capital, of what she has done with her life and the chance that her mother took in going to Hawaii, the risks and the heartache and the difficulties her family went through. It made you feel good.

And what I want to say to you today is that there are people, just like these young people we're honoring back here, on every Indian reservation, in every hill and hollow of Appalachia, up and down the Mississippi Delta, in every inner city, and they deserve—they deserve—the chance to be whatever they're willing to work hard to be. And unless we're prepared to do that, even our best efforts to bring new investment to these distressed communities will be less than fully successful.

Now, we have a better opportunity and a better reason to do that now than ever before. As I tell people, I spend a lot of time in Washington; Sandy's always saying that I've done a good job as a Democrat with the economy so more people can live like Republicans—[laughter]—and I've done my best to do that.

But you should know that one of the things that we seriously debate back in Washington, DC, a long way from Anaheim, is how can we keep this going. We already have the longest economic expansion in peacetime in our history. We have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. We have almost 19 million new jobs, and we have very low inflation, and we've had unemployment rate below five percent for 2 years. So a big question is, how much longer can this go on, and how can we keep it going without having inflation buildup, then having interest rates go up and having the recovery stop?

This is not an academic issue if you're about to get your first job or if you're sitting there trying to make up your mind whether to take out a huge bank loan to expand your business. You want to know if we can keep this going.

My answer is we can keep it going if we can find noninflationary ways to promote growth. Now, what are those? Well, we can sell more American goods and services around the world—why I hope the Congress will agree to help us expand our trade with other countries. We can also bring populations that are outside the work force into the work force. With the welfare rolls—they're now the lowest they've been in 30 years, and there are a lot of people

still on welfare that are able-bodied, but they have limited skills. We could bring more people from welfare into the work force.

You can bring hundreds of thousands of disabled people who are capable of doing more and more kinds of jobs, thanks to technology now, into the work force. And the Congress, I believe, will soon send me a bill that will enable those that have high health care costs that are now being paid by the Government to keep that health care coverage so private employers can afford to hire them.

But by far, the biggest opportunity—by far—in keeping this economy going without inflation is to get more investments, more jobs, more new business owners, more new workers, and therefore, more new consumers into the rural and urban areas that have not yet been blessed by this recovery.

That's why every single American actually has a vested interest in our success here. And more and more businesses are looking for young people like those we celebrate, because there's a shortage of skilled workers, even though there are people who are still looking for jobs, in some job categories, a shortage of hundreds of thousands. Therefore, if Americans are willing to look a few exits off the beaten path, we can continue to grow this economy, and we can continue to have more of the kind of stories we just heard.

Let me also say to you, if we can't do this now, with the strongest economy we have ever had, when it is manifestly in the self-interest of every enlightened decisionmaker in the country, when will we ever get around to doing it?

Let me tell you some of the things that we saw on the human capital front. We walked down the dusty streets on an Indian reservation. We saw the boarded-up storefronts in a town in the Mississippi Delta, famous for its role in the civil rights struggle. We saw desperate living conditions in a little hollow in Appalachia where everybody had a job, and they still couldn't afford a decent house to live in.

But every place we went, nobody wanted charity, nobody wanted a handout. What they wanted was a hand up. That's why this will work. What people want is a good private sector job, the simple dignity of a paycheck, the ability to house and educate their children and provide health care for them. And what you know here, what these young people behind me demonstrate is that intelligence and ability and drive

and dreams are equally distributed in this country among the poor and the nonpoor.

I've often said, things happen to people that derail their lives, and then they have to work hard to get them back on track. Things happen to places like that, too. I know the Mississippi Delta, which includes a big part of my own home State, the economy that once sustained that area has been gone a long time. Nobody was ever able to figure out how to put a new economy in its place. But there's a new economy out there that could fit in that place.

There are new economies that could fit in the most remote villages of the Appalachian Mountains. There are new economies that could go into the Native American reservations. How many data processing jobs do American companies ship overseas on airplanes every night to go to poor countries and other places? They could be done on Indian reservations, for example. We have got to think about that.

We all can identify with a human story. If Hazel stands up here and tells us the story of her family, it grips us, and we pull for her. But what you need to know is all these places have stories like that. We got the land and the mineral rights away from the Indians, and we said, oh, we'll make a deal; we'll have a nation-to-nation relationship with you, and we will provide for the education and health care and housing of your people. But we'll do a poor job of it, and we'll spend just as little as we can get away with; and then, we'll say you must not really want to do any better.

We have to write new stories for these places, and it takes a commitment to money capital and to human capital. And what Sandy and all of you who have been involved in this magnificent project show—this is Exhibit A—that we can do it.

Now, let me say, on a very positive note, I'm quite optimistic, that I am quite sure that one answer to this, in the United States and all across the world, is better dispersal of technology. When I went to Africa, I went to these little villages where people had maps—these children were in these little village schools where they had maps that still showed the Soviet Union and other nations that haven't existed in a long time. But if those kids just had one computer for the school and a printer, they would never have to worry about that. We could change the map of the world every day, and

all those little kids would have an updated map. Right?

Technology will enable some of these areas to skip a whole generation of development if it is broadly dispersed. Secretary Daley referred to the Department of Commerce report today on technology. Let me tell you what it says. It confirms what you already know. More and more Americans than ever are connected to the Internet. It is the fastest-growing method of human communication in all of history by far.

But it also shows, this report, that there is a growing digital divide between those who have access to the digital economy and the Internet and those who don't and that the divide exists along the lines of education, income, region, and race. It might have pointed out, of course, that all of us parents are not as good as our kids; that divide's not so serious. But the real one is.

And yet we know, I will say again, that the very information technology driving this new economy gives us the tools to ensure that no one gets left behind. It gives us the tools to provide a story for these communities, to literally provide a self-sustaining economic infrastructure for the 21st century. Millions of Americans now on the economic margins can join the mainstream in the enterprise of building our Nation.

A child in south central L.A., in the most remote part of Indian country can have access to the same world of knowledge in an instant as a child in the wealthiest suburban school in this country. Now, just imagine if not simply a fraction, but all of our young people entered the work force, had access to the Internet always, and had mastered the skills of the new information economy.

So if we want to unlock the potential of our workers, we have to close that gap. We've done what we could. We have provided the HOPE scholarship and other tax credits so that we've literally opened the doors of college to all Americans. We have emphasized higher standards, smaller classes, more teachers. We're connecting every American classroom to the Internet, and I think we'll make our goal that the Vice President and I established here in California in 1994 of having all the classrooms connected by the year 2000.

The \$8 million in corporate commitments made today by this group are so very important, as are the information technology academies to

which Sandy referred earlier. Sandy has said often that today's students are tomorrow's employees, today's students are tomorrow's economy. They're not just somebody else's employees they are tomorrow's economy. So, bringing these skills to distressed families in distressed communities can have more to do with our ability to restructure the economy in these areas than perhaps anything else.

I also want to thank AT&T—and I think Dan Hesse, the CEO of AT&T Wireless, is here—for committing more than \$1.4 million to increase access to the tools of the high-tech economy. I want to thank America Online—George Vradenburg of AOL is here—for providing more than \$1 million in grants to help narrow the digital divide. I want to thank Oxygen Media on the cable network it will launch next year. They will offer high-tech training on TV, so more embarrassed adults can learn what their kids already know. *[Laughter]*

This is the kind of thing we have to do. If we have money capital and human capital, we can bring hope to the places that have been left behind.

The last thing I want to say to you is this: This tour, this last four days that we have all spent together has been a significant step toward opening America's new markets. But it can't be the end of the journey. It has to be, instead, the opening salvo of a battle to build a real economy in every community in this country. The real measure of our success is not whether CEO's join the President on a trip like this which moved the nation, but whether the same CEO's and others will return to those markets and move the lives of the people there.

So I say to you, you have to do that. The real test of the success is not whether I've got a legislative idea, but whether Congress will set aside its partisan differences and put that idea into law so we can have more investments in these communities.

Next week I will send our new markets legislation to Congress. Over the next several weeks we'll announce a new national effort to promote the business link partnerships, pairing big businesses with smaller, often disadvantaged companies, an idea the Vice President has so strongly championed.

And this fall we're going to take another tour. I am going to start in Newark to challenge the owners of professional sports teams and professional athletes to follow the example set by the

owners of the New Jersey Nets—Ray Chambers and Lew Katz—who set up the ownership of the Nets in a way that 35 percent of the profits of the franchise are reinvested in downtown Newark, to give the future to the people there. You might know that the Nets have now—those gentlemen have joined in a joint partnership with the New York Yankees, they now have a big partnership, and they have dedicated a significant percentage of the profits of the joint venture to reinvest in inner-city New York, in the Bronx, and in Newark.

So I'm going to go up there. I'm going to highlight what they're doing. I'm going to see what we can do to help. And we're going to make another round here to show people that there are things that we can do together that are both morally right and good business.

Often on this trip, Reverend Jackson has referred to the fact that Dr. Martin Luther King, just before he was killed, thought that he had done about all he could do to get the legal changes necessary to get rid of the stain of racial segregation and that the great disadvantages and discrimination still alive in America could only be eliminated if there were a new alliance of people across racial lines to create genuine economic opportunity for all Americans.

It's hard to believe, to somebody like me anyway, at my age, that it has now been more than 30 years since Dr. King was killed and his dream was put on hold. One of the lesser known passages in his famous speech at the Lincoln Memorial in August of 1963 involved language in which he challenged America, and I quote, "to refuse to believe that there are

insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity in this Nation."

Well, my fellow Americans, today, those vaults of opportunity are more full than they have ever been in the entire history of this country, and we have more evidence than we have ever had that, when children like those that we talked about today and when young people like those we celebrate today—Hazel and her peers behind me—do well, we are all strengthened; that there is a fundamental sense in which our futures are bound up together, from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Native American reservations to the inner cities to the wealthiest corners of our land.

All our kids need a chance to live their dreams, and the American dream needs for all Americans to be blessed by the opportunity that has given so much to us.

Thank you for what you do to achieve that goal, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Pacific Ballroom at the Anaheim Hilton and Towers Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to award winner Hazel del Rosario; Mayor Tom Daly of Anaheim; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Sanford I. Weill, chairman and co-chief executive officer, Citigroup, and founder and chairman of the board, National Academy Foundation; Marianne Spraggins, senior managing director, Smith Whiley and Co.; and George Vradenburg III, senior vice president for global and strategic policy, America Online, Inc. (AOL). A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on the Patients' Bill of Rights in Torrance, California

July 9, 1999

Thank you very much. Well, good morning, and I want to thank Tecla Mickoseff for welcoming us here to Harbor-UCLA. Thank you, Ethel, for your powerful statement out of your personal experience. I want to thank my old friend Jack Lewin for, as usual, making the case. We're used to being in fights where the evidence is overcome by political power. [Laughs] But we're determined to reverse it in this case.

I want to thank Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald; my friends Zev Yaroslavsky and Yvonne Burke and the mayors and other local officials who are here. I thank the leaders of the health care groups that are here, both consumers and providers. Thank you, Reverend Jackson, for coming. We're glad to see you this morning.

I have a couple of things I want to say about health care and about how this Patients' Bill

of Rights issue fits into our larger responsibilities to deal with the health of the American people. I have just finished a trip across our country, from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation to inner-city neighborhoods in East St. Louis, Illinois; south Phoenix; and Los Angeles. The purpose of this was to shine a spotlight on the opportunity which exists in areas that our prosperity has completely passed by.

It was a remarkable 4 days, and I came in contact with all the health issues that you would be concerned about in the process of pushing an economic agenda. For one thing, when we left Washington and arrived in Appalachia and arrived in the Mississippi Delta and arrived in East St. Louis and arrived in Phoenix, in all those places, it was 100 degrees. [Laughter] It was cool in Dakota when we got there at night, but the next day it was a mere 94.

And I'm very worried, I must say—I want to say this today—I've been very concerned because a lot of poor people depend upon the LIHEAP program, the low income health assistance program, to pay for air-conditioning or get fans in the summertime. And I have today directed the appropriate people in our Federal Government to expedite the analysis we're required to do about the effects of the recent heat wave on the need for emergency assistance under this program. We could lose a lot of people who won't even get to the emergency room if we don't do it. So I do want you to know that I hope the message will go across the country to the places I visited and the other places that we know this is going to be a problem.

When we went on this tour, we saw an awful lot of problems, and we saw a lot of promise, enough promise to convince us all that we actually can succeed in building a bridge to the 21st century that all Americans can walk across. When we give economic opportunity to all, we're helping to build that bridge. When we give all of our kids a world-class education, we're helping to build that bridge. When we're dealing with health care challenges, we're helping to build that bridge.

Jack mentioned the Medicare proposal that I have made to stabilize the Medicare Trust Fund until 2027, provide a prescription drug benefit that we can afford, and provide much more preventive services, which I think are very, very important. There's a fundamental difference.

Now, how does the Patients' Bill of Rights fit into all of this? I feel in a way that I have a special right, if you will, to advocate for this bill because I have defended the role of managed care in our health care system for years. When I became President, health costs had been going up at three times the rate of inflation for many years. And all of us knew it was totally unsustainable, that eventually, if it kept going up at three times the rate of inflation, we'd be spending all our money on health care.

We all knew that was completely unsustainable and that there was nothing wrong with managing a system properly so that you could, at the lowest possible cost, achieve the objective, which was the highest possible quality of health care. And yes, at the margins, there will always be tough decisions, but fundamentally, no one who both believes in the American health care system and the professionals who provide that health care and who believes in proper management, believes you should sacrifice basic quality of care to the decision made by an accountant to make the bottom line of an HMO bigger. The purpose of managed care is to enhance quality of care by making it as affordable as possible, not to undermine quality of care by making the people who provide managed care as profitable as possible, and it's very important. There's a fundamental difference.

So, as has already been pointed out, I asked the Congress a year and a half ago to pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, with all the things you've heard about: the right to see a specialist, the right to emergency room care at the nearest emergency room, the right not to have to change health care providers in the middle of treatment, the right to enforce accountability for harmful decisions. And I have used my authority as President, as you said, not only to cover by Executive order those people on Medicare with the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights, but also those people on Medicaid, those people served by the Veterans' Administration, and the people in the Federal health insurance plan, the Federal employees and their families.

And I want to just tell you that we actually now have some experience with the Patients' Bill of Rights. You know, the HMO's say, well, this all sounds very good, but we can't afford it, and if you—and they always try to make you think only of yourself, your healthy self—if you, your healthy self—[laughter]—who never

gets sick but has to pay health insurance, give these Patients' Bill of Rights to them, all those sick people, you—your healthy self—will have to pay more for health insurance, and oh, how terrible it will be. That's their argument, right?

Well, we actually have done this now, and we have evidence—and sometimes evidence overcomes interest groups in Washington, so let's talk about the evidence. Our evidence is that when we put the Patients' Bill of Rights into the Federal employees' health plan, it raised the cost of health insurance by less than a dollar a month.

Now, I'm going to go over this one more time. You've already heard—I'm going to go over it one more time, and I'm going to ask every American if he or she wouldn't be willing to pay something in that range on the off-chance that their healthy self might not always be that way and out of a genuine concern for our fellow citizens and an understanding that the wealth and power and strength and quality of life of our country depends in no small measure on the continued advances in the health of all Americans.

And yes, some States have done some things in this area. But until Congress acts, there will be more than 100 million Americans who won't have these full protections. I can only give it to 85 million by Executive order. So next week, at long last, the Senate is going to take this up. I'll say more about that in a moment, but thank goodness, the Senate finally is going to take this up.

Last year all year, the leaders of the Senate kept us from bringing the bill up, and there's a good reason why they did: They're not for it, but they know they can't afford to be caught being against it. We have 200—200-plus medical and consumer groups are for the Patients' Bill of Rights. The American Medical Association has allies it has never had before. [Laughter] This is a very big tent. And there is only one group on the other side, the health insurers. It's 200 to one, but the one is a big one, and so far has had enough support in the majority party in the House and the Senate to keep this from coming up.

But if you go out in the country, I have said this over and over and over again, if you go out in the country, this is not a partisan issue, because Republicans get sick just like Democrats. Even stubborn independents sometimes get sick. [Laughter] And when you walk into

the emergency room—I would really like to know whether she's got a form she fills out in the emergency room that has a check for political party. [Laughter] "Now, before I give you this medicine, are you a conservative or a liberal?" [Laughter] You know, we're laughing about this, but it makes a very important point. This is not a partisan issue, this is not even a philosophical issue, not anywhere in the wide world but Washington, DC.

If you explained all the options to all the people in all the communities of this country, I promise you over 70 percent of Republicans, Democrats, and independents—you know, when you got above those stratospheric numbers, maybe there would be some partisan difference—but you'd have over 70 percent of all groups for this. How can it be that, for over a year, the American people have been deprived of even a full debate on this in the United States Senate?

Well, as I learned and Jack learned back in 1993 and '94, these folks have a lot of clout. But let's forget about the politics and look at the facts. I want to run through this; look at this chart over here. I wish every American could just have this chart at home. If I had the ability, through the Internet, to send this to every American, I would do it.

Our plan says, if you need to see a specialist, you can't be denied the right to see a specialist. Their plan doesn't give you that right.

Our plan says, if you get hit driving out of this event today, on a hot Saturday morning in Los Angeles, you ought to be able to go to the nearest emergency room, not show up there and be told you've got to drive 25 miles to one that your plan covers. This is a real issue, as you know.

Our plan says—and I was so glad to hear you mention this—that if you're being treated with chemotherapy or if you're six months pregnant and your employer changes providers, you should be able to stay with the physicians that are treating you until the treatment is completed—hugely important issue that most Americans are not aware of.

Our plan assures HMO accountants don't make arbitrary medical decisions. Now, let me just say, I've listened to a lot of stories about this. I've done a lot of research on this. A lot of times, the HMO decisionmaking tree—you finally get high enough to get a doctor who makes the right decision, and it's too late.

And I've said this over and over again—I'm actually sympathetic with a lot of people at the first line of decisionmaking in the HMO. Why? They're not doctors, and they're never going to get in trouble with the company for saying no. Right? They know—I'm sympathetic with them. A lot of them, they're making a modest income, they're looking forward to their Christmas bonus, they want to please their employer like we all do. You're my employer; I want to please you. [Laughter] We're all like that. And these young people who are working in these companies, they know they are not going to get in trouble for saying no, because they know if they say no, the decision can always be kicked upstairs, and maybe it's three levels upstairs, but eventually, somebody who actually understands this is going to make a decision. And if they say yes, then they won't get in trouble for having said no; but, ah, if they say yes, and somebody above them says, "You should have said no," they can get in a world of trouble.

So we try to fix that here and change the incentive so that there is no institutional bias to deny quality care. Should the health plans be held accountable? I think so. The framers of the Constitution understand that a right without a remedy is not a right at all. And should they cover all health plans? Absolutely. The other bill leaves out 100 million folks.

So that's what this is about. The "yeses" and the "noes." It's simple evidence. It's about how people live. And yes, the health insurance association may have some of its profit margin squeezed. And yes, they may have to have modest increases, like we did—the Federal employees' health plan—I'll tell you it's less than a buck-a-month policy. That's what our experience is. But isn't it worth it to allow the system to work, to keep the benefits of managed care without having to shoulder these enormous burdens, these heartbreaking burdens?

I don't know how many people I have seen—I've seen nurses who work for doctors in their offices, who have to make the calls to the HMO's to get told no, break down and cry, telling me stories of people that they couldn't take care of. You know, these are not just isolated anecdotes. This is a systematic problem in American health care, and once we fix it, all the people will be happy. The HMO's will do just fine, and they'll be happy we did, and people will wonder what in the wide world we

were doing all those years not providing these basic protections.

Think of how you'd feel if you were a doctor. You'd spend all those years going to medical school, all those years in residency, you go all those years without any sleep, and you're finally out there giving health care, and all of a sudden you're told, here's a strait-jacket we'd like you to wear to work every day and still figure out how to make these people well. I mean, this is a big, big, big issue, and it should not be played out in a partisan, political, or special-interest atmosphere. Shouldn't we err on the side of health? What are we afraid of?

I saw today an amusing article in the paper which said that the leaders of the majority party had decided that instead of bringing up their bill and having to deal with 20 of our amendments, which would put people—force them to put their Members on record being against these things, they would bring up our bill and just beat it, in the hope that then there would be no specific record of accountability.

I thought to myself, what kind of a weird world am I living in? If this was just about something we had an emotional opinion about, and we were on different sides, I would think that would be a clever thing to do, and that's just politics. This is not whether you've got an emotional thing. This is about whether some people live and some people die. This is about whether people get well or they don't. This is about whether people feel at least comfort when they're dealing with the challenges of life or they're just knotted in anxiety all the time. This is about whether all these doctors, these nurses, these health care professionals wake up every day happy to go to work because they think they're going to be able to do their job or they're waiting for the other shoe to fall every single day because somebody is trying to strangle their ability to make decent decisions. This is, in other words, not a typical political decision. This is about life and the quality of life and the fundamental decency of our society.

We should err on the side of humanity. We should err on the side of quality health care. We have evidence now from our own experience that we can well afford to do this. And this is an idea whose time has long since come, and there are Members of Congress in the Republican Party, as well as the Democratic Party, who support this, who just want a chance to

vote for it and bring the benefits of it to the American people.

You know, it's like anything else. You can argue against anything on the grounds that it's not perfect. Well, if we never did anything because it wasn't perfect, we'd never do anything, and America wouldn't be here celebrating the 21st century. We wouldn't be around after 223 years. The Constitution wasn't perfect. It had to be amended.

So it is not an argument to vote against this bill, that it might not be perfect, that there might be some unforeseen consequences that we might have to fix. We take our cars to mechanics to fix things that aren't perfect, but we don't stop buying cars and go back to walking around. [Laughter] I mean, none of these arguments make any sense at all.

We have to put people and principle and evidence ahead of raw political influence. Democracy has to work.

So, I thank you for being here. Remember, we're all preaching to the saved in this room today. Reach out to other Members of Congress. Send a note or an E-mail today or Monday morning to every House Member that represents anywhere around here, and both your

Senators are for this bill; that's great. Send it to Senators from other States. Give people a chance to do the right thing. Tell them what's at stake.

If people will listen to their hearts and their heads, we'll prevail next week.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:54 a.m. in the Parlow Auditorium at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. In his remarks, he referred to Tecla Mickoseff, administrator, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center; Ethel Edmond, registered nurse, King Drew Medical Center; Jack Lewin, executive vice president and chief executive officer, California Medical Association; Los Angeles County supervisors Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, 2d district, and Zev Yaroslavsky, 3d district; and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson. The President also referred to the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP); and his memorandum of February 20, 1998, on compliance of Federal agencies with the Patients' Bill of Rights (*Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1998 Book I* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), p. 260).

Interview With Jesse Jackson of CNN's "Both Sides" in Torrance

July 9, 1999

New Markets Initiative Tour

Mr. Jackson. Welcome to "Both Sides." Last week there was a phenomenal mission across our Nation led by President Clinton—a kind of journey from Wall Street to Appalachia to the Delta to Indian reservations to Watts to south Phoenix, across the country, building that bridge to share the wealth, the growth, the prosperity—called a new markets initiative. This week we have as our very special guest, our esteemed Mr. President, President Bill Clinton. Welcome.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Jackson. In this trip last week—Hazard, Kentucky; Appalachia; the Delta; East St. Louis; Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; south Phoenix; Watts; Anaheim—what stuck out in your mind the most?

The President. That in all those places where our prosperity has not reached, there are good people, smart people, people with dreams, and good opportunities for American business. This is a moment when we can do what is morally right, to give everybody a chance to walk into the 21st century together, and do it in a way that will actually be good for the American economy and good for the people who invest there.

Mr. Jackson. They've missed this booming prosperity. Is something wrong with the people?

The President. I wouldn't say something's wrong with the people. A lot of them don't have as much education as they need, and that's part of our strategy to do better, and they're going to have to have specific job training skills. But what happened is that all these places either

never had a self-supporting economy, or the basis of economic life which once was there moved away, and nothing was ever brought in to replace it. And now, we've got a chance just to keep our own economy going, just to keep our own economy going with no inflation, we have a chance to bring investment to these areas, put these people to work, give them better lives, and in the process, help everyone else in America.

Mr. Jackson. But last week there were Republican and Democratic Congresspeople on the trip; there were corporate business leaders, Democratic and Republican.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Jackson. They seem to have found a common accord on this idea of new markets. The War on Poverty seemed to—would have been divisive: poverty, reaction; affirmative action, division, reaction. But new markets seem to have bound Appalachia and Delta, black, white, red. What's kind of magic about this notion of new markets initiative?

The President. Well, first of all, it's not charity; it's a hand up, not a handout. Secondly, the people who are being asked to invest in these new markets should do so with the expectation that they will actually make a profit out of it, that by helping people in areas which haven't participated in this prosperity, by starting businesses, giving people jobs, having these job training programs, they'll actually make money.

Mr. Jackson. So it's a kind of war for profits, not just a war on poverty?

The President. That's right.

Mr. Jackson. And therefore, you incentivize broadening the base of investment?

The President. We're not asking anybody to do anything that isn't a good business decision. It's a good business decision, and that's one of the things—you know, we saw that everywhere. Every place we went—do you remember that little—that first place we visited in Appalachia, a guy starts out with 40 employees; a few years later, he's got 850. And yes, you know, Appalachia's fairly isolated, but he makes those parts and—those various component electronic parts—and he's got 850 people. He's fixing to expand again because of the incentives that he has in our empowerment zone program that the Vice President's run for us for the last 6 years. That's the kind of thing we want to go nationwide with.

We believe if we give, in the new markets initiative, if we give the same tax credits and loan guarantees to Americans to invest in America's new markets we give them to invest in new markets in Africa, Latin America, Asia, or the Caribbean, that our people will do very well.

Mr. Jackson. You take, for example, the black and brown market alone is maybe \$800 billion in consumer power. How has corporate America—what has been missing? How have they missed these markets—markets, money, talent—right under their noses?

The President. I think there are two reasons. I think, first of all, they've been doing very well by doing what they're used to doing and expanding in ways they're used to expanding, so our economy's grown quite a lot in the last 6 years.

Mr. Jackson. Even though they've missed markets?

The President. Yes, by taking the nearest thing at hand, the thing they're used to doing. Secondly, I think that there is something that the economists would call, in purely economic terms, imperfect knowledge. That is, I think that a lot of people really don't know how well they could do if they gave people in inner-city America, in rural America a chance. I think they just don't know. Which is one reason that it was so important that these business leaders went on the trip. You know—remember, when we started out, the chief CEO of Aetna life insurance company said, "You know, I may not be happy about this, because I had this deal figured out, and now all my competitors are going to know there's money to be made out here."

Mr. Jackson. So something about imperfect knowledge and our cultural blindness, we just don't even look toward those unexplored markets.

The President. Well, when you see a place so depressed for so long, or you see the figures and the education levels low, or you look at the maps in and out of a place and you realize it's physically isolated, and you think, "I've got all these other ways to make money that are near at hand," you don't get around to it. But now, the unemployment rate in America has been under 5 percent for 2 years. Everybody is wringing their hands, you know, from Wall Street out here to California, about how can we keep this economic growth going without inflation. The answer is invest in these places.

Mr. Jackson. It's interesting, in politics there's a zero-sum game. You have 435 Congress seats; you might change faces, but the seats don't change, and so it's forever tight and competitive. But in economics, inclusion leads to growth.

The President. That's right.

Mr. Jackson. And it seems that they have missed growth. In baseball, for example, we thought we had a great major leagues before we let Jackie Robinson and Campanella and Hank Aaron and Willie Mays in. But once they opened up the market, they now will go to Cuba; they'll go to the Dominican Republic and find Sammy Sosa; they'll go to Japan. The basketball team, now we'll go to Yugoslavia, go to Croatia—that the baseball owners seem to have gotten it; the basketball owners seem to have gotten it; now the rest of corporate America must get that inclusion leads to economic growth.

The President. And the important thing in your sports analogy is that as we have broadened the pool of talent, we've had more teams. There are now more baseball teams than there used to be. There are more basketball teams than there used to be. More people get interested as you broaden the pool of talent, and you get more people in. That's what is happening here.

So that if somebody invests in these new markets, they don't have to quit investing where they were. This is not a zero-sum game. You're right; we'll just widen the circle of opportunity.

Mr. Jackson. But why are they so much more likely, say, to invest in Indonesia, Taiwan, South Korea, Eastern Europe, than in Appalachia or East L.A., in south Phoenix? What is the incentive factor there?

The President. I think that we look at Indonesia—let's just take Indonesia. We look at Indonesia, and we say, "Gosh, there's a market of 200 million people. It's the biggest Muslim country in the world, fairly moderate country historically, although they've had some problems lately, and we'll invest there and we'll sell to that market."

What we miss in America is that if you put people who are unemployed to work in distressed areas, you create a new market, first. Second, as you just pointed out, even in places with very high unemployment—if you go into an inner-city neighborhood with 15 percent unemployment, that's high; that's 3 times the national average plus. That still means 85 percent of the people are working there; they've got

money to spend. In almost every city in America in the inner-city areas, the people have more money to spend than they can spend in their neighborhoods.

Mr. Jackson. That means breaking down stereotypes. For example, if you look at Hazard, Kentucky, you look at Watts, most poor people are not on welfare.

The President. They're working.

Mr. Jackson. They work every day, and most are not black or brown; they're white—

The President. That's right.

Mr. Jackson. —female, young, invisible. So perhaps when you speak of markets, you kind of transcend the color/cultural barriers that divide and make people terribly anxious.

The President. Yes, I think that's really important. One of the things that we've felt, I think, all of us in this week, is that—like there in the Mississippi Delta, we were walking down the street in Clarksdale—you've got an African-American Congressman and a white mayor, and they're working together. I met in a store with an African-American woman and a Chinese grocer who had been in that community for 40-plus years. This is a way of bringing people together. It's about much more than money. It's about cementing a quality and fabric of life that is absolutely essential.

Mr. Jackson. What is it about this period that allowed this mission to go from Hazard, Kentucky, Appalachia, to Clarksdale, Mississippi, to the reservation, and yet there was no evidence of racial rancor or division? What was it about this period that allowed at least that body of people to look toward another agenda, another formation of problem solving?

The President. First of all, I think the American people—it's a great tribute to the people in those areas that they've kind of gotten beyond that, and they understand that if they can build a common economic framework, they can build a home together in their communities.

Secondly, I think the business leaders who went, the political leaders who went were genuinely intelligent, savvy, and human people who saw that they could do the right thing and do very well.

Mr. Jackson. You know, when you were speaking to the Native Americans in Pine Ridge, and one of the corporate business leaders looked out, and he saw the 7,000 people, and he said, "I've always just seen Indian reservations"—which meant something—but he said, "Now, I

see two supermarkets. I see a car dealership. I see 7,000 people wearing clothes. I see a market." He had never seen them as a market; he'd just seen them as Indians.

The President. Yes, and a lot of these people, if we put more stores, for example, in these Native American areas and hired the people there to work in the stores, then even in—and they're the poorest parts of America; they have the highest unemployment rate—but if you get their unemployment rate just down to 20 percent, then you have 80 percent of the people working and you make a whole market. So by creating the jobs, you create the market to buy the products that the jobs provide.

Mr. Jackson. What I thought was kind of mystical to me, frankly, was when we left Appalachia and got to Memphis, and after we had eaten at the Blues Cafe and had big fun eating much too much—

The President. We did that.

Mr. Jackson. —and you, on one of your sleepless nights, decided we were going to go to the Lorraine Motel. We went through this whole museum, Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tennessee. We ended up in the spot that Martin Luther King was killed, and there you stood, and we prayed, and there was a somber spirit.

But what struck me about it was that what you did this past week was to fulfill Dr. King's last great mission. He knew that slavery was the race gap; denial of public accommodations, the race gap—we won that public accommodations bill—the lack of the right to vote, the race gap.

We now argue that that was a resource gap, it was a North-South resource gap, not just a race gap. So his last great movement was to pull together people from Appalachia, Al Lowenstein, Jewish allies from New York, Hispanics from the farm workers, from Chavez; he pulled all these groups together, and that was his last great mission, was to tour these areas to focus on a shared resource gap. So in some sense, this week, you've fulfilled that last leg of his journey.

The President. If we can make that so, I would be very proud, because he was right about that. You know, it's funny how much time we lost as a country after he and Senator Kennedy were killed, because both of them were trying to—I remember when Bobby Kennedy went to Appalachia, went to the Indian reservation in Pine Ridge in '68. They understood that

the last shreds of our racial problems would be mired forever in our economic insecurities until everybody has a chance to make it. And now, our country has this phenomenal prosperity for which we are very grateful, but interestingly enough, it is becoming the enlightened self-interest of the investor community to keep this thing going, to finally—

Mr. Jackson. Sow profits, not fear.

The President. That's right. Finally, to give all these folks a chance to play again.

Mr. Jackson. Now that you have put the light on it—I mean, a Presidential entourage creates that—you put focus on America's underserved markets, its underutilized talent, untapped capital. We saw in Clarksdale, Mississippi, a man and his wife, both of whom are Stanford graduates, MIT engineers, graduates—

The President. Yes.

Mr. Jackson. —selling McDonald's.

The President. McDonald's, yes.

Mr. Jackson. Very talented people, and that was—they found a niche there. But now, you put light. What must the Congress do to make this real? And then what must the business sectors—we have focus; we need legislation, and we need business. What's the next two pieces?

The President. Congress should do two things. First of all, they should fund the second round of these empowerment zones, because in the empowerment zones, we give special tax incentives for people to put business there and to hire people from there, and we give the communities extra money to educate and train people—first thing. And the Vice President's done a great job of managing that program. In addition to that, we have some more money for these community development banks. They give capital to first-time business people who couldn't get it other places. That's the first thing.

The second thing that Congress should do is to pass the new markets legislation which, as I said, basically gives American businesses the same incentives to invest in poor areas, urban and rural, in America that we today give them to invest overseas.

Mr. Jackson. What do we give them overseas?

The President. Well, we give them tax credits; we give them loan guarantees; we give them other things to try to lower the cost of capital.

Mr. Jackson. OPIC and the like?

The President. Right. Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Export-Import Bank.

Mr. Jackson. So you propose APIC—American Private Investment—

The President. American Private Investment Companies, and here's how it would work.

Mr. Jackson. Do you think it would pass, likely to pass?

The President. I think so. I mean, the Republicans ought to love it because it's a tax incentive thing, you know, it's not a big Government program. But here's how it would work. Suppose you and I were trying to build a shopping center development in East St. Louis, where we visited, and suppose the costs of that were—I'm making this up—about \$300 million, and suppose we could raise \$100 million in capital. Well, if we could do that, we could get a 25 percent tax credit with that \$100 million investment, which takes our risk down to \$75 million right off the bat. We've only got \$75 million at risk, not \$100 million. We could then go borrow the other \$200 million from the bank with a Government guarantee on the borrowing, which would dramatically cut the interest rates and save us another several million dollars over the life of the project.

Mr. Jackson. So you've got tax incentive, investment incentive, and loan guarantees and markets.

The President. That's right. So, first of all, you've got a profit opportunity. We're not asking anybody for charity here. If there's no opportunity there, don't do it. But if there is an opportunity but you're worried a little about the risk, we will cut the relative risk of this investment, as compared with others, with the tax incentives and loan guarantees. It's a real good deal.

Gun Control

Mr. Jackson. We've found, in each of these markets, invariably two new buildings, a new ball park and a new jail. In all of these schools where we visited, the schools were unwired. Those in the jails, 90 percent are high school dropouts; 92 percent are functionally illiterate. The question of lack of education can breed the crime thing.

Senator Bradley put an article in the Post this week about proposals to reduce guns. Just briefly, he says that we should ban the distribution and sale of "Saturday Night Specials," registration for all 65 million handguns, a licensing and safety course for everyone who owns guns, ban gun dealers from selling guns in residential

neighborhoods, insist on mandatory gun locks. Are these commonsense measures from your point of view?

The President. Sure. You know, we've got the gun locks provision in the Congress, and that still might pass. But I have said, we ought to have registration. We register our cars. If your car gets stolen while you're doing this interview with me, and somebody drives it halfway across the country and leaves it in a parking lot—let's say in Lincoln, Nebraska—and the police find it, as soon as you report your car stolen, it will go into an international computer system. As soon as he, the person who finds your car in Lincoln, Nebraska, says, "Here, I've found this stolen car, and here is the license plate and the registration," within 30 seconds, the local police in Chicago will be able to call you and say, "Reverend Jackson, we found your car." And so, of course we should do these things.

Mr. Jackson. So the drive to reduce easy access to guns and gun registration and gun education become factors in reducing the—

The President. Yes. And I think it's interesting—I think the NRA ought to support this. I don't think it's in their interest what they're doing, because nobody's trying to say we shouldn't have hunting and sport shooting. And if I were, they never listen to me, obviously, but I used to work with them sometimes in Arkansas. One of the best things they ever did were their hunter education programs, and they really try to teach young people to safely use firearms. Why shouldn't we say, if you're going to have a gun and you're a young person, you ought to be licensed and you ought to be taught how to use it; they would teach it.

Mr. Jackson. But you don't hunt rabbit with AK-47's.

The President. No, you don't. Well, we ought to ban those. You know, I'm in favor of getting rid of all that and all those big clips and all that kind of stuff. But if they have those guns, they ought to be able to use them, and NRA ought to be out there certifying teachers to teach them. If somebody steals your gun, you ought to be able to find it, just like your car. Then the other thing I disagreed with them about, we ought to close the loophole on selling these guns at gun shows and flea markets in big cities so that the same background checks are done. These background checks work; we keep those guns out of the wrong hands by doing that.

Hillary Clinton's Possible Senate Candidacy

Mr. Jackson. In this dialog, we've talked about all of the easy stuff, I mean, how to wipe out poverty without wiping out the poor, how to begin to close the resource gap and the skills gap. Now, the ultimate question: Is Hillary going to run for the Senate? [*Laughter*]

The President. I honestly don't know. She's having the time of her life in New York this week, and the people have been very good to her. And if she decides to do it, I will strongly support her in every way I can. She would be a fabulous Senator if she decides to do it. I honestly don't know what she's going to do, but she's obviously interested in it. If the people of New York were to vote for her and elect her, she would be magnificent.

Mr. Jackson. So you don't think the Presidential issue will last in the heat of the campaign?

The President. No, I didn't say that. I think that she believes that it's a legitimate issue; at least, she believes that if she presents herself as a candidate, she would have to demonstrate to the voters of New York that she understands the State, that she is capable of learning about all the local issues, that she cares about them as well as the big national things on which she and I spent our lives. And so that's why she's up there on her listening tour. And she's going to go back every week this summer.

Mr. Jackson. How do you think she has done this week on her listening tour? Because she's had to do some talking while listening.

The President. I come back at night from our tour—I'd come back at night and flip on the TV and see what she had done, and I think she's done really well. I'm really proud of her. If this is what she wants to do, I'm 100 percent for it.

Mr. Jackson. When do you think she will decide?

The President. I think she wants to complete this—I think she at least wants to complete her summer schedule and listen to these folks and assess where she thinks it is. But I'm happy for her. It's a very exciting thing.

New Markets Initiative Tour

Mr. Jackson. Let me say to you, I thank you for this interview. This trek around America was most historic this week because we measure our strength politically by following opinion polls about how well Wall Street is doing, but you

made the point over and over again that in the end you measure character by how you treat the least of these. And your dissatisfaction with 15 million children in poverty and 40 million without health insurance, your discomfort level with the poverty-stricken is a great moral statement and challenge for all of us.

I hope that in this season that we can, in some bipartisan basis, move from the bickering racial battleground to economic common ground, a kind of—I lived in Mississippi and saw whites and blacks on a shared economic security agenda, you know, Patients' Bill of Rights and increased teacher pay and cut the infant mortality rates. I mean, it seemed that is—this is a certain pregnant moment with possibility that all of us should seize.

The President. You know, the thing that was so touching to me—and we got out there in the country—you know, there were a lot of Republicans with us as well as Democrats, and in these areas we went, we met a lot of Republicans as well as Democrats.

These issues, these sort of common ground economic issues—I don't think there are partisan issues out there in America, and if we can keep them from becoming a partisan issue in Washington, then I'm going to reach out to the leadership of the Republican Party in Congress next week to talk to them about this trip and ask them to help me pass something that will really make a difference out there.

Mr. Jackson. So beyond the historic economic petitions and political petitions and racial petitions, you see this bridge building as ultimately your legacy, building bridges to the underserved, the unutilized, and the untapped.

The President. Yes. I think that this country ought to go whole into the new century, and we can't do it if not everybody has a chance to make a living, get an education.

Mr. Jackson. Well, thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you. Thank you for going with me. You were fabulous.

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 11:35 a.m. in Room 213 at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for later broadcast on CNN. In his remarks, the President referred to Richard L. Huber, chairman and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc.; Representative Bennie G. Thompson; and Mayor Richard M. Webster, Jr., of Clarksdale, MS. The transcript was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 8 a.m. on July 10.

A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

The President's Radio Address *July 10, 1999*

Good morning. Today I want to talk to you about our Nation's duty to ensure that all America's seniors can enjoy their golden years as healthy as modern medicine will allow. I want to talk about my plan to strengthen and modernize Medicare and the important steps we can take to encourage older Americans to undergo health screenings that can save their lives and improve the quality of their lives.

For 34 years now, Medicare has been the cornerstone of our efforts to protect the health of the disabled and our seniors. Last month at the White House, I unveiled a fiscally responsible plan to secure and modernize this vital program for the 21st century. The plan will strengthen Medicare by controlling cost, promoting competition, and dedicating a significant portion of the budget surplus to keeping the Trust Fund solvent until the year 2027. And my plan will modernize Medicare by matching its benefits to the latest advances of modern medicine.

Since Medicare's founding in 1965, a medical revolution has transformed health care in America. Once the cure for many illnesses was a scalpel; now, just as likely, it's a pharmaceutical. That's why I made helping seniors afford the prescription drugs essential to modern medical care a key part of the Medicare plan.

But even as we modernize Medicare with the prescription drug benefit, we also must modernize Medicare's preventive care benefits. Today, doctors have new tools to detect and prevent diseases earlier and more effectively than ever. And for millions, early detection can mean the difference between a full recovery and a bleak prognosis. For instance, if prostate cancer is caught early, the survival rate is 99 percent; but if it isn't, the rate can be a discouraging 31 percent.

In 1997 we worked across party lines to expand Medicare coverage for preventive services. But too few seniors still are using this benefit. Last year just one in seven older women re-

ceived a mammogram covered by Medicare. For many seniors on fixed incomes, who every day must struggle to pay for food, rent, and other necessities, the cost of even a modest copayment can be prohibitive, and that can cost lives.

It makes no sense for Medicare to put up roadblocks to screenings and then turn around and pick up the hospital bills its screenings might have avoided. No one should have to undergo a dangerous surgical procedure that could have been prevented by a simple test. No senior should have to hesitate to get the preventive care they need. That's why my plan will eliminate the deductible in all copayments for all preventive services, for cancer, diabetes, osteoporosis, and other diseases.

And because 70 percent of beneficiaries still do not even know about all of Medicare's preventive services, we'll launch a nationwide campaign to inform and encourage seniors to take these tests. We'll keep looking into ways to improve preventive care for seniors, including strategies to help them stop smoking.

In the meantime, I call on older Americans to take advantage of the preventive benefits that already are available to you. They could save your life.

We must seize America's moment of prosperity to strengthen and modernize Medicare for the 21st century. There are some who propose spending our new budget surpluses on tax cuts. Well, I support tax cuts for retirement savings, for child care, for education, but it would be wrong to spend our hard-earned surplus on tax cuts before we first have honored our obligations to our seniors and to all our families in the 21st century. First things first.

I've invited leaders of both parties to meet with me at the White House on Monday to discuss the urgency of acting on Medicare now. We have an unprecedented opportunity to prepare Medicare and Social Security for the retirement of the baby boomers and to pay down our debt, to make America debt-free over the

next 15 years. We can't let this opportunity slip away. Together, we can find a way to make this summer a true season of progress for all Americans.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:20 a.m. on July 9 in Room 210 at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks to the China and United States Women's Soccer Teams Following the World Cup Final in Pasadena, California

July 10, 1999

The President. I want to say to the whole team how much we admire your performance in the whole World Cup. You were magnificent today, and we were very honored to have you in our country. You will win many more games.

[After greeting China's team, the President proceeded to the locker room of the champion U.S. team.]

The President. Let me say one thing. First of all, I think everybody in the whole stadium was weeping with joy. It was the most exciting sports event, I believe, I've ever seen. We were so very proud of you.

I also want you to know, I just went in to see the Chinese team. I told them what a magnificent game they played, how honored we were to have them in our country. And they could not have been more generous. They said how well you played and that you deserved to win. I mean, it was an amazing day.

We learned a lot today about soccer, about women athletes, about courage and endurance, and about genuine sportsmanship. I cannot thank you enough for the gift that you have given to the United States, which is even bigger than this great trophy. *[Applause]* Wait, wait, wait.

And you see I brought a lot of people here who are big fans of yours, but I'd like our host Governor, the Governor of California, to say——

[At this point, Gov. Gray Davis of California made brief remarks.]

NOTE: The President spoke to China's team at approximately 4:30 p.m. in a locker room at the Rose Bowl. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Governor Davis. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Death of James L. Farmer

July 10, 1999

Hillary and I were greatly saddened to learn of the death of James Farmer, one of this century's pioneers for freedom. As the leader of the Congress of Racial Equality, he stood on the frontlines of the struggle for justice. At historic sit-ins, freedom rides, and countless picket lines, thousands of citizens risked their lives on behalf of basic rights, led by the inspiration of James Farmer. Their effort changed America.

Through a long career as an activist, public servant, and educator, he never lost sight of the shining goal of integration and racial equality. He never stopped working to build one America. I was privileged to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom last year. James Farmer helped to make America a better nation. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family and many friends.

Interview With Bob Herbert of the New York Times in Anaheim, California

July 11, 1999

[The interview is joined in progress.]

New Markets Initiative

The President. —the successful work that's been done in the empowerment zones by these community development financial institutions. If you look at the banks that have vigorously pursued the Community Reinvestment Act and what they've been able to achieve, there is a lot of evidence that this will work.

Secondly, this is not like either the Great Society of the sixties or the great neglect of the eighties; this is about getting good jobs into the inner cities and the rural areas by building an economic infrastructure that is part of the private economy, where the primary role of the Government is to, through tax incentives and loan guarantees, reduce the relative risk and to provide and to support these intermediary institutions so—like the community development banks and the microenterprise loan programs, where there are relationships with people in the community, so good decisions will, in fact, be made. And there's just a lot of evidence that this works, not just in the United States but all over the world.

And what I'm trying to do with this tour is to, building on what we've already done, show the investor community in America and the business community that there are a lot of good opportunities out here in the cities and in the rural areas, and secondly, to try to highlight the need for this new markets legislation which will, unlike the empowerment zones of the community development financial institutions, be nationwide in scope. It will be available to investors in every underdeveloped area in the country whether or not they have a community development bank, whether or not they have an empowerment zone or an oppressed community, whether or not they have any of these other things. And it emphasizes the most important thing, which is incentives to get that first equity capital to start the investment.

Essentially, what none of these programs in the past have ever seriously done is to try to build a self-sustaining economic infrastructure. So that's why you see these apparently con-

tradictory numbers. You see wages for the lowest income workers finally going up again substantially over the last 2 years; you see the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, but you still see these pockets of real difficulty because there is, in these places, no indigenous economy.

Mr. Herbert. What do you say to those Americans who are already doing well, especially Republicans? What do you say to them? Why should they get behind an effort like this? Why is it good for them?

The President. I would say three things. Number one, anybody who has done as well as most of them have done in the last 6½ years ought to want other people to do better. They ought to feel like they should do it. But if they don't feel that way, the second thing I'd say is, there is money to be made out there. You know, the Aetna chairman who went with us on the first half of the trip, he also took our little advance trip down to Atlanta, you know, when we were down in the market down there, and he made a joke. He said, "I may be the only guy that's not happy about this, because I had this figured out, and now all my competitors are going to find out." There's money out here to be made by creating businesses and jobs and tapping the consumer markets.

The second thing I would say is, even if—to a Republican who would not invest in this area, even not getting money, I would say they ought to think about the larger economy. How can we keep the economic growth going the last 6½ years? We've already got the longest peacetime expansion in history. Soon, if we—knock on wood—can keep it going, it will be the longest expansion in history. How are we going to keep growth without inflation?

The answer, it seems to me, is there are only three options: We've got to sell more American goods and services around the world, which is why I think—and most of them agree with that.

Secondly, you can bring more discrete groups of people who are outside the work force now into the work force so there will be workers and consumers; that's principally the remaining people on welfare and the disabled. You know,

we had this big initiative before the Congress—I think is going to pass—to legislate when people take their Medicaid insurance in the work force.

But by far, the biggest opportunity is the third one, which is to find new markets here at home, basically to both create producers and consumers in the areas of our country which have not participated in this recovery. That is a non-inflationary way to continue to grow the economy, to continue keep the unemployment rate down.

Tax Cuts and New Markets Initiative

Mr. Herbert. The Republican Party would like to pull a large tax cut out of the surplus. What are the implications of that for this effort that you've been spotlighting for the past 4 days?

The President. Well, I think they, of course, could include my tax cuts and loan guarantees along with what they want. The larger implications are that if you look at their tax cut, what it will do is, if you pay for their tax cut and their defense proposal, it would restore the deficit and dramatically cut our investments in these areas, in education, in health care and the environment, and in medical research and everything else. I think that's also important.

I don't think we should stop investing in these areas. If you look at the program we just visited, one of the problems that's held a lot of these areas back is the enormous premium that goes to education in the world we're living in, with the economy that's emerging based on information technology. So here you've got all these inner-city kids—that handsome young man that's going into the Army today, that is working that computer program to set up international trades from his Los Angeles—his Watts high school, was once a gang member. So I think it would be a terrible mistake to walk away from our education obligations. And it would be, I think, very dumb to restore the deficit if we can avoid it.

You know, the Republicans have made a lot of money out of our economic policy. That's one reason they can afford to finance their campaign so generously; they've done well. And now they say, "Okay, you've made us a lot of money; now we want to be in power again and change the economic policy." [*Laughter*]

Think about this. If we kept on the path we're on now and we paid the deficit off—I mean, we paid the debt off and we essentially were

debt-free in 15 years, that's a bigger boost of money in the pocket to the people who would benefit from their tax cut than their tax cut would be. Keep in mind, I'm for a tax cut, too; I just think it ought to be affordable, and I think it ought to be targeted to the people that need it most.

But if you look at this—if we sent a signal this year to the markets we were going to be debt-free in 15 years, and yes, it might not—I know, I've read all these stories saying, "Well, but you won't have 15 years of constant growth." That's true. But all these projections are based on an average rate of growth which allow for good years and bad years.

So if we sent that signal to the markets, then—and, you know, we start materializing and playing down this debt, it keeps interest rates lower. That means ordinary people get money in their pockets: lower home mortgages, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments. It means that business investment is less expensive, so there will be more of it, and incomes will be higher, and growth will be more; it means we will be less vulnerable to things like the turmoil that gripped Asia 2 years ago; and it means that since we won't be taking that money out of the world economy, when other countries who are our trading partners and who are poorer than we are get in trouble, they'll be able to get money more cheaply because we won't have to be taking it away from them to pay for our debt.

So I think, to me, this is clear, that if you're imagining what the 21st century economy will be like 20 years from now, that the richer states will need to be as nearly debt-free as possible so that when they borrow money, they're borrowing it for something like dramatically improving their infrastructure or rebuilding all their schools and cooking on computers or something like that. But on a year-to-year basis, the richest countries ought to be debt-free so the countries that need to borrow money to elevate their standard of living and also be trading partners for the richer countries can do so at less cost and with less turmoil. And it will be better for the ordinary citizens in the United States for all the reasons I said. So that's my answer to the Republicans.

Hillary Clinton's Possible Senate Candidacy

Mr. Herbert. And final quick question—Mrs. Clinton's run for the Senate. Are you guys—

and welcome to New York—but, two, are you guys committed to living in New York if she loses this Senate race?

The President. She decided, irrespective of the Senate race—I told her when we moved here, I said, “You know, ever since you came to Arkansas in 1973, we’ve lived where my work dictated and where I wanted to move. When we get out of here”—this is a 1993 conversation we had—“when get out of here, I’m going to have to spend a lot of time at home because I’ve got to build my library and my center there, and”—but I said, “but I will live wherever else you want to live.” And she told me years ago that she wanted to go to New York. And I said that’s fine with me. I love New York. I’d be happy to live there. It would be fine. So I’m going to divide my time between New York and Arkansas no matter what happens.

I talked to her three times yesterday; it was really, I think, an exciting day for her. She felt really good about it.

Mr. Herbert. Tough for a New York reporter—I’ve got to decide whether to cover her or cover you.

The President. She’s a better story now.

Mr. Herbert. She’s a great story.

The President. She’s a better story, but this is an important story, what we’ve been doing these last 3 days. I’m so thrilled. I hope I can persuade them to adopt the legislation by the end of the year. But I think all these business guys get interested; it’s really amazing. There is no partisan difference on this in the business community, and a lot of these guys that were with us in the last 2 or 3 days are Republicans. They’re just excited about it. They think it’s the right thing to do, and they think they can make money doing it. So do I.

Mr. Herbert. Thank you very much.

The President. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 11:30 a.m. on July 9 in the Presidential limousine en route to the Hilton Anaheim. In his remarks, the President referred to Richard L. Huber, chairman and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc. The transcript was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 6 a.m. on July 11. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Statement on Releasing Funds Under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

July 12, 1999

In much of our Nation, the early part of summer has brought a chance to explore the outdoors or enjoy a day at the beach or lake. But in large parts of the eastern United States, these first weeks of summer have brought record high temperatures, extreme discomfort, and for some, severe danger.

Up and down the eastern seaboard, and as far west as Michigan, temperatures over the past 2 weeks soared to levels more than 30 percent higher than average for this time of year. Temperatures that hit the nineties and beyond can pose grave risks to the elderly, the very young,

the disabled, and the ill. Tragically, this heat wave has already claimed the lives of more than 100 people.

Today I am releasing \$100 million to help low income Americans in the affected areas cope with this terrible and life-threatening heat. These funds will help victims of the heat wave pay for the costs associated with home cooling, so that they are able to purchase air conditioners and fans and pay their electricity bills.

These resources will help protect the most vulnerable among us as the current heat wave runs its course.

Statement on the Congo Conflict Cease-Fire Agreement

July 12, 1999

I salute the leaders of Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DROC), Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda, and Zimbabwe for their courage and commitment to peace in agreeing to the terms for a cease-fire in the Congo war. The signing of this agreement in Lusaka on July 10 provides hope for the many innocent civilians who have suffered through one of Africa's most dangerous and divisive wars in modern times.

Zambian President Chiluba also deserves special tribute for his role in mediating and facilitating the Lusaka peace talks and for his continuing efforts to urge rebel factions to support the cease-fire agreement. I urge all rebel groups

to commit to peace and sign on to this important accord.

We have worked with all parties to encourage the resolution of their differences through dialog and negotiations. We will work closely with our partners in Africa, the international community, and the United Nations to support this agreement. We hope that its full implementation, including the disarming of those responsible for the Rwandan genocide, will end the cycle of violence in the region, pave the way for an inclusive democracy in the DROC, and help bring a better life for all the people of central Africa.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia Budget Request

July 12, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 202(c) of the District of Columbia Financial Management and Responsibility Assistance Act of 1995 and section 446 of the District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganization Act, as amended, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Request Act.

This proposed Fiscal Year 2000 Budget represents the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor, the Council of the District of Columbia, and the District of Columbia Financial Respon-

sibility and Management Assistance Authority. For Fiscal Year 2000, the District estimates revenue of \$5.482 billion and total expenditures of \$5.482 billion, resulting in a budget surplus of \$47,000.

My transmittal of the District of Columbia's budget, as required by law, does not represent an endorsement of its contents.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 12, 1999.

Remarks on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

July 13, 1999

The President. Thank you very much, Senator Daschle and other Members of the Senate who are here. I would also like to thank the health professionals who have joined us: Beverly Malone, the president of the American Nurses Association; Dr. Michael Rapp, the president-elect

of the American College of Emergency Physicians; Dr. Omega Silva, a board member of the American Medical Women's Association; Dr. Gary Dennis, the president of the National Medical Association. They represent over 200

medical, consumer, and citizens groups who endorse our legislation.

You heard Senator Daschle say that it has been almost 2 years since we started the call for the Patients' Bill of Rights. Ever since, we have been gratified by the enormous outpouring of support from professional as well as consumer groups. Now, after months and months and months of delay, the Republican leadership in the Senate finally has agreed to allow an open debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights; and I must say, it has been very enlightening.

The American people have waited a long time for this day, and we must not let this opportunity slip away. All Americans in all plans must have these basic rights; that's what this is about. Are you for or against all Americans and all plans having these basic rights: the right to see a specialist; the right to go to the closest emergency room; the right to remain with your health care provider throughout a medical treatment, whether it's a pregnancy, chemotherapy, or some other course of treatment; the right to hold a health plan accountable for its decisions if they are harmful?

Senator Daschle's bill would make each of these rights the law of the land. It is strong, meaningful, effective, and if you talk to people who have been affected adversely by the way HMO's too often operate in this country, it is long, long overdue.

Now as you know, there are some who will try to substitute the Republican leadership's own bill. As Senator Daschle has explained, it is watered down; it is nowhere near what the American people deserve or need. Not only does it offer merely toothless and half-hearted protections, it fails to protect all Americans in managed care. We estimate now that there are 110 million Americans who would not be covered at all by this bill.

Already the opponents are resorting to this \$100 million scare campaign. They allege that a strong Patients' Bill of Rights would cause premiums to rise beyond the reach of average Americans. They are wrong. As Senator Daschle said, the Congressional Budget Office—now, we all remember, going back to 1995, from the day the Republicans assumed the majority in Congress, how they have said we must always rely on the studies of the Congressional Budget Office. We always have to rely on the CBO's figures. But now when the health insurance companies say, "We don't want you to rely on

the figures anymore, and we're spending \$100 million to discredit the HMO figures that the same Republican leaders have held up as the gospel truth for 4 years now"—they say it would cost no more than \$2 a month.

And I would remind you that we have some evidence here. I put in place, by Executive order, the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights for all those covered by the Federal employees health insurance plan, and it costs less than one dollar a month to implement. So we have evidence, and we have the study of the group that Congress says we should rely on for all of our figures; that is, unless the health insurance companies decide differently.

Now, this is not about dollars; this is about people. It's about whether the people of this country come first in the votes of the Congress of the United States. The people deserve a bill that protects them, not the insurance companies. That is why every single doctors organization, every major nurses organization, every major consumer group stands with us today.

Now we're going to have an honest debate. It should be open, and it should be complete. No cynical, parliamentary maneuver should bypass the need of the American people to know exactly where and why every Member of Congress stands on every issue.

The American people deserve to know whether the Senator they elected is for or against the right of people to see a specialist. They need to know whether every Senator is for or against the right of a doctor to decide and stopping the right of an HMO accountant to delay—sometimes indefinitely, often until it is too late—the right of a patient to see that specialist. They need to know whether every Senator is for or against the right of somebody who is hurt in an accident to go to the nearest emergency room and not have to bypass one or two or, in the case Senator Dorgan cited yesterday, three emergency rooms before getting emergency treatment. They need to know whether you are for or against maintaining the same doctor during a pregnancy or a chemotherapy treatment if your employer happens to change insurance providers during the course of that treatment. And they need to know whether they are for or against the right to correct and to get remedies when you are hurt by harmful decisions.

This is not complicated. This is not rocket science. And it is very real for the American

people out there who feel they have lost control of their ability to have a secure relationship with their health care providers. This is about the way people live; and we now know that it would not be prohibitive in cost, but it could save a lot of lives and untold misery.

So let's have a clear decision. We've waited a long time for this day, and the American people are entitled to know where their Members stand and why.

Now let me say again, this is not a partisan issue anywhere in the United States of America outside Washington, DC. Democrats, Republicans, and independents all get sick. They all have accidents; they all need doctors; and they all have pretty much the same opinion of whether this bill should pass in the form that Senator Daschle has presented it. This is only a partisan issue in Washington, DC.

We have found common ground on health care before. We did provide the right to keep your health insurance when you change doctors—excuse me—when you change employment. We did provide the right of up to 5 million children to get health insurance. It is unconscionable that we would say—here we are in the last year of the 20th century—that we would say, with all the miracles of modern medicine, “I am sorry; we have found it necessary to allow health care to be organized in such a way that doctors can no longer tell you when you need a specialist”; that “I’m sorry; no matter how badly hurt you are, you may not be able to go to the nearest emergency room”; that “I’m sorry; no matter how difficult a chemotherapy or pregnancy treatment is, you may just have to change doctors in the middle of the stream”; and “I’m sorry; no matter how badly hurt you are, your insurance company should decide whether you get remedies or not.” We don’t need to say that.

The Congressional Budget Office, held up as the sacred authority on financial matters by the Republican majority, says this wouldn’t cost more than \$2 a month a policy. And I’m telling you, there is no excuse for not passing it. I hope the Congress will pass this. The Senate has got to lead the way, and I thank those Members who are here with us today for fighting for all the American people. This is an American issue, not a partisan issue, and it ought to be that way when the votes are counted.

Thank you very much.

Q. What’s your prediction? What’s your prediction on the Daschle bill? Will it pass?

The President. I don’t know—

Q. You don’t know?

Q. Will you veto the Republican bill? Would you veto the Republican bill?

The President. I don’t know what my prediction is. You know, you would think that it would be a no-brainer. You would think—70 percent of the Republicans in America—in America—support this Patients’ Bill of Rights. So, 200 medical and health care organizations and consumer organizations support it. Senator Daschle says that health insurers are spending \$100 million to beat it, and we’re having all these scare tactics, and people are saying, “Oh, the States can take care of this.”

Let me tell you something. I used to be a Governor, and if I were still one, we’d have the strongest bill of rights I could possibly pass through my legislature. But the States cannot cover everybody, number one; and number two, what they have done is a total patchwork that does not provide any uniformity or protection. Now, I was a Governor for 12 years; I know what these States have done. That is a hollow argument. It is not true. This is one of those things that can only be taken care of this way.

Now, you have all these scare tactics. Every time we try to do something, we have this kind of tactic. This is what we heard when we passed family and medical leave. Every piece of social advance we’ve had, you have these kind of scare tactics. But these folks have \$100 million to spend on this and lots of other money, as well. So you know, it’s just not right.

And I figured when the CBO came out with their study, as much as all of us heard about the CBO for the last 4 years, that would close the door. But this is not about the evidence, this is about political power in Washington trying to shut off something that is manifestly in the best interests of the average citizen of this country, and not just the average citizen, every single person covered by an HMO. And I feel that I have some standing to say this, since I have consistently said that good HMO’s can manage health care better, ever since I got here. But this is wrong. It is just wrong.

And all of these stories that our side on this issue are recounting, all these human stories, to hear the others sort of dismiss this as sort of anecdotes and accidents and odd-man-out stories is ridiculous. This is the way the world

works for people out there who feel they have lost control of their most basic needs in life.

And I would just ask every person in America who watches this, who has ever had a child, to think: How you would feel if your child was riding on a bicycle one day and got hit by a car and had to pass two emergency rooms before he or she could get care? How would you feel if your husband was at work being treated, in his thirties or forties, for cancer, with your whole life still before you, and the employer changes treatment—and then they tell you in the middle of the treatment you've got to change doctors? Or if your wife was 6 months pregnant and had a difficult pregnancy and was told the same thing? Just ask yourself how you would feel. And there is nothing on the other side of this.

We have the study now from the CBO, and we have the evidence of the Federal health employment plan which led to increases in pres-

miums of less than a dollar a month. That's what our costs were. How would you feel? And I want to ask all of you who are reporting this—you can't be biased; you have to give their side and ours. But just ask yourself, how would you feel? That's what's happening in America today, and we're here to try to do something about it. And God willing, and the creek don't rise, we'll do it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for Miami Beach, FL. In his address, he referred to his memorandum of February 20, 1998, on compliance of Federal agencies with the Patients' Bill of Rights (*Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1998 Book I* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), p. 260).

Remarks to the Communications Workers of America Convention in Miami Beach, Florida

July 13, 1999

Thank you for that wonderful welcome. You, in particular. [Laughter] Thank you, President Bahr, Mrs. Bahr, members of the executive committee. President Sweeney, it's great to see you here, to see all of you out here and all of those behind. I always knew the CWA was behind me, but when I saw so many people up here, I thought it was a literal truth today. [Laughter]

I want to say I also believe that two gentlemen who came with me are still here, Florida representatives, our Democratic Congressman, Representative Alcee Hastings, and Attorney General Bob Butterworth. I welcome them here.

I came here, first and foremost, to say a simple thank you. Thank you for what you do to make America great. Thank you for what you have done for me and the Vice President. Thank you for the help you have given us to move this country forward.

Harry Truman once said, whenever labor does well, the whole country does well. As usual, he was right. You prove it. The CWA is stronger than it's ever been, and America is more pros-

perous than it has ever been. The bounty we enjoy today is in no small measure the result of your hard work, every day programming computers, manning customer service centers, electronically filing news stories, running MRI machines, laying the very cable of the information superhighway. The CWA is building the new economy of the 21st century.

In that endeavor, the Clinton-Gore administration and our allies in Congress have been your partners. Remember what it was like when I became President 6½ years ago? Unemployment was high; the deficit was huge and rising; poverty and inequality were increasing; our social problems were getting worse. We promised to make a new covenant with the American people: opportunity in return for responsibility; a community of all Americans; and a Government committed to giving the American people the tools and conditions they needed to solve their problems and make the most of their own lives.

That strategy was set in motion with our economic plan in 1993. In the years since, we have turned the red ink of deficits into the black

ink of surpluses, lowered interest rates, and fueled an economic expansion of truly historic proportions. Meanwhile, we've nearly doubled investment in education and training; put more police on the street and taken more guns out of the hands of criminals; invested more in technology, medical research, in cleaning up the environment; passed family leave and other family-friendly measures, including substantial tax cuts to help families pay for college and to help families raise their children. We showed, in other words, that our Democratic administration could balance the budget while honoring our values.

Now, because we believe it is wrong for any child to be without access to the Internet, one of the greatest vehicles of opportunity the world has ever seen, we created our E-rate program to make sure every classroom—thanks to the leadership of Vice President Gore—every classroom in America can be hooked up to the Internet by the year 2000. We're well over half way there now, and I thank you for your role in that. I also want to thank Morty Bahr for serving on the advisory council on the national information infrastructure, which laid the groundwork for the E-rate program, which has brought discount after discount after discount to poor schools and libraries throughout America to make sure everybody can afford to be part of the information superhighway.

Now, because we believe all Americans should have the means to upgrade their skills, we unveiled in January a new initiative to offer literacy and job training to every single working American who needs it now and who will need it in the future. And again, Morty Bahr was there with me at the unveiling, having served on our 21st century work force commission.

And now, because we believe that to be secure means meeting the challenge of the aging of America by reforming Social Security and Medicare, providing more health care security, more retirement security, and strengthening our economy, we have put forward a sweeping proposal to use most of our surplus for these purposes.

Today I want to talk to you in detail about the challenge of strengthening and modernizing Medicare for the 21st century. The simple problem is that more Americans are living longer. That's a high-class problem. But with the baby boom retirement just ahead of us and more Americans living longer, the number of Medi-

care beneficiaries is simply growing faster than the number of workers paying into the system. By the year 2015, the Medicare Trust Fund will be insolvent, just as the baby boom generation begins to retire and enter the system, eventually doubling the number of Americans over 65 by the year 2030.

Over the last 6½ years, we've taken some important steps to strengthen Medicare. When I first became President, Medicare was scheduled to go broke this year. We've helped to extend the life of the Trust Fund to 2015 by fighting waste, fraud, and abuse, and taking tough action to contain costs, in 1993 and in 1997.

But we must do more, not only to extend the solvency of Medicare but to ensure that its benefits keep up with the advances of modern science. No one, for example, no one would devise a Medicare program, if we were starting from scratch today, without including a prescription drug benefit. It wasn't as important back in 1965. Many of the drugs we now use to treat heart disease, arthritis, and other conditions didn't even exist back then when Medicare was first created.

When it comes to securing health care and its benefits, nobody—nobody—has done more than the CWA. When it comes to controlling health care costs and maintaining quality of care, no union has worked harder or more cooperatively with employers and insurers than the CWA. What you have done for your retired members, we as a nation must now do for all our senior citizens.

Last month I set out a plan to secure and modernize Medicare. Here are its elements:

First and foremost, my plan would provide what every single objective expert has said Medicare must have if it is to survive: more resources to shore up its solvency. The plan would devote 15 percent of the Federal budget surplus over the next 15 years to Medicare to extend the life of the Trust Fund to 2027.

Second, the plan will use the force of competition and the best practices now in the private sector to keep costs down without sacrificing quality.

Third, the plan will allow Americans between the ages of 55 and 65 who don't have health insurance, on the job or in their retirement, to buy into Medicare in a way that does not compromise the solvency of the Trust Fund. This is a huge issue today, with more and more

early retirees and others who don't have health insurance and simply cannot afford it in the private marketplace in the years when they may be most vulnerable.

Fourth, the plan will modernize Medicare's benefits to match the advances of medical science. For example, almost every week, researchers seem to develop a new preventive screening to catch diseases in their early stages. Unfortunately, the copayments Medicare charges for these tests leads many seniors struggling to pay rent and utility bills to put off getting those tests done until it's too late. It makes no sense for Medicare to put up roadblocks to screenings and then turn around and pick up the much more expensive hospital bills the screenings might have avoided. That's why our plan will eliminate the deductible and all copayments for all preventive services. We pay for it by requiring modest copays for lab tests that are often overused and indexing the very modest part B premium.

But we must help. If we're going to do this right, we must help seniors to meet their greatest growing need, the need for affordable prescription drug coverage.

Now, many of our friends in the other party say, "Well, a lot of seniors have drug coverage today." Well, that's right, a lot do. But 15 million don't, and more are losing it every single day; and a lot of them are paying an arm and a leg for very modest coverage. For those who have good plans, they're not having any problems because our plan on this is entirely voluntary. It provides voluntary prescription drug coverage, paid for largely with resources we will save from making Medicare more competitive and innovative, plus a small fraction of the surplus that is dedicated to Medicare.

This benefit will cover half of all prescription drug costs, up to \$5,000, when fully phased in, with no deductible at all, and all for a modest premium that will be less than half the price the average Medigap policy costs, and will not apply—will not apply—to seniors up to 130 percent of the poverty line. This is a good deal for America, and we ought to do it. It is a program our seniors can afford, provided in a way the rest of America can afford.

Nobody knows better the value of prescription drug coverage than union men and women who have fought hard for drug benefits more generous than those I'm proposing. But retired unionists are among the fortunate few. I say

again, nearly 15 million Medicare beneficiaries lack prescription drug benefits altogether. Nearly half of them are not poor; they're middle class Americans. With prescription drug prices rising, the pressure is on employers to cut back or eliminate prescription drug coverage, and it's becoming more intense. Much of that pressure is coming from competing employers who don't offer these benefits. You and your employers should not have to fight this battle by yourselves.

Of course, America works best when we work together to meet our common challenges. Yesterday at the White House, I met with leaders of both parties to discuss the budget and my plan for Medicare. I was pleased that Republican leaders expressed a willingness to work together with us. But they are putting together a tax plan today that leaves no resources available from the surplus for strengthening Medicare. That is why I am asking Republican leaders, in the interest of saving Medicare, to reconsider the size of their tax cut plan. First things first.

We worked very hard in putting this plan together to squeeze every penny of savings we could out of Medicare without harming the quality of care. But to extend the life of the Trust Fund for a quarter century without devoting a portion of the surplus to Medicare would mean—listen to this—would mean holding spending increases in Medicare to a rate that is more than 60 percent below what private insurance is expected to grow. It can't be done. That would severely cut both the quality and the quantity of health care available to seniors on Medicare, and that will not happen on my watch. I won't let it happen.

I am pleased that there does seem to be an agreement between the Republican leaders and our Democratic leaders and myself to devote that portion of the surplus attributable to Social Security taxes just to Social Security. But it is critical that we have a so-called lockbox that actually locks in the debt reduction that we get from not spending that money and gives the benefit of that debt reduction to Social Security, so that we can extend the life of the Trust Fund, as my plan does, the Social Security Trust Fund, to 2053, adding 53 years from here to there. That's important.

I'll be talking more about this later, but the Social Security Trust Fund is expected to last until 2035 now. It's even more important that we devote some of these funds to Medicare

right now because Medicare is expected to be insolvent almost 20 years earlier, in 2015.

We, as a nation, have got some big choices to make in the next few months. We've got to decide what to do with this surplus. Did you ever think a few years ago we'd even be having this conversation? We had a \$290 billion deficit when I took office; it was supposed to be up to \$380 billion this year. We quadrupled the debt—4 times—quadrupled the debt in 12 years. So I realize that it's tempting for a Congress to say, "Well, 16 months before election, let's do what is most immediately pleasing, whether it's right for America over the long run or not." This is a big test for us, for our wisdom, for our judgment, for our concern for our people and their future.

I think the right choice is to devote most of the surplus to saving Social Security and Medicare. Let me tell you and let me walk through this with you again because, under our plan, besides reforming and saving Social Security and Medicare, this plan will allow us to pay off publicly held debt to make America debt-free in 15 years for the first time since 1835.

Now, what does that mean to the Government? It means when you pay your tax money, we're not spending 13, 14, or 15 cents on every dollar of your taxes just to pay interest on the debt. It means that future tax burdens can be lower.

What does it mean to ordinary citizens right now and every year from now on? It means if America is on a path to becoming debt-free, interest rates will be lower. That means businesses can borrow at less cost. That means more new investment, more jobs, and more money for higher wages. It means average families can borrow at less cost. That means lower home mortgages, lower credit card payments, lower car payments, lower college loan payments. I'm telling you, the average family will save a whole lot more under this plan looking after our future than they will under the tax cut plan offered by the other party.

Now, because their plan spends almost all the non-Social Security related surplus on a tax cut, it would not only do nothing to restore Medicare; it would require deep cuts in those things we need to be investing the most in: in education, in hiring those 100,000 teachers, in medical research, in technology, in preserving

the environment, in modernizing our national defense. We won't have the money to do that.

And again I say, this is a mistake because our plan has a sizable tax cut, nearly a quarter trillion dollars for middle income families to meet their crucial needs for child care, for long-term care, for saving for retirement. It provides tax cuts for building world-class schools, for developing and installing new environmental technologies, for funding the new markets initiative, which I highlighted on my tour to the poorest parts of America last week, simply to say we will give you the same tax breaks to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas overseas. It is the right thing to do.

So here's the choice: We can save Social Security and Medicare and make Medicare better. We can make America debt-free, giving our children a stronger economy and all of you lower interest rates. We can still have a good-size tax cut, but not as large as the one the Republican leaders propose.

Again I say, their plan would spend almost the entire non-Social Security portion of the surplus on tax cuts. It wouldn't extend the solvency of Medicare by a single day. Depending on how they do it, it might not extend the solvency of Social Security by a single day. It would force drastic cuts in education, research and technology, defense, and the environment. It would mean not paying off the debt and leaving us and our children more vulnerable to higher interest rates, a higher level of Government spending for interest payments alone, higher taxes in years to come, a weaker economy, itself more vulnerable to the kind of global financial turmoil we've all seen in the last couple of years.

So that's the choice: an America debt-free, with Social Security intact and Medicare even better, and a substantial tax cut; or a return to the "spend now, pay later" approach that will not save and strengthen Medicare, may or may not lengthen the life of Social Security, will certainly cut education and other vital programs, and again I say, over the long run, will be far more costly to every person in this room and every working family in the entire United States.

I believe we all want—Republicans and Democrats and independents—the strongest possible America for our children. I'm encouraged by the tone and the substance of the meeting I had yesterday with the leaders of Congress

in both parties. So I ask again the Republican leaders in Congress, for the sake of saving Medicare and strengthening our future, to reduce the size of your tax cut and join us in putting first things first.

If we would sit down at the table like responsible family members and figure out how much it would cost us to meet our current obligations to education, defense, and other things, what we have to do to save Social Security and Medicare, not just for the baby boom generation but for their children and grandchildren who otherwise will be spending money they need to get along, to pay for education, to pay for the future on their parents, then we could figure out how much is left over for the tax cut. That's what I've tried to do, because I think it's the right thing for America. First things first, putting people first. It's the American way.

To my fellow Americans who may think that this is just one of those Washington debates, and one side makes their side sound good and the other side makes their side sound so good, and it's all just a bunch of politics, all I can offer is the record of the last 6½ years.

Think about it; with your help, we have nearly 19 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded. We have declining rates of teen pregnancy, smoking, and drug abuse. We have cleaner air, cleaner water, and safer food. We've got 90 percent of our children immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time. We've had 100,000 young people working in our communities in AmeriCorps, making America better and earning their way to college. The record indicates that when we say something is good for America's future, it probably is good for America's future.

That's why we're trying to pass this Patients' Bill of Rights they're debating up there today. Think how you would feel— that's what I asked the Senators to do today—think how you would feel if it was your child, your wife, your husband, and the question was, your doctor says you need to see a specialist and your HMO accountant says you don't. Should you have to hassle it out for 3 months? And then, if the damage is irrevocable, shouldn't you be able to hold somebody accountable? Think how you would feel.

Think how you would feel if—God forbid—you got hurt in an accident outside this convention hall and the ambulance had to drive you past two or three hospitals until they finally got to one covered by your HMO. Depending on what kind of injury you had, it could just be much more painful or terribly devastating.

Think how you would feel if your small employer changed health care providers in the middle of your wife's pregnancy or in the middle of the husband's chemotherapy treatment, and they said, "I'm sorry; I know this is traumatic. I know you're 6 months pregnant and you've had a terrible pregnancy, but here's a new doctor for you. I know your life is on the line and you've got great confidence in this doctor supervising your chemotherapy treatment, but here's a new doctor for you."

I just try to think about what's right for the American people. Oh, they'll tell you how much it costs up there. But we put in the Patients' Bill of Rights for the Federal employees; its cost, less than a buck a month a policy to comply with. The Congressional Budget Office says that, at the most, it would cost \$2 a month a policy. Don't you think it's worth \$24 a year to know that when you need to see a specialist, you can see one?

So that's what we're trying to do with our proposal to modernize schools, to finish hiring 100,000 teachers, to put even more police on the street, and take even more guns out of the hands of more criminals; and that's what we're trying to do by shining the light of enterprise and opportunity at America's poorest communities; and most of all, that's what we're trying to do with our plan to save Social Security and Medicare, provide that prescription drug benefit, and make America debt-free.

You know, in a year and a half, I'll retire with a pretty nice pension. I'll be all right, regardless. Thanks to the CWA, most of you will be all right, regardless. But you know, if we haven't learned anything in the last 6 years, it ought to be that the policies that help the least of us help all of us; that when we strengthen America's families and workplaces and communities, we're all better off.

A lot of people that have made a lot of money out of the stock market in the last 6½ years, when it's more than tripled, they'd have been all right if the stock market hadn't gone up. But they're a lot better off because the lives

of average Americans have gone up. That's why the stock market's done better.

And so again, I'll say to all of you, we've got this phenomenal opportunity, the opportunity of a lifetime, of a whole generation, to use the last 16 months of this century to get the 21st century off to a rousing start for America. We just have to be faithful to the covenant we made with the people in 1992. We have to put first things first. We have to put people

first. And if we do it, watch out, you ain't seen nothin' yet.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in Hall D at the Miami Beach Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Morton Bahr, president, Communications Workers of America, and his wife, Florence; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; and Robert A. Butterworth, State attorney general.

Statement on the Surrender of the Suspected "Railway Killer"

July 13, 1999

I want to thank all of the State, local, and Federal law enforcement officials whose hard work led to the surrender of the suspected "railway killer" earlier today. As a result of their determined efforts and the cooperation of Mexi-

can authorities, the suspect is now in custody in the United States. All Americans can rest easier knowing that law enforcement authorities will bring the full force of the law to bear in this case.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Paraguay-United States Extradition Treaty

July 13, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Extradition Treaty between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Paraguay, signed at Washington on November 9, 1998.

In addition, I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty. As the report states, the Treaty will not require implementing legislation.

The provisions in this Treaty follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States.

Upon entry into force, this Treaty would enhance cooperation between the law enforcement authorities of both countries, and thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts. The Treaty would supersede the Extradition Treaty between the United States of America and the Republic of Paraguay signed at Asuncion on May 24, 1973.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 13, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Weapons of Mass Destruction

July 13, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economics Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, in response to

the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons ("weapons of mass destruction") and of the means of delivering such weapons.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 13, 1999.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Coral Gables, Florida

July 13, 1999

Well, thank you very much. I must say, I have had a wonderful time in south Florida today, as I always do. I got to speak to the communications workers convention earlier today, and then I got to play golf with some of you in this room. I didn't play all that well, but I had a good time anyway. *[Laughter]* And now Coach Riley is giving me this Miami Heat gear, and I might say Hillary will be very jealous of me. She thinks that Pat Riley is the best looking person in the NBA. *[Laughter]* And we're thrilled by the success that you've had down here, Coach.

I have so many friends in this room, and I hesitate to even start to say any, but let me begin by saying, Alfie, you were there for me from the beginning, and you've been there—we've gone through some difficult times; and I want to thank you personally for the extraordinary effort that you made, with Mitch Berger and others, to resolve this issue of where we would go and how we would save the Florida Everglades. And now I think we're going to do it, and I thank all of you for being involved in this. I thank you.

I want to thank Attorney General Butterworth and Marta for being here, and Bill and Grace Nelson. And I almost never ran without opposition; I guess Bill's going to get through the primary without any. That's pretty impressive. That's the best way to run, I think. I want to say to all of you, that's a profoundly important

race in 2000. We have a lot of highly competitive United States Senate races. And who wins will have a lot to do with what our country will be able to accomplish in the first 3 or 4 or 5 years of the next millennium.

I want to thank Representative Carrie Meek and Representative Alcee Hastings for being here, and I want to thank them for their wonderful support over the years. I want to thank my good friend Adele Graham for being here, and with her daughter and her about-to-be grandchild—*[laughter]*—and her son-in-law. Thank you. Bob was reminding me, their 10th grandchild—it doesn't seem—I knew Bob and Adele when their kids were maybe not even all in high school. It seems impossible to me that they have or are about to have 10 grandchildren.

I'm here tonight also because this State's been very good to me, from 1991, in December, when I won the Florida straw poll, thanks to a number of you in this room, including Representative Elaine Bloom. I hope you're going to send her to Congress to join Carrie and Alcee. Pat was telling me he wanted to make sure the Democrats targeted Florida in the year 2000 because I argued with all the Democratic Party people in '92. I said, "We can win Florida." They said, "You're crazy." And we nearly did, in spite of everything. I think we spent \$3.50 here in 1992—*[laughter]*—and took a lot out and nearly won anyway. And in '96—we

had our first campaign meeting in 1995. I said there was one issue over which we will have no argument. The first meeting, 5 minutes into the first meeting, I said, "This year we're going after Florida, and we will win." And thanks to you, we did; and I thank all of you. So I'm very, very grateful to all of you for that.

And I'm also here because Charlie Whitehead has been my friend a long time. I'll tell you an interesting story. It's a little bit about human nature that you never forget. I first came to Florida to give a speech in 1981. Now, when I was invited to Florida to give a speech by Charlie Whitehead in 1981, he thought he was inviting the youngest Governor in America. Then we had the Reagan landslide, and it turned out he was inviting the youngest ex-Governor—[laughter]—in the entire history of the Republic, you know? [Laughter] You can't imagine what it was like back then unless you went through it, man. [Laughter] Our friends on the other side, some of them are fairly coldblooded, and the guy that defeated me terrorized—I had contributors, people I had actually appointed to office who were afraid to speak to me on the street. True story.

So I was rather amazed that anybody still wanted me to come to Florida and get a suntan. And so I came and I made the best little talk I could. Then I got reelected, and he invited me back in '83. And then I got to come back in '87. So I became a regular fixture at the Florida Democratic Convention, and I came to love it very much.

But I'll never forget the fact that when I was down and out and I didn't think I'd ever get invited to the smallest Rotary Club in my State again and my career prospects were something less than bright, Charlie Whitehead still wanted me to come to Florida to give a speech. And I will never, ever forget it, and I thank you.

Alfie told you why he's a Democrat. I thought he made a remarkable statement. Somebody asked me the other day what I thought about Governor Bush raising \$36 million. I said it just proves I didn't discriminate in my economic policies; they benefited the Republicans, too. [Laughter] And as far as I'm concerned, they can spend their money any way they wanted to. That was not part of my deal, but we helped to make it.

I've got a friend in New York who's a very wealthy and successful businessman, an ardent

Democrat, who's now going to every person he knows on Wall Street and saying, "Look, if you paid more taxes in 1993 than you made in the stock market, support the Republicans." [Laughter] "But if you made more money than you paid in taxes, you better stay with us, and it will keep going." So you might remember that, you all, when you're out there moseying around. [Laughter] You don't even have to give me credit for it. Just sort of mosey around and say it. [Laughter]

Anyway, I've had a wonderful relationship with this State. The last time I was here, I was at the Gays' home, and what a wonderful night we had there with so many of their friends. And we had great music. I think he had the Drifters there, and Willie got up and sang with them. He could actually leave his day job, unlike me. [Laughter]

I want to say just a few things to you tonight. I spent most of the 1980's, except for my brief period out of office, as a Governor. My seatmate for most of that time was Bob Graham. I think I served with 150 Governors. If you asked me to make a list of the five best I served with, he would certainly be on that list.

But we had an interesting time of it in the 1980's, in that Republican ascendancy, when we were out here in our States trying to make our schools better, trying to generate income, trying to build a future. And I spent a lot of time thinking about what makes America work, what were the challenges of our country, what should the Federal Government do, and what shouldn't it do. And in 1991, when I decided to seek the Presidency, I had thought for years and years and years not so much about what I would do but what I thought our country should do. And one of the reasons that I've been very pleased with the Vice President's campaign is that, alone among all the people running in both parties, he is the only person who said, "Now, before I tell you that I want you to vote for me, I want you to know what I intend to do if I get elected." And I think that's pretty important.

And so I said to the American people, I didn't think our country was headed in the right direction for the 21st century. Unemployment was high; social problems were worsening; there was a sense of drift in the country. And I asked the American people basically to embrace a vision of politics that was premised on some simple ideas. One is that we ought to be committed

to opportunity for every citizen who was responsible enough to deserve it. The second was that we ought to be committed to building a community that embraced every law-abiding American without regard to whatever differences they had in their God-given characteristics or their choices in life. The third was that the Government of our country ought to be smaller but more active, and ought to be focused not on trying to solve all the problems but being a good partner, giving people the tools they need to solve their own problems and live their own dreams.

And I said, if we did the right things and embraced some new ideas, I really believe that we could go into the 21st century with the American dream alive and well for everyone, with America coming closer together instead of drifting further apart, and with our country still the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity around the world.

Well, 6½ years later, I have been profoundly gratified by what has happened. Our country has nearly 19 million new jobs; the longest peacetime expansion in history; a 26-year low in crime; a 30-year low in the welfare rolls; declining rates of teen pregnancy, teen smoking, teen drug abuse; 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in our history; the highest homeownership in history; the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded; 100,000 young people have served our country and their communities through AmeriCorps and earned some money to go to college. We changed the tax laws now so that through tax credits we've really, literally, opened the doors of college to anyone who's willing to work for it. We set aside more land for preservation than any administration in the history of this country, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. And we've been a force for peace in the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Bosnia and Kosovo. It has been a wonderful ride, and for the role that all of you had in it, I am grateful.

Why am I here tonight? I'm not running for anything. I'm here tonight for two reasons. Number one, I don't want the country to go on idle for the next year and a half while everybody plays games about the next election. There's plenty of work to do, and everybody in Washington is still drawing a salary from you; therefore, we are expected to show up for work

every day. I do, and I want everybody else to do the same. And there are some big challenges out there.

The second reason is—and I will talk more about that in a minute—the second reason is, it is very important that we build the strength of the Democratic Party at the grassroots level so that every person can answer the question Alfie answered, each in your own way. Why are you here tonight? You're going to go about your life tomorrow morning. You'll come in contact with all different kinds of people. People ask you, "Why did you come?" You might say, "Well, it is a beautiful house." [Laughter] That would be a good reason to come, but it won't persuade anybody else. You need to know—and you can tell them what I just told you—that this is working.

And when people make their judgments in 2000, no one should believe that you're just riding on a clean slate, that there's no connection between the candidates and their ideas and what they're committed to and the consequences that will flow to the country. You can see it today in Washington.

We're debating the Patients' Bill of Rights. Two hundred organizations have embraced the bill, unanimously supported by the Democratic Senators, unanimously supported by our side: The American Medical Association and all of the other major doctors groups, the American Nurses Association and all of the other major health care groups, all the major consumer groups. The health insurers are on the other side. Why? They think it will erode their profits, and they're claiming—they're telling the American people that all these people that are in managed care plans, if we guarantee basic fundamental rights that we ought to be able to take for granted, your premiums will explode. This is just one of the issues that's before us.

What are those rights? Most of us probably have good health care; we don't have to worry about it. But I'm telling you, millions and millions and millions of people who are in managed care today do not know whether they can get to see a specialist if their doctor tells them they need it, or whether some accountant can tell them no, they can't. There are people in managed care plans today that if—God forbid—they should go outside and get hit by a car, they would have to go by one or two hospitals before they would finally get to a hospital emergency room covered by the plan. That's not right.

When people are hurt, they ought to go to the nearest health care, not the farthest because it's covered. There are people today who work for small businesses who, if the small business changes their health provider while a woman is 6 months pregnant, no matter how difficult the pregnancy, or a woman or a man is undergoing chemotherapy for cancer, might be told in the middle of the treatment they have to change physicians. And I don't think that's right.

Now, the Congressional Budget Office, which until this moment—until this very moment—from the day they got into the majority, the Republicans have said is the end-all and be-all, the authority on everything having anything to do with money—you ask Alcee and Carrie; they tell us every time, you know, whatever they say is what we do—so they said, if we guarantee these rights to all Americans, it might—it might—raise health insurance premiums by as much as \$2 a month. I think it's worth it to see a cardiologist or to keep your pediatrician or to keep your obstetrician or to stop at the nearest emergency room. There is no reason in the world that we shouldn't.

And it's another—going back to what Alfie said—my premise is, if you do what's right for the people, the country tends to do pretty well. Those of us who have been blessed with the means to make money or with good educations or with good positions in life, we tend to do pretty well, regardless. But we do a whole lot better when everybody else does well.

We have a big decision to make. Are we going to deal with the challenge of the aging of America now that we have this surplus? Did you ever think we'd be debating what to do with a surplus? *[Laughter]* When I took office, the deficit was \$290 billion; the debt total had quadrupled in the previous 12 years; we were spending 15 cents plus every dollar of your tax money on interest payments on the debt. Elaine will go to Congress, and first thing she'll have to do—she has all these things she'd like to do for you, whether it's investing money or giving you tax relief or you name it. Well, the first thing she has to do is to figure out how much of every dollar you pay in taxes you've got to take right off the top just to pay interest on the debt.

So, now we have this surplus, and I'm gratified that there seems to be agreement between both parties that we ought to take that portion of the surplus that's produced by your Social

Security taxes and set it aside for Social Security. Now, how we do that will make all the difference. But they want to spend the rest of it on a tax cut. And you know, it's getting close to election, and I'm sure it's popular, but I'd like to tell you what the consequences of that will be.

If we do it, there will be no new money put into Medicare. There's a representative here tonight who told me he worked for a hospital, and the hospital already is out \$6 million this year because we cut Medicare too much in the balanced budget amendment for a lot of urban hospitals that deal with a lot of poor people. That's true with a lot of teaching hospitals, a lot of university hospitals.

I propose to put 15 percent of the surplus into Medicare, provide a prescription drug benefit, to provide free preventative services so older people will go in and get all these tests and screenings and prevent themselves from getting sick. It doesn't make any sense for us—we don't pay for the preventive screenings, so people don't get them. Then they get sick, they go to the hospital, they cost 10 times as much, and we pay for that. Better to keep people well. So that's what I think we ought to do.

I also don't think we ought to cut education or our investments in medical research or technology or the environment or defense by the 25 to 35 percent it would cost to fund this program over the next decade. I think that's a mistake. I think that's a mistake.

But we have offered the American people a sizable tax cut, targeted at child care, to long-term care if your family needs it, to help all families save more for their retirement, to help build world-class schools, to give people the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in our inner cities and rural areas. You saw me visiting some of them last week at our Native American reservations.

I think they ought to have—every one of you in this room with money ought to have the same incentives to invest in those areas that you get today to invest in poor areas overseas. I'm not against that; I'm glad we invest in the Caribbean and Latin America and Asia and Africa. But I believe you ought to have those same incentives to invest in the Indian reservations, in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in inner cities in Florida, in New York, in California, and wherever else in this great country of ours. I think it's important.

Let me just say one other thing. If my plan gets adopted, we'll save most of this surplus for Social Security and Medicare. As we save it, our debt will go down, because we don't have to spend it right away. We'll run Social Security's Trust Fund out until 2053; we'll run Medicare out to 2027. It will be the first time in everybody's memory that it's been stable for that long. We'll be able to handle the retirement of the baby boom generation. The interest payments on the debt will go down, and we'll take the savings on the interest and put it into Social Security. And, guess what? For the first time since 1835, in 15 years, this country will be debt-free.

Now, why—and I'd like to tell you all, particularly those of you who are younger and have young children, why that's important. I predict to you that 10 years from now, when your 10 grandchildren are all getting up there, it will be the conventional wisdom all around the world that wealthy countries ought to be debt-free. Why? Because we live in a global economy; this money moves around; the interest rates are set by global movement. All of you know this.

If we are out of public debt, what it means is interest rates in America will be lower. That means more business investment, higher business profits, more money for more jobs, and higher wage increases. It means ordinary people have lower home mortgages, lower car payments, lower credit card payments, lower college loan payments. It means that our children and our grandchildren will have a more stable economy. It means, when the world gets in trouble like it did 2 years ago in Asia and there's a terrible financial crisis, we won't have to worry about it because we won't be borrowing money, and our friends we want to help will be able to get the money they need at a lower cost. This is a huge deal.

Now, all of this takes more time to explain than somebody saying, "Look, I'm going to take this surplus and put the part paid by Social Security into that and give the rest back to you in a tax cut." That just took me 5 seconds to say. It sounds great. But keep in mind, I'm not running for anything. But I do want to be able to bring my grandchildren to Florida someday and show them the things that I did when I was a young man here and tell them the stories about what you did for me and know they're living in America that is having its best days.

And I'm telling you—did you ever think we'd be sitting here having a national debate about what to do with the surplus? We can have a tax cut. The question is, how big can it be and still allow us to fulfill our fundamental responsibilities to make sure America is the strongest country in the world in the 21st century and every American, without regard to race or religion, has a chance to live out their dreams? This is the question before the Congress today. That is the question before the American people today.

I'm going to do my dead-level-best to work with the Republicans. I have told the Democrats, and I think almost all of them agree with me, that we should do this. There will be still plenty we disagree with by the 2000 election. Take it from me. *[Laughter]*

Florida is not known—for example, we have a 26 year low in the crime rate, right? Part of the reason is we put 100,000 police on the street, and we passed the Brady bill, which has kept 400,000 people with criminal records from getting handguns. Now, when we passed the Brady bill, I remember what the Republican leaders and the NRA said. They said, "This is a worthless bill because those criminals do not buy guns in gun stores; they get all their guns at gun shows and flea markets and stuff like that." So we passed the Brady bill—turned out they were wrong—400,000 people who shouldn't have handguns were trying to buy them at gun stores. And that's one of the reasons the crime rate has gone down.

But now we said, "Hey, you guys might have been right. Let's close the gun show loophole. Let's do the background checks at the gun shows and the flea markets." They said, "Oh, goodness, we couldn't do that," even though they told us 4 years ago that's where the criminals are buying the guns. Florida—no flaming liberal State, right? *[Laughter]* Left-wing, pinko Florida voted 72 percent in the last election to close the gun show loophole. We can't close it in the Congress for the country. Why? Because the leadership of the other party and the NRA won't let the rank-and-file Republicans vote for it. That's the truth.

In the Senate, 98 percent of our side voted to do it, and 90 percent of theirs voted against it. In the House, 75 percent—almost 78 percent of our side voted to do it, and 85 percent of their side voted against it. There are real,

significant partisan differences here, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, on how to keep America safe, and other things.

But you know, we're all going to get older. The baby boom is going to age. There will be twice as many people over 65 in the year 2030 as there are today. And whether we like it or not, we Democrats are going to get old just like the Republicans. *[Laughter]* And we are never going to have another time like this in our lifetime. We should not wait to save Social Security, to save Medicare, and to get this country out of debt. We shouldn't wait; we don't need to do that. We shouldn't wait to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We shouldn't wait to continue the improvements in education that we've worked so hard on the last several years. There will be plenty to argue about in 2000. So I hope we can do it.

But you ask me why I'm a Democrat. I'm a Democrat partly for the reason Alfie is. When ordinary citizens in this country do well, when poor people have a chance to work their way into the middle class, the rest of us who have been gifted and blessed and are lucky as sin, we do just fine, even better than we would if those folks were in trouble, first of all.

Secondly, life is about more than money; and when we live in harmony with our friends and neighbors; when we have a feeling that our society is just and moving in the right direction; when we know that people, who are less fortunate than we are, are going to have a chance to live out their dreams; and when we come into more contact with more different kinds of people, life is more fun, more interesting, and more rewarding. So all those things are terribly important to me. And when they ask you why you came, tomorrow, say you came because of those things. Say you came because our ideas worked, and say you came because what we're fighting for now is right.

Let me just say a few words—Alfie asked me to talk about the Cuban issue and the unfortunate incident with the people who were trying to come here. I'd like to put it into a larger context. One of the most frustrating things to me as President—people say all the time I'm a reasonably good communicator, but I don't think I've succeeded in convincing the American people entirely that America is living in a world that's increasingly interdependent and that our prosperity and our security and the quality of

our life is more and more caught up with how we relate to other people throughout the world.

I'm proud of the fact that we stopped the ethnic cleansing and slaughter in Bosnia in 1995, and I'm proud of the fact that we didn't let it go on for 2½ years before we stopped it in Kosovo. And that's a long way away. And you may say, "Well, that's a long way away." I mean, it's amazing; we lost no pilots in combat. They had far fewer civilian casualties than we would have had if there had been some massive invasion. But over 650,000 of those people have already gone home. Václav Havel, the great Czech President, great hero of liberty and human rights, said it was the most moral, selfless war ever fought, because the people who carried it forward, we didn't want anything; we didn't want territory; we didn't want power; we didn't want money. All we wanted was to create a world in which Europe could live without people being killed because of the way they worship God or because of their race or ethnic background.

We're trying to set up the same systems that will prevent that from happening in Africa. We're working today to diffuse the conflict between India and Pakistan. We're looking forward—I'm eager as a kid with a new toy for the meeting I'm going to have with the new Israeli Prime Minister this weekend, in the hope that we can begin to energize the peace process in the Middle East on terms that are just and fair and will guarantee genuine security for Israel and a way of living for the Palestinians that will bring reconciliation and a resolution of all these issues with Syria so that there can be peace in the Middle East. These are things I believe in, just like I believe we were right to expand trade.

I haven't convinced everybody in my party we were right about that. But if you think about it, we're 4 percent of the world's people; we've got 22 percent of the world's income. There's no way for us to keep 22 percent of the world's income unless we sell something to the other 96 percent of the world's people. To me, it's not rocket science, and I know there are difficulties, but we have to do it.

Now, one of the things that I've tried to do as President is to be more active with the Caribbean and with Latin America. I'm trying to pass a Caribbean Basin initiative through the Congress that will enable us to be better neighbors to our friends in the Caribbean.

I have had now the opportunity to participate in two Summits of the Americas. Every country in the Caribbean and Latin America is a democracy but Cuba, and it is a continuing frustration to us. We have an embargo, a tough embargo that's even tougher than it was before those people were shot out of the sky. And you remember that, just a few years ago, which led to the passage of the new legislation. There is no question that they were flat out killed illegally. It was wrong.

So what we have tried to do recently is to be firm with the Government of Cuba and make it clear that we can't be forthcoming until they change, but that we want to help the people of Cuba and their suffering and keep families here in communication, one with another. One of the most difficult things has been how to handle the people that want to get away, particularly when you know, well, from time to time they've been used as a political weapon.

So a few years ago, we reached an understanding with Cuba, and we've tried to use the Coast Guard, as Alfie said, as a lifesaver. We have, completely independent of that—and you should know this—completely independent of what is happening with Cuba, the United States has had more and more and more people come to this country, principally in California and New York, under the control of alien smugglers, cruel people who enslave people and bring them here.

So the Coast Guard, in part, I think, has tried to react more to try to cut down on alien smuggling. But what happened with the way those people were sprayed and all that, it was outrageous. I want you to know it was not an authorized policy. None of us knew anything about it in Washington until we saw it on the news or read it in the newspapers, just like you did. We have taken vigorous steps to make sure it does not happen again, and the incident is being thoroughly investigated.

So now we have to look and see whether or not the policy we have is manageable, given the problems that we're facing. But we still have to try to have a legal, orderly process by which people come from Cuba to the United States.

A few years ago, I expanded the number of people who could legally get visas to come here to 20,000 a year, and we are reviewing this whole situation now in light of what has happened. But I do believe that the general statements Alfie made at the beginning are the cor-

rect ones. We have to try to keep the movement here orderly, safe, and legal, and we have to look at the new challenges that have been presented to us. But I want you to know that there will never be a time when any of us will willfully sanction the use of excessive or inhumane tactics in dealing with anybody coming to this country.

We have to try to enforce our laws; we have to try to protect our borders; we have to try to deal with a situation which could, as you well remember from times past, spiral out of hand. And I am reviewing what the facts are and what our options are. But I want you to know that the values that will guide us, I think, are the right ones.

So last thing I want to say is, thanks for giving money to the Florida Democratic Party. [Laughter] Pat, I will do my best to make sure nobody gives up on Florida. I haven't given up on Florida. We're going to get a Senator. We're going to get Members of Congress. You're going to have gains in the legislature, and I believe we can carry it in the Presidential race in the year 2000 if it is clear what the issues are and what the choices are. And you can't do that if you don't have folks like you out here who know good and well what they are and are willing to say it and if you don't have people like you who are willing to give money so we can get our message out to the larger populace.

You have done that tonight. You have validated Whitehead's decision to come out of retirement. You've made sure that the old lion will not return to his den prematurely. [Laughter] So for all that, I am very grateful. Mostly, I am grateful that you have been so good to me and to Hillary and to Al and to Tipper in what has been the experience of a lifetime. But we're not done yet, and we owe it to the American people to give them our best down to the last day. That's what I mean to do, and I'm going to do what I can, wearing my Miami Heat outfit—[laughter]—to keep enough heat in Washington to make sure they do the same.

Thank you very much.

Mayor Penelas just came in. Thank you very much, Mr. Mayor. Good to see you. How are you? Welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:08 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner host Alfonso Fanjul; Mitchell W. Berger, member, South Florida Water Management District; State Attorney General Robert A.

Butterworth and his wife, Marta; State Treasurer Bill Nelson and his wife, Grace; Senator Bob Graham, his wife, Adele, his daughter Kendall Elias, and his son-in-law Robert Elias III; State Representative Elaine Bloom; Charles A. Whitehead, chairman, Florida State Democratic Party;

Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Gov. Frank White of Arkansas; Willie E. and Gloria Gary, who hosted a DNC dinner in Stuart, FL, on March 16; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Mayor Alexander Penelas of Metro-Dade County, FL.

Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council National Conversation in Baltimore, Maryland

July 14, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. You guys look good out there. [Laughter] I want to thank Al for inviting me, and thank you, Cruz, for your wonderful remarks and your generous introduction. One thing I like about the California Lieutenant Governor is he doesn't beat around the bush; you know what's on his mind. [Laughter]

I shouldn't do this because it's not really Presidential, but I'm going to do it anyway. I have really—you've got to give it—this "compassionate conservatism" has a great ring to it, you know. It sounds so good. And I've really worked hard to try to figure out what it means. I mean, I made an honest effort. And near as I can tell here's what it means; it means: "I like you, I do." [Laughter] "And I would like to be for the Patients' Bill of Rights, and I'd like to be for closing the gun show loophole. And I'd like not to squander the surplus and save Social Security and Medicare for the next generation. I'd like to raise the minimum wage. I'd like to do these things. But I just can't, and I feel terrible about it." [Laughter]

Oh, that will come back. [Laughter] I would like to thank—you don't have to give me credit if you repeat that back home. [Laughter] I want to thank you all for being here today. We have five Governors: Governor Glendening, Governor Barnes, Governor Carnahan, Governor Carper, Governor Vilsack; Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend is here, along with Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante; Mayor Schmoke, the leaders of the Maryland legislature, Senator Mike Miller and Speaker Casper Taylor; any number of other officials.

I brought a large delegation from the White House, including Secretary Glickman and a number of people who have been particularly

close to the DLC, including Sidney Blumenthal and your old hands, Bruce Reed and Linda Moore. And I brought a person who joined the DLC with me back in 1985, although he says he joined before I did: my first Chief of Staff and the former Special Envoy to Latin America, Mack McLarty. So we're old hands, and I thank them all for coming with me today.

This is the third national conversation about a talk that Al From and I have been having for nearly 15 years now. Today, we can have a very different conversation than we had 15 years ago or even half that long ago because of the proven success of New Democratic ideas.

When I first ran for President back in 1991, I asked for a change in our party, a change in our national leadership, a change in our country. The American people have been uncommonly good to me and to Hillary, to the Vice President, to Tipper, to our administration, and thanks to their support, we have changed all three things. The ideas of the men and women who are here today are rooted in our core values of opportunity, responsibility, and community. They have revitalized our party and revitalized our country.

We won the Presidency in 1992 with new ideas based on those values, because the American people could see and feel that the old ways weren't working. We won again in 1996 because, with the help of a lot of people in this room, we turned those values and ideas into action. And they did work to get our country moving again; or in the words of Cruz Bustamante, they did help real people.

Now, as we move into a new era and a new millennium, these ideas, as all of you well know, have spread around the world. They've helped center-left parties to take power in Great Britain

and France and Germany and Italy and Brazil. They have sparked the kinds of debates and discussions that you have been having in virtually every country in the world where people take politics seriously. The Third Way has become the way of the future.

And when you hear our friends in the other party sort of use the same words in the same way, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, that, too, is something we should welcome.

I told the little story at the first because, as the Lieutenant Governor said, rhetoric and reality are sometimes two different things, and it's better when they're not, when they are the same thing. But it shows you the grip that the idea of a dynamic center has on thoughtful people throughout the world. It shows you how desperately people want new ideas, experimentation, an end to bitter partisanship, a genuine spirit of working together. And wherever that exists, it is a good thing.

As we move into the information age, we really, as Democrats, have reclaimed the true legacy of Franklin Roosevelt, which is not a particular set of programs but a real commitment to bold experimentation, to the idea that new times demand new approaches and often a different kind of Government.

America was ready to listen to that back in 1992. You know it's almost hard to believe now, and we may have to remind our fellow citizens in times to come just what it was like back then, how high the unemployment was; how stagnant the wages were; how steeply growing the inequality was; how fast the social conditions were worsening.

Then, the Democrats were seen too wedded to the programs of the past to make the necessary changes for today and tomorrow. The Republicans were too committed to the idea that Government was the cause of all of our problems, and neglect, therefore, was the right response.

They won election after election at the national level by sort of dividing our people and putting up cartoon caricatures of our Democrats as somehow not really American, not really in touch with the values of ordinary citizens. And they were so good at it, they came to see the White House as their private fiefdom. I'd always get a little kick out of the fact that our friends on the other side of the aisle rail and rail about entitlements; they really don't like them. But

actually they thought the White House was their entitlement until the DLC came along.

Now, Al Gore and I had a different idea. We thought power should not be vested in any party but in the people. We thought that we should use the power of our office and the power of Government to take a different direction for the country. We believed we could do it with a smaller Government; and it is now, as all of you know, the smallest Federal establishment since John Kennedy was President in 1962. That's the last time the Federal Government was this small. But we have been much, much more active, trying to be a catalyst, trying to be a partner, trying to give people the tools and to create the conditions so that our people could meet their own challenges and live out their own dreams. We have been called New Democrats; our approach has been called the Third Way. But I think it is important to remember that we too do not want to get trapped in our rhetoric. We were the first to point out that labels should not define a politician or a person or a political movement; ideas do. And every time, every age in time requires a continuous infusion of new ideas. We took on the hard work of creating real solutions. We worked hard to make politics and policies and to put both in the service of progress.

Now, I think it's worked pretty well. We did everything we could to reject forced, false choices between work and family, between the economy and the environment, between being safe and being free, between recognizing what makes us interesting and individual and different as people and what we have in common. We tried to solve problems rather than score partisan points. We have done our best to restore the people's faith in our Government but, more important, to restore their faith in the limitless potential of America.

Now, I think it's worked pretty well. Along the way, we had the '94 election setback, and we had to fight a rearguard action to beat back the Contract With America. Then we worked with the Republicans to pass welfare reform and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, and I was encouraged. Lately, I have been discouraged, obviously, because the Republican majority in Congress has taken, I think, very, very wrong actions in killing the Patients' Bill of Rights and in killing the sensible gun control measures embodied in our legislation, among other things,

to close the gun show loophole. So, there are still profound differences among the parties.

Cruz listed a few of these, but I would just like to say that, as you go back home and the people you represent ask you for your thoughts about what's going on in Washington, I would like to respectfully request that you at least ask them to give us the benefit of the doubt, because our friends in the other party said if we implemented our policies, it would be a disaster for America. They said it over and over and over again. They said, when the deficit was \$290 billion and we passed our economic program, it would get bigger and we'd have a deep recession. Now we have the biggest surplus in our history; almost 19 million new jobs; the longest peacetime expansion in history; the highest homeownership and the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded; wages are rising; crime is at a 26-year low; the welfare rolls at a 30-year low; teen pregnancy, teen smoking, teen drug abuse are all declining; air and water are cleaner; the streets are safer; 90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time; we've opened the doors to college to virtually all Americans through the HOPE scholarship that we modeled on what Georgia did; and we have had over 100,000 young people serve our country and their community through AmeriCorps, another big DLC idea. From the California redwoods and the Mojave Desert to the Florida Everglades, this administration has protected or set aside more land than any administration in history except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We have worked for peace from Bosnia and Kosovo to the Middle East to Northern Ireland. We've worked to expand trade on fair and freer terms. We have worked to build partnerships with Latin America and Africa and people who often feel that they're not even in our radar screen or in our orbit. We have worked to give our children a safer world by combating terrorism and the other threats which they will face in their lifetime.

We've done this—and I appreciate the reception you gave me when I came in—but we have done this because we had the right ideas. I am grateful that I was given the opportunity, in my time, to be the instrument of implementing those ideas. If anybody is responsible for the intellectual renaissance which possesses the politics in this country, in this world, it

really is Al From and all the true believers with the DLC who stayed there all those years.

But you're here because we believe that you can do these jobs. You can do the jobs you have. You can be Governors; you can be Senators; you can be President. The most important thing is that we keep the ideas coming, consistent with our core values, always looking at the real facts, always looking at the long-term future. And what I am trying to get the American people to focus on now, and the Congress, is that, in the remaining days of this century and this millennium, we will either explicitly or implicitly make some very large decisions that will affect our country for a long time to come.

I think that we have shown by results that our Third Way is the right way for America, for our economy, and for our society. In the weeks to come, around the budget, we will have a huge debate over great national priorities. We will have to make a choice that 5 or 6 years ago you never would have believed we'd be making, which is how are we going to use the fruits of our prosperity. If somebody had told you, 6 years ago, the biggest debate in Washington will be what to do with the surplus—[laughter]—you would never have believed it.

Now, I think the answer is to stick with the economic strategy that brought us to this great dance and to deal with the great challenges still before us. So I gave the Congress a budget that will do big things: that will meet the challenge of the aging of America by saving and reforming Social Security and Medicare; that will do it in a way that will make this country debt free for the first time since 1835; that will raise educational standards and end social promotion but provide for summer school, modern schools, and 100,000 more teachers and hooking up every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000; that will make America safer with even more community policing and more efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals; that will make America more livable with the Vice President's livability agenda; that will provide genuine tax relief to the people and the purposes who really need it at a price we can afford, without undermining our prosperity, including our new American markets initiative designed to give Americans the same incentives to invest in the poor areas of America we give today to invest in the Caribbean and Latin America and Africa and Asia. I think that's a very important thing to do.

I might say, all of you would have gotten a big kick seeing Al From and Jesse Jackson walking arm in arm across America last week. [Laughter] It was good for America. It was good for the Democratic Party. It was good for the people that lived in Appalachia and the Mississippi Delta, in East St. Louis. Mayor Powell, I'm glad to see you here today. We had a wonderful time there. Thank you for coming.

She gave such a great speech when we visited East St. Louis, I told her she ought to show up for this conference, and lo and behold, she did. So I thank you for coming.

We went to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. We went to south Phoenix. And I know we've got some legislators from Arizona here today, and I thank you for being here—the block over there. And we ended in L.A. These are big things. These are big, big things. And we will decide, directly or indirectly, whether to embrace them. The decisions cannot be escaped.

You all know the basic elements of my plan. I want to use the bulk of the surplus to save Social Security. I want to set aside 15 percent of it to reform Medicare and to begin with a prescription drug benefit, which would have been in any program if it were to be designed today from the start. I want to provide substantial tax relief, \$250 billion of it, targeted to help families save for retirement, to deal with child care and long-term care needs, to help to deal with some of our larger challenges including modernizing our schools, adjusting to the challenge of climate change, and as I said, investing in America's new markets.

If we do it the way I have proposed, this country will be out of debt in 2015. Now, I would like to tell you very briefly why I think that is a good idea. First of all, you all know we live in a global economy. Interest rates and capital availability are set in global markets. If a wealthy country like the United States is out of debt, what does it mean? It means interest rates will be lower; it means there will be more business investment; it'll be more jobs; it'll be higher incomes. It means that, for ordinary citizens, their car payments, their house payments, their credit card payments, their student loan payments will be lower. It means the next time there's a financial crisis in the world, we won't need to take money, and the needy, vulnerable countries will be able to get the money they need at lower interest rates, which means not

only their people will be better off, but they will be better trading partners for us, and their democracies will be more likely to weather the storms. This is a progressive idea today, and we ought to stick with it.

Now, I realize 16 months before an election the allure of "I've got a bigger tax cut than you do; come look at my tax cut"—[laughter]—I mean, that's got a lot of appeal, you know. And it doesn't take very long to explain. You can put it in a 5-second ad: "Our tax cut is bigger than theirs." But I'd just like to remind the American people, number one, look at the results we have achieved in the last 6½ years by looking to the long run and doing the responsible thing. Number two, every ordinary American citizen, and virtually every wealthy American, will be better off over the long run with lower interest rates, a more stable economy, a more growing economy, than with a short-term tax cut.

I'm not against a tax cut. We've got a good one in here. But if we don't fix Medicare and Social Security and we let the baby boom generation retire and worry about whether these systems are going to go haywire and we impose on our children the burden of taking care of us when it is absolutely unnecessary, undermining their ability to raise our grandchildren, we will never forgive ourselves, just because there is an election in 16 months. It's wrong.

The Vice President and I had a meeting with the Republican and the Democratic leaders of Congress Monday, and we told them that we wanted to work with them. And we have worked with them in the past, as I said, with welfare reform and the Balanced Budget Act. But we've got to stay on this new way. I think that, on this issue, they're still committed to their old ways.

Yesterday the Republican leadership unveiled a tax plan that I believe could wreck our economy. It would certainly wreck our fiscal discipline. Let me explain what is wrong with their plan. Their tax plan would devote just about all of the surplus that doesn't come from Social Security taxes, all the non-Social Security surplus to a tax cut. First of all, if they did that, it would leave no money for Medicare. Every responsible analyst of Medicare says there are just so many people drawing and so few people paying in; as the baby boomers retire, that will be twice as many people over 65 in 2030 as there are today. Everybody says you've got to

put some more money in. So there would be no money for that.

Secondly, it would require, as our economy grows, real cuts in education, defense, the environment, research, technology, the kinds of things that we have invested more in. We have almost doubled investment in education and technology as we have shrunk the size of the Government and gotten rid of the deficit and eliminated hundreds of programs. So it won't work.

The second big problem with it is that if you look at the next 10 years, not just the first 10 years—that is, the 10 years when the baby boomers will retire and when we ought to be paying off the debt—their tax cut will really be big, and it will put us back into debt.

So remember now, I'm not going to—I hope I will be one of the people just out there drawing my check, you know. I'll be out of here. But think about this, especially the younger people in this audience. In the second decade of the 21st century, just when the baby boomers start to retire, just when Social Security and Medicare begin to feel the crunch, just when we could be debt-free for the first time since 1835, at that very moment, their tax cut would swallow the surplus and make it impossible to meet our basic commitments.

I have asked the Treasury to report as soon as possible to me on what their tax cut costs in the second 10 years of this decade. We should not undo our fiscal discipline. We should not imperil our prosperity. We should not undermine Medicare. We should not make big cuts in education, defense, research and technology, and the environment. I won't allow that sort of plan to become law. It wouldn't be right.

Now again I say, we can have a tax cut. We ought to have a tax cut, but we ought to do it in the right way for the right reasons, and we ought to put first things first. We should save Social Security and Medicare, meet our responsibilities for the next century, before we go off talking about the tax cut.

You know, some of this is basic arithmetic. We had years and years in the 1980's when people said there is no such thing as basic arithmetic. There is supply-side economics, or whatever, and they said supply-side economics would dictate a huge recession after our '93 economic plan passed. But the American people don't have to guess any more. We tried it their way; we tried it our way. There is evidence.

And I'm telling you, I don't care if the election is next week, never mind next year; we have worked for too long to get this country out of the hole. We are moving in the right direction, and we must not compromise the future of America and the next generation just for the next election. It would be wrong, and I want you to help us get that message out there.

The same thing is true on crime. The DLC had a lot to do with our ideas about fighting crime, and you remember what they were. We wanted 100,000 police. We used to go—our DLC trips, we'd go to these places, and we'd go look at these community policing operations that were already bringing crime down in cities in the early nineties. We wanted the Brady bill; we wanted an assault weapons ban; we wanted targeted, tougher punishment and broad prevention programs for our young people. And the program is working.

The real choice, as the Vice President pointed out in his speech Monday, is not between stronger punishment and better prevention. The real choice is to do both. But I hope the DLC will not give up its ideas on fighting crime just because we're at a 26-year low. Because, if you're one of the victims, the crime is still too high.

We could make this country the safest big country in the world if we would do the right, sensible things to do it. I thought the Vice President put some great ideas forward on Monday. And that's what this election ought to be about. Even the commentators on the other side point out that, so far, he's the only person who has actually said what he would do if the people gave him the job, which I think is a reasonably good idea to do. You probably ought to tell people what you're going to do when you get the job, and then you would be more likely to do it.

And I believe one of the central reasons for the success that we have enjoyed is that we worked—Al and I and others and my folks at home in Arkansas—we worked for years to think about exactly what ought to be done. And so, if you look at what he said, that we ought to apply reforms that are working in the private sector at many levels of government to revolutionize the justice system, we ought to take the next step on licensing people who own handguns to make sure that they're trained to use the guns and that they should have them; and that

would solve all these loopholes because, if you had a bad background, you couldn't get a license, you couldn't own one.

This is not going to keep anybody from being a hunter or sportsman. This is not going to undermine the fabric of life in America; it's going to make it safer. And this is a very serious issue, so I would urge you to keep up your interest not only in the economic issues, not only in the entitlement reforms, but also in the question of how we can make America the safest big country in the world.

When I was running in '92, we were just trying to get the crime rate down. Everybody thought it was going to go up forever. Now, we know we can bring it down. I think we ought to commit ourselves to making America the safest big country in the world. When I was running in '92, everybody said we've just got to get the deficit down, got to try to balance the budget. Now, we can imagine making America debt-free. We can do things that are not imaginable at the moment if we will have good ideas and work on them in a disciplined way.

So I think that the other candidates ought to follow the Vice President's lead and tell us where they stand on these crime issues and on the other issues as well. There will be clear choices here. Will we have commonsense gun laws, or Government by the gun lobby?

I'll never forget when I went to New Hampshire in 1996. Just for all you elected politicians who think you can't survive this stuff, they voted for me by one point in '92, and I was grateful, because they normally vote Republican. So my first meeting, we had a couple of hundred, largely, men in this audience in their plaid shirts, waiting more for deer season than the President's speech. [Laughter] And so I told them, I said, "You know, in '94 you beat a Democrat Congressman up here, and you did it because he voted for the Brady bill and the crime bill and the assault weapons ban. And I want you to know he did that because I asked him to. So if you have, since 1994, experienced any inconvenience whatever in your hunting season, I want you to vote against me, too, because he did it for me. But if you haven't, they lied to you, and you ought to get even." [Laughter]

In New Hampshire, our margin of victory went from one percent to 13 percent. You can do this. Tell the American people the truth about these things. Just go out and tell people the truth about these things.

I feel the same way about welfare. I had to veto two bills that the Congress passed, because I thought they were too tough on kids. They took the guarantee of nutrition and health care benefits away from children. After we put that back in, I believe the welfare reform bill was right, because I thought we ought to require able-bodied people to work, and because letting the States have the money for the benefits was not a big deal since the States had radically different levels of benefits anyway. And remember, in our welfare reform bill, we left the States with the same amount of money they had in February of 1994 when the welfare rolls were at an all-time high, even after the rolls dropped, so that they could be free to put the money back into training, to child care, to transportation, to the things people need.

We've still got work to do to make sure that work pays. With the strong support of the DLC back in '93, we doubled the earned-income tax credit; then we raised the minimum wage; we put more into child care. But I want to do some other things.

First of all, we are changing the rules, so thousands of poor working families won't be denied food stamps, as they are today, just because they own a reliable car. We're going to change those rules, and we should be for them. We're also going to get rid of some of the old reporting rules and launch a national campaign to make sure that working people know there is no indignity in taking public assistance to help feed their children if they're out there working 40 hours a week. And finally let me say, I hope you will really give a lot of thought to the project that Al and I and others were on last week. How can we go across that bridge to the 21st century together? How can we bring the spark of enterprise and opportunity to every community? There are still a lot of people that haven't participated in this recovery and a lot of places that we didn't visit last week. There are still a lot of small and medium-sized towns that lose just a factory, but have real trouble restructuring their economy.

We presented this new markets initiative, which I said I think is very good, because it will give the same incentives to people nationwide that they only have in the empowerment zones today to invest in those markets. But we need to do more. A fertile, fertile ground for

DLC endeavors is involving everyone, every single American who is willing to work in American enterprise. We can do that.

And let me just make one last point as we segue into the next part of the program. The DLC now takes a lot of justifiable pride in the fact that the ideas we have long championed are now being debated in Berlin or London or some other world capital. But that's not why we got into this. We got into this to prove that politics had a positive purpose in the lives of ordinary citizens, and therefore, it is far more important for us what is happening in Sacramento or in countless other legislatures and city halls across America. You are still on the frontline of the battlefield of ideas. You must lead us forward.

I have taken enormous pride in the work of Lieutenant Governors like Cruz Bustamante and Kathleen Kennedy Townsend. I have taken enormous pride in watching mayors like Kirk Wilson in Austin and Don Cunningham in Bethlehem. I see my former colleagues in the Governors' Association continuing to do remarkable things and people in other State offices. Don't forget that.

I close with these words. Robert Kennedy, who I believe was trying to do something like what we've been doing when his life and career were cut short in 1968, said, "Idealism, high aspiration, and deep conviction are not incompatible with the most practical and efficient of programs. There is no basic inconsistency between ideals and realistic possibility, no separation between the deepest desires of heart and mind and the rational application of human efforts to human problems." That is a good statement of what we believe and what you were doing.

I thank you for your hard work, and I ask you to remember, you can celebrate our achievements all you want, but the American people hire us for tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

[At this point, the conversation proceeded.]

The President. Well, first of all, I would like to thank Kirk and Don and Ember and Mike for their presentations. They pretty well made the point I was trying to make, that—and I think they're four people who could do just about any job, and I think that the jobs they are doing are changing people's lives.

I would just like to make a couple of points about what was said by each of them. First of all, if I could go back to the point I made about paying the debt down and the general condition of the economy. If we can keep this going, pretty soon this peacetime expansion, which is the longest peacetime expansion in history—we'll have the longest expansion of any kind in our history, including wartime, pretty soon. Now, I do not for a moment believe we have repealed all the laws of economics. But I do believe that the technological revolution underway in America, and the fact that we have relatively open borders, and therefore, have consistent competition, has kept inflation down as we've had growth.

But if you look at what they said from the perspective that I have to take every day—you know, we sit around here all the time, and we argue how much more can the American economy grow without getting inflation going up. And you remember, every time the Federal Reserve meets now, that's the big argument. People say, are they or are they not going to raise interest rates? Well, there's no evidence of inflation now, but surely we can't keep doing this on and on and on.

We've now got unemployment under 5 percent for 2 years in a row. Well, if you think about it, how could we continue to grow without inflation? And if you posit for the moment the potential of technology, there are the following ways: You can look at what Austin is doing; you have to continue to expand the base of people that make a living in the most powerful part of the economy now. Eight percent of our economy is in high-tech, 30 percent of our growth. And since it, by definition, is—the whole thing that makes it work is continuing explosive increases in productivity. So that's one thing you can do.

The second thing that you can do is to sell more of what we make around the world, which is why I've tried really hard to build a consensus among our party and to reach out to the others by continuing to expand trade, but to do it in a way that lifts labor and environmental standards around the world, so it's a race to the top, not a race to the bottom.

The third thing you can do is to reach out to discrete population groups, and that's what Michael does. The two biggest discrete population groups in the country that are still not in the work force are the people who still

haven't moved from welfare to work, although we moved another million and a half last year. And they are the hardest to reach. That's why what you said about the work force act is so important. Every Governor now has been given the opportunity to work with labor commissions and others to design a training program that we hope will eventually lead to a lifetime educational training program, so that whenever anybody's changing jobs at any age, they'll always be able to get the training they need. But the two big population groups anywhere are people on welfare and disabled people who want to go to work.

One of the things that I think will come out of this Congress, there appears to be almost unanimous bipartisan agreement that we ought to let people on disability who get Medicaid health insurance keep their Medicaid when they go in the work force. Now, that's a good deal for the States, because we're going to pay their Medicaid anyway—State and Federal Government—but if they're working, they'll be paying taxes back. They'll be happier; they'll be part of it.

Seventy-some percent of the people who are disabled in this country want to go in the work force. I met—in New Hampshire, I met a guy who was an Olympic skier once who had a terrible skiing accident, was confined to a wheelchair. He had \$40,000 in medical bills a year, and that was slightly more than he was going to make on his job. We're better off if he takes a job. But on the welfare—I don't want to minimize the difficulty of this—he's got a big challenge now, because most of the easy movement from welfare to work has occurred. So if you want to move people now, you've got to really work at it.

And then, to go to what the mayor of Bethlehem said, the other thing we've got to do is to find a way to enable people who lose their economic base to create one more quickly. People like me who come from the Mississippi Delta area—I see Mr. Eastland over there—that's what happened to us. We never—we lost the economic base that once gave everybody a job, even though a lot of those people were working for substandard livings, and we—that's a part of our country that's not yet reconstructed its economic base. That's why I think the DLC ought to be working on it.

The reason we were celebrating East St. Louis the other day is it was the first—this

Walgreens store is going to anchor this big development down there—it's the first development they've had in decades—not years, decades. We cannot afford, in an economy that's moving literally at the speed of light, to wait decades to figure out how to bring enterprise to places that have been left behind. We have to figure out how to do that better. And what you're doing will work, but it needs to be done everywhere.

The last point I'd like to make is that, going to what Ember said, when I became President, there was one charter school in the whole country—one in Minnesota. Minnesota was also the first State in the country to have statewide school choice before the charter schools. Arkansas was the second; I stole the idea from Minnesota. So I said, well, let's have 1,000 charter schools. Then I asked the Congress to give me enough money to help people set up 3,000 charter schools for this next year. We're going to be at 1,500 this fall. I think next year will be actually quite close to 3,000 nationwide, which is enough to have a profound impact.

But we won't really have a successful system until the things that make the charter schools work can be found in the other schools. And the voucher movement will never go away if people feel that they're trapped in failure. I've worked for school choice. I've worked for the charter schools. I believe in accountability. Actually, there is no evidence—and there is quite a bit of evidence out there now on how well kids do who opt out and go to private schools—there is no evidence that they're doing better. But if people feel their schools are unsafe or they're inadequate, the voucher movement will be out there, and it will be a difficult political issue for Democrats, for Republicans, for people who love public education.

We have got to prove that—the one thing that we have never done, and I've worked for 20 years on this deal now, more than 20 years now—we have not succeeded as a country in taking what works in public education in one place or two places or 10 places, modifying it for local conditions, yes, but implementing it somewhere else. And so you have to assume that parents and others who would go to the trouble to set up the charter schools wouldn't go to all the trouble unless they were committed to learning, unless they were really committed to what works.

But if I could have waved a magic wand as Governor, when I was Governor and solved any problem in my State, it would have been that. I had poor little rural schools, I had some schools in poor urban areas that were doing stunningly well. But I never could either set up the systems or set up the incentives or convince people that everybody else ought to run through what they were doing and do it. Because this is not rocket science. This is not the same as walking on Mars within 5 years. In some ways, it's more difficult because it deals with the human psyche and all these human difficulties, but people can understand what works.

And I just think that the work you've done in Minnesota and what you're pushing now, this whole concept of charter districts—I never even thought about it before you said it today, but that's the sort of thing we need to be doing. We will never bring everybody into the big tent of our prosperity until we have not only the best higher education system in the world but the best elementary and secondary education system in the world.

And you've got to give this lady and her colleagues in Minnesota an enormous amount of credit for what they have done now for more than a decade to make us think about this. But if I could say to all of you at the grassroots

level, if you can figure out a way to make economic change faster, to bring opportunity to where it doesn't exist, and to bring more uniformity of excellence in public education, if we could do those things, if that could be a huge part of the DLC's crusade for the next decade, I wouldn't be a bit worried about America's future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Baltimore Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante of California, who introduced the President; Gov. Parris N. Glendening and Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Gov. Roy Barnes of Georgia; Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware; Gov. Tom Vilsack of Iowa; Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore; Maryland State Senate President Thomas V. (Mike) Miller, Jr., and House Speaker Casper R. Taylor, Jr.; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Mayor Debra Powell of East St. Louis, IL; Mayor Kirk Watson of Austin, TX; Mayor Donald T. Cunningham, Jr., of Bethlehem, PA; Minnesota State Senator Ember Reichgott Junge; Georgia State Labor Commissioner Michael L. Thurmond; and Hiram Eastland, founding member, Mississippi Democratic Leadership Council.

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Provide Assistance to African Nations

July 14, 1999

This week Congress has a chance to pass a bill that can transform our relationship with an entire continent for the better. The African growth and opportunity act promises a new partnership with Africa based on mutual respect and mutual responsibility.

Last week African nations signed two significant documents: a cease-fire in Congo and a peace agreement ending the war in Sierra Leone. With these agreements and with democratic government in Nigeria and a new leadership in South Africa, we have an historic opportunity. The United States must do everything we can right now to support the efforts Africans are making to build democracy and respect for

human rights, advance peace, and lay the foundation for prosperity and growth.

This bill supports education and job creation so that all of Africa's children can grow up educated and productive. It supports better health care and the flow of ideas and technology that will help Africa's doctors save more lives.

This bill has strong bipartisan support in Congress, nearly unanimous support from the nations of Africa, and brings together a broad group of concerned citizens on both continents, from Jack Kemp and Andrew Young to the African Association of Women Entrepreneurs. It represents an effort to build a partnership with

African nations that involves listening and working with them. It serves America's national interests in creating new markets for American goods and services; in building strong, reliable, and

democratic partners overseas; and in creating a more prosperous and stable world. I urge Congress to seize this opportunity by passing the African growth and opportunity act.

Statement on the Deutch-Specter Commission Report

July 14, 1999

I welcome the report of the Commission To Assess the Organization of the Federal Government To Combat the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (the Deutch-Specter Commission).

The Chairman, John Deutch, the Vice Chairman, Senator Specter, and other commissioners have provided a comprehensive study of how we should organize the U.S. Government to deal with the threat of proliferation, which poses one

of the most serious challenges to national and international security that we face.

The Commission's report contains a number of interesting recommendations and observations that deserve serious consideration. I have asked my National Security Adviser, Samuel Berger, to coordinate an interagency review and assessment of the Commission's recommendations and report back to me within 60 days with advice on specific steps.

Remarks to the College Democrats of America

July 14, 1999

Thank you. I ought to quit while I'm ahead. *[Laughter]* Harold, you ought to be giving that speech for yourself some day. That was pretty great. I was definitely impressed.

Thank you for your wonderful welcome. I want to thank all the College Democrat officers: your national chair, Reta Lewis, who used to be in the White House with me; Vice President Brendan Tully; Executive Director Jeff Schulman; National Field Director Lisa Kohnke; and all the people who helped to organize this, your largest meeting ever.

Let me say a special word of welcome or greetings on behalf of the Vice President. Eleven years ago he almost single-handedly brought the College Democrats of America back, and I'm glad you came back. We have needed you.

My administration has been, in large measure, about giving the young people of America a better America in the 21st century, an America where there is opportunity for every responsible citizen and where we are coming together as a community across all the lines that divide us.

When I ran for President in 1992, I was infuriated that I had seen election after election

after election and then Washington in between use rhetoric to divide us and to create a majority based on not being "them." I didn't think it was good for America then; I don't think it's good for America today. I have done everything I could do to get all of us to see that what we have in common is much more important than what divides us.

I must say that the young people of America, who increasingly live more and more together with those who are at least superficially different from themselves, are going to have to lead America to that future. The work that you have done, the registration efforts that you have done—in 1996, under the leadership of your former executive director, Susan Blad Seldin, CDA helped to register over a million young people—that is very, very important.

I want to say something serious tonight. This is—we've got a very festive atmosphere, and I know the fire marshal is concerned about how many people we've crammed in this room—*[laughter]*—but I want to say something really serious to you. I'm not running for anything anymore. I'm not on the ballot in 2000. I'm

telling you this because I'm still concerned about tomorrow. Ideas make a difference in politics.

I was, earlier today, at the Democratic Leadership Council's meeting. Many of the ideas that we've been working on there for 14 years are now the focus of debate not only in the United States but in other countries around the world, where new parties—sort of like where the Democrats have been in the last 6½ years—have won elections in England, in France, in Germany, and Brazil and The Netherlands and many other countries, with the kind of debates that we have tried to provoke about how do you create opportunity for everyone; how do you really promote greater responsibility among citizens; how do you build a community in an increasingly diverse society; what are our responsibilities to the rest of the world? Those kinds of debates are going on all over the world today, based on ideas. Ideas have consequences.

I know that images have a lot to do, rhetoric has a lot to do with elections. But what I want you to understand is that we must stay the course that is the course of new ideas rooted in these basic values that have produced such good results for America. It is not an accident—I used to say, coin that old—quote that old country saying in the '96 election, when you find a turtle on a fencepost, the chances are it didn't get there by accident. *[Laughter]* Ideas have consequences.

All these things that your president just recited about the strength of the economy—and I might say, we now have almost 19 million new jobs—almost 19 million—and we have the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded since we started taking statistics, and we have, as has been pointed out, cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. We've also set aside more land—from the redwoods in California and the Mojave Desert there to the Florida Everglades—we've set aside or protected more land than any previous administration except those of the two Roosevelts. This administration has thought about tomorrow. Ninety percent of our 2-year-olds are immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time in history, because we're thinking about tomorrow.

Ideas matter, and in the last year and a half of this administration, in the last 6 months and the first year of the new millennium, we will have a debate about ideas which will not only shape the 2000 election, but decisions will be

made or not made which will profoundly affect your future and the future of every young person in this country.

This week and in the weeks to come, we're going to have a huge debate centered around what we should do about the surplus. Now, most of you are so young that you can't realize that if anyone had had this discussion 10 years ago, that would have been an absurd discussion. *[Laughter]* In the 12 years before I became President, the national debt was quadrupled. The year I took office, the deficit was \$290 billion, projected to go to about \$400 billion this year. This is a high-class debate in that sense—what to do about the surplus. Don't stop thinking about tomorrow—that's what to do about the surplus. I believe we should use this moment to meet the great challenges of your generation, the great challenges of the 21st century.

What are they? Number one, the aging of America. That affects not just the baby boom generation—that's most of your parents—but you. If we reform and strengthen and secure Social Security and Medicare, it means not only that your parents will have a secure retirement; it means they won't have to depend upon you and the income you will need to raise your children when they're your age. This is a compact for all Americans. So yes, I believe we should use the bulk of the surplus to save Social Security and to save Medicare and to reform it.

I believe we should continue to invest in education, in the environment, in research and development, and to keep our military the world's strongest so that we can do what we did in Kosovo, to save lives against ethnic slaughter. I think that is important.

I believe we can do these things and still have a tax cut, a tax cut that will help people to save for their own retirement, to pay for child care, to pay for long-term care for their parents, that will help us to build modern schools, and that will help us to do something else: that will help to give Americans the same incentives to invest in the poorest parts of America they now have to invest in the poorest parts of the world. That's what I tried to do last week in traveling around the country.

And the nice thing about it is that if we do with the surplus what I propose, we can spend more money on education and the military and other things; we can have a tax cut

that is substantial. But if we will save the bulk of it to extend the life and the security and the quality of Social Security and Medicare, we will also have this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, in 15 years.

Why should you care about that? Because in a global economy, where the financial markets move money across national borders at the speed of light, where interest rates are set by what's going on everywhere, if America, the world's wealthiest country is out of debt, it means lower interest rates; higher business investment; more jobs; higher incomes; lower costs for home mortgages, student loans, car payments, credit card payments; more money at lower cost for other countries that need the money badly to develop, to become our partners for trade and prosperity and for democracy and freedom. It is a better thing for the world. So I say to you, it matters.

Now, I had a good meeting Monday with the leaders of Congress in both parties, and we may have some agreement on at least saving the Social Security taxes for Social Security. But they may not do it in a way that actually lengthens the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. Nonetheless, it's a good start.

But unfortunately, the Republicans have now unveiled their tax plan. What they want to do is to use almost all the non-Social Security surplus on a tax cut and to go to the people and say, "Our tax cut is bigger than theirs." And that sounds good. But what they don't say is if theirs passes, it means you can't really strengthen Social Security; it means no new money for Medicare, which will imperil it; it means big cuts in education, the environment, research and development; and yes, their defense budget cannot be funded. That's what it means. And it means, in the second decade of the tax cut, we'll actually start having deficits again, at the very time when the baby boomers retire and we ought to be paying down the debt until we don't have one any more.

Now, these are big ideas. And young people in college should care about them because it will affect your life much more than mine. This is about tomorrow. So if somebody asks you tomorrow, "Why did you go to the College Democrats convention?" don't say it was because the President gave a good speech. [*Laughter*] Say, "It's because I believe that our ideas are good for America, good for all Americans, and I have evidence." We have 6½ years of

evidence: not just a strong economy but the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, declining social problems.

I believe it matters, and I believe we ought to use this moment of promise with this surplus to save Social Security, save and modernize Medicare, give the seniors the prescription drugs benefits and more preventive screenings so they stay healthy in the first place, invest in education, invest in the environment, bring opportunities to the poorest parts of America, and still pay for a tax cut we can afford while meeting our responsibilities to tomorrow.

If they ask you why you're a Democrat, say because you think we ought not to let criminals buy guns just because they go to gun shows. If they ask you why you're a Democrat, if they ask you why you belong to this party and this organization, tell them it's because you're for a Patients' Bill of Rights that lets doctors, not accountants, decide the medical needs of people.

If they ask you why you came to this convention, tell them you're for hate crimes legislation that protects people without regard to whether they're gay or straight, black or white or Hispanic or Asian; and you tell them, tell them it's because you kind of like the idea of giving Federal money to help our schools in a way that hires 100,000 teachers, modernizes schools, ends social promotion, but gives kids a chance to go to summer school and after-school programs to guarantee all of our children learn.

And you have to keep looking for new ideas. On Monday the Vice President talked about his crime plans, and he said that he thought we ought to have, yes, stiffer punishment where it was merited, but more prevention where it would work, and that he thought we ought not to quit now in trying to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. He said we license people to drive cars, and they have photo licenses. If you don't want to close the gun show loophole because you think it's too burdensome, we could do it if everybody had a photo ID to go with their handgun license and they had to show that they knew how to use a gun.

If they ask you why you're a Democrat, tell them because you like the fact that we have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food; you don't like all these proposed legislative riders from the other party to weaken the quality of the environment, and you like the Vice President's livability agenda. Why shouldn't we set aside

more green space in all of our cities? Why shouldn't city kids be able to enjoy nature just like people like me, that grew up in rural areas?

Now, I'll tell you why it's important. Because for every one of you here cheering, there are 10,000 others that aren't here, maybe more. In 1998 only one out of five young people between the ages of 18 and 24 voted. I realize sometimes it's a hassle. You register where you're in school or where you live, and you have to study for an exam or you're just preoccupied with something that seems much more important in the immediate future. But I'm telling you, ideas matter.

Young people understood, when they stood with me and Al Gore in 1992, that we had to turn this country around, and their future was at stake. It is no less at stake now just because things are going well. And the longer you live, the more you come to appreciate—or endure when they're not so good—the rhythms of life, the ups and downs, the twists and turns in the road, the unpredictability; and the more you come to understand how precious moments like this are, when things seem to be going well, and how profoundly important it is not to just reach out and grab the biggest apple on the tree that looks so good but to keep thinking about tomorrow.

So what we do with the surplus will affect how you raise your children as well as how your parents fare in retirement. It will affect the quality of the air your children breathe. It will affect the texture of the society in which you live and whether we are really coming together in a way that celebrates our diversity and makes life more interesting but still binds us tighter and tighter together as a national family. It will affect all of that.

So when you leave here, make yourself a promise. This summer when you go home to your friends, next year when you go back to school, talk to people about the ideas. Oh yes, the people are important, and I'm glad I had the chance to serve at this time, but the ideas and the values behind them are far more important, and you, you can carry them into the 21st century and guarantee that America's best days are in your future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:38 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Washington Court Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Harold D. Powell, national president, College Democrats of America.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of S.A.F.E. Colorado and an Exchange With Reporters July 15, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. I want to welcome the groups of young people from Colorado S.A.F.E. here to the White House, as well as those who brought them here from Colorado, the co-leaders, David Winkler and Ben Gelt. David will speak in a moment. And I want to say again how grateful I am that these young people have come. Secretary Summers and Attorney General Reno and I have just had a remarkable session.

It has now been 3 months since the horrible day in Littleton, since the crack of gunfire and the cries and the funerals, and now, as the shock and grief subside, as the cameras and satellite trucks move on to different events, it might be easy to forget and to have the Nation weaken

its resolve to keep our children safe from gun violence. But America must not forget that event or those which occurred in schools last year or the fact that 13 of our children die every single day from gun violence.

These young people represent millions of Americans who have come together at the grass-roots to take action. They have come to Washington to hold our feet to the fire and to make their voices heard. And I thank them for coming.

I have just had, as I said, a fascinating question-and-answer session with these young people. They have asked good questions, and they

have given good suggestions, and they are plainly impatient with the lack of action on the important legislation before Congress.

This afternoon they will carry that same message to Capitol Hill. I hope the Congress will listen very, very carefully to them. For the past 3 months, the gun lobby has been calling the shots on Capitol Hill. Now, it's time for Congress to listen to the lobbyists who truly matter, our children, the people who will be most affected by what is or is not done by the Congress.

This is not a partisan issue out there in America, indeed not a partisan issue anywhere but Washington. Americans of all ages, all backgrounds, all political philosophies support strong legislation to close dangerous loopholes in our gun laws. The vast majority of Americans believe passionately that no criminal who has failed a Brady background check and been refused a gun by an honest dealer should be able to turn around and buy a gun at a gun show. Florida, hardly one of our most liberal States, voted 72 percent in a referendum last November to do just that.

We believe that every handgun should be made childproof with a safety lock. We know that high-capacity ammunition gun clips are designed for war, not hunting, and they have no place in the American market. We believe any juvenile convicted of a violent crime should be banned, as an adult would, from owning a handgun.

But 3 months after Columbine, Congress has yet to send me a bill to make these common-sense gun reforms the law of the land. The Senate has passed them, and though they died in the House, we still—we still—have an opportunity to make them the law this year. I ask, as the young people ask here today, don't forget Littleton; don't allow the victims at Columbine to have died in vain; don't forget the 13 children who die every day from gun violence. Many, many, many of them can be saved.

We must not lose the urgency of our mission. It is not too late. How many more children must become victims of an illegal or poorly secured weapon? How many more parents must be robbed of the opportunity to see their children grow up into the fine young people we see standing behind me today?

I ask Congress to end this delay and to send me a strong bill like the one passed by the Senate. I ask Congress to reaffirm these young

people's faith in America, in our system of democracy. I ask Congress to listen to the young lobbyists who will be on Capitol Hill today. Send them home with the knowledge that Washington can hear their voices, too, that men and women who serve in democracy's house, the U.S. Capitol, truly serve the American people.

There are less than 2 months now before the start of a new school year. Let's show all our children that when it comes to making their classrooms and communities safe from gun violence, America did not take a summer vacation. Let's show them that politics can stop at the schoolhouse door, that this summer can be a season of progress and a season of safety.

I again say, I wish every American could have seen and heard these young people as the Attorney General, the Secretary of the Treasury, and I have just done. I was impressed, amazed, and heartened. I ask the Members of Congress to open their eyes, their hearts, their minds to what they have to say.

Now I'd like to introduce one of the people who is most responsible for all these fine young people being here today, the co-leader of this S.A.F.E. trip, David Winkler.

David.

[At this point, David Winkler, co-leader of the Sane Alternatives to Firearms Epidemic (S.A.F.E. Colorado) trip to Washington, DC, made brief remarks.]

The President. Great job. That was terrific. Thank you.

Mr. Winkler. I want to thank all the students for coming on this trip, and all of our chaperons for making it possible. Thanks, guys. You all deserve a big hand. *[Applause]*

The President. I think if you all stayed a couple of weeks, we would do very well. This is great. Thank you.

Yes.

Middle East and Northern Ireland Peace Processes

Q. Mr. President, a little bit later on today you will be meeting with Prime Minister Barak, who has asked you to take a step back from the peace process and let the parties work it out for themselves. I'm wondering, first off, if you are considering—do you think the time is right for him to do that? Conversely, do you think the time is right for you to get back into, directly, the Northern Ireland peace process?

The President. Well let me say first of all, on all these other questions unrelated to this subject, as all of you know, I'm going to be making a public statement with Prime Minister Barak later, and I will be happy to answer questions then. I'm not sure that the way you've characterized it is exactly what his request to me is going to be, so I think I ought to wait until we are out there together.

On Northern Ireland, let me say that this is a difficult day for those of us who have worked for years and who have worked over the last several weeks. It is a particularly difficult day for Prime Minister Blair and Prime Minister Ahern, who have performed heroic service, and it is hard for most Americans, I'm sure, and most people throughout the world to understand how a peace process could be stalled when both sides agree on every element of the peace process and both sides agree on exactly what they both have to do between now and next May. And the idea that this whole thing could fall apart over an argument over who goes first, sounds more reminiscent of something that might happen to these young people in their school careers, 6 or 7 years earlier in their lives.

I mean, that's basically what's going on here, and you all need to understand it. There is no difference of opinion here about what the Good Friday accords require, what the communities of Ireland and Northern Ireland have voted for, what they are all committed to do. They are having a fight over who goes first, and acting today as if the whole thing could be abandoned over that.

That cannot be allowed to happen. I do not believe it will be allowed to happen. I believe there is too much invested in this, and I believe sooner rather than later, we'll get this thing back on track.

But I've done what I could, along with the people in the communities and the British and the Irish Prime Ministers; they have been wonderful. I don't know what else they could have done. I don't know what else I could have done. But I just don't believe, as far as we've come, that this thing is going to come apart. This is not a good day for us, but I do not believe that it's going to come apart, and we'll keep working on it.

And I'll answer the other questions later.

Gun Control Legislation

Q. On gun control, will you veto legislation from Capitol Hill on juvenile justice if it does not contain a gun control provision?

The President. Well, I want to talk to the Attorney General about what else is in the bill, and I'd like to get her advice on that before I make a final decision. But I'll tell you what I will do: I will veto any legislation that appears to be gun control legislation that actually weakens the law. I mean, one of the things they were trying to do up there before was to actually go back and weaken the pawnshop part of the law and say that if a criminal puts a gun in a pawnshop and goes to jail, when they come back there shouldn't be a background check if you're coming back to get your own gun at a pawnshop. That's been the law for years and years, and they're even trying to weaken that law.

So I will not, in any way, shape, or form, countenance a weakening of the law. I will do whatever I think—I'll tell you the answer to that—I will do whatever I am convinced is best to increase the chances that we can pass responsible legislation to protect our children from guns, to keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them. That's what I will do.

But in terms of the details, I think the Attorney General will have to give me a briefing on it before I can make a final decision.

Thank you, and I'll see you in a couple of hours. Thank you.

Patients' Bill of Rights

Q. Patients' Bill of Rights?

The President. It's still a good bill. I'm bewildered by that, actually. I mean, I don't see how the majority is going to explain—we had 100 percent of our caucus and a couple from theirs, and I listened to the debate, and it still doesn't make any sense to me. All they can say is—either they can say, "We just don't want doctors to be able to refer their patients to specialists, or people to be able to stop at the first emergency room, or women to be able to keep their gynecologist throughout a pregnancy, or people with cancer to be able to keep their oncologist throughout a chemotherapy treatment," or they have to say what the health insurers are saying, which is, "Oh, this is going to really raise premiums."

The problem with their argument and all these millions of dollars they're spending on their advertising is that the Congressional Budget Office, which as you know—all of you know this now—for more than 4 years the Republican majority has held up as the sole authority on anything having to do with money in Washington, DC; they have held it up as an icon, and the Congressional Budget Office tells them that, at most, this could raise premiums \$2 a month.

So the health insurers have paid advertisement that says something different from their own Congressional Budget Office, and so now, they're only too happy to abandon the Congressional Budget Office that they waved in front of us like a sacred body for 4½ years.

So I don't know what's going on there. I know one thing—again, that's just like gun violence—you go out into this country and you will find 70 percent of Republicans, Democrats, and independents who believe in the provisions of the Patients' Bill of Rights; and you tell them that Congress says it will cost 2 bucks a month, the Federal Government experience is it costs less than one dollar a month, and the numbers will stay solid.

So there's something else going on here. And all I can say is I'm going to keep working for a good one. And I just—this is—this one is truly beyond me. I figure when the Congressional Budget Office came up after they had nourished it as the end-all and be-all of financial wisdom for 5 years, or nearly 5 years, that we would be home free and we could pass this in a bipartisan fashion, and the health insurers won't let them do it. That's really what's going on. They won't let them do it, and I think it's a sad day for health care in America. But we're not done yet, and this won't die.

Thank you.

2000 Election

Q. Are you being overly protective of Mr. Gore's campaign, sir? You've agreed to raise funds for him, and you took a shot at Mr. Bush yesterday. How do you respond?

The President. That's—I have nothing to say about that. Everything I said yesterday was in complete good spirits, and everyone that was there knew that we were all having a very good time—that we were all having a good time, and I think we ought to lighten up here on the politics and focus on the work.

You know, we're going to have an election in November and then you'll have somebody else to chew on after 2001. But between now and then, everyone who is in Congress and everyone who is in the executive branch is drawing a paycheck every 2 weeks, from them and their parents. They're paying us to go to work, and what we need to do is to be less obsessed with the politics and more obsessed with substance and deal with these issues.

And what I was trying to do yesterday was basically cut the atmosphere a little bit, give us something to laugh about—which they did—and then talk for a good period of time, probably more than a half hour, about the issues that are before us. I want us to focus on the work to be done. There's plenty of time later to worry about that. All of us that are drawing a check ought to be doing the people's business now.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. During the exchange, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters

July 15, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I am delighted to welcome Prime Minister Barak to Washington. As all of you know, he is the most decorated soldier in Israel's

history. And as a soldier, as Army Chief of Staff, Interior Minister, and Foreign Minister, he has made immeasurable contributions to his nation's security and its emergence as a modern, thriving

democratic society, time and again taking on tough tasks and getting them done right.

Now, as Prime Minister, he has put Middle East peace at the top of his agenda, telling his fellow citizens that Israel's triumph, and I quote, "will not be complete until true peace, trust, and cooperation reign between Israel and its neighbors."

Mr. Prime Minister, if your mentor, Yitzhak Rabin, were here today, I believe he would be very gratified, seeing the leadership of his cherished nation in your most capable hands.

For more than half a century, the United States has stood proudly with Israel and for the security of its people and its nation. Now, Mr. Prime Minister, as Israel again walks bravely down the path of peace, America will walk with you, ready to help in any way we can.

As we have seen before here at this house, as Israelis, Palestinians, Egyptians, and Jordanians have come together, what at first seems unlikely, even impossible, can actually become reality when the will for peace is strong. America will help as you move forward, as you put implementation of the Wye River agreement back on course, as you work for a final status agreement, as you seek to widen the circle of peace to include Syria and Lebanon and to revitalize talks among Israel and the Arab world to solve regional problems and build a prosperous common future. I look forward to our meeting and to strengthening the bonds between Israel and the United States.

First, Mr. Prime Minister, again, welcome. The podium is yours.

Prime Minister Barak. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I came here as a messenger of the people of Israel who have called for change and renewal, and I am determined to bring about change and renewal. I and the people of Israel attach great importance to the relations with the United States, its friendship and support, and its invaluable contribution to the peace process. The United States has always been true and tried friend of Israel, and President Clinton personally has played an important role in changing the Middle East landscape.

I came to Washington following a series of talks with a number of Middle East leaders. I assured them that we would work as partners with mutual trust in order to overcome all the challenges and complications that are still awaiting us down the street.

We agreed that we need to abide by the previous agreements signed by all parties, including the Wye accords. It is our intention to inject new momentum into the peace process and to put it back on all tracks. For this, we need American leadership and support all along the way.

Mr. President, we are on the threshold of the 21st century and the third millennium. Mothers, fathers, and children all across the Middle East yearn for the dawn of a new era. They expect us to provide them with a better and safer future. We cannot let their hopes down. Together, as partners in the search for peace, we can help transform the Middle East from an area of confrontation and enmity to a region of peace, security, and prosperity.

I look forward to all my meetings here, and I hope that this visit will usher in a new era in the peace process and further deepen American-Israeli relations.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister—

Q. Mr. President—

President Clinton. Let me tell you—here's what we'll do. We'll take a couple of questions from the Americans and a couple of questions from the Israelis, but we'll start with a question from the American press.

Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News].

U.S. Role in Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, when you say as you did the other day, words to the effect that the United States perhaps should step back somewhat and let the parties do more of the work, what do you mean by that?

And, Mr. President, how would that change U.S. involvement in the process?

Prime Minister Barak. I think that the United States can contribute to the process more as facilitator than as a kind of policeman, judge, and arbitrator at the same time. This was the tradition when Yitzhak Rabin was leading the peace process, and I deeply believe that this is the right way to have the best kind of inference and the best kind of contribution that the United States can bring into the peace process.

It is clear to all of us that without United States participation, contribution, and without the leadership that had been shown in the past by the President—and I hope will be shown in the future by the American administration—we won't be able to reach a peace. And I'm

confident that we'll find these resources and move forward towards peace that all our peoples are awaiting.

President Clinton. I agree with what the Prime Minister said. I thought that the peace process worked best when we were essentially facilitating direct contacts between the parties and helping to make sure that there was a clear understanding, helping to make sure that we were there to do whatever we could do to, now and in the future, to make sure that it would work.

We took a more active role, in effect, as a mediator when the bonds of trust and the lines of communication had become so frayed that we were in danger of losing the peace process. And I did not want that to happen, and I didn't think either side wanted that to happen. So we did what was necessary to keep it going. But, obviously, if there is a genuine priority put on this, there's a sense of trust and mutual communication on both sides—the people in the region have to live with the consequences of the agreements they make; it is far better for them to take as large a role as possible in making those agreements. And so, to that extent, I agree with the Prime Minister.

Do you want to call on an Israeli journalist? Is there anyone—

Visit of Prime Minister Barak

Q. Mr. President, when you say that you are waiting for Mr. Barak as a kid that's waiting for a new toy, you don't think that by this remark you're making some kind of patronizing on Mr. Barak, that you want to play with him? What kind of game do you want to play with Mr. Barak?

President Clinton. No, I don't think it's patronizing at all; it's just the reverse. What I'm saying is that the United States is a sponsor of the peace process. We have done what we could consistently for more than 20 years now through all kinds of administrations to try to advance the peace process. I have probably spent more time on it than anyone has, and certainly I've spent a lot of time on it.

But my view is that we should not be in a patronizing role, we should be in a supportive role. We should do what is necessary to keep the peace process going. But you heard what the Prime Minister said. He said that the United States' role was essential, it was best if it worked as a facilitator. He has already gone to see all

the leaders of the region with whom he must work, or many of the leaders of the region with whom he must work, which I thought was the right thing to do in the right order. So I was supporting the position that he took.

Prime Minister Barak. Wolf Blitzer [Cable News Network], you are half American, half Israeli, so you get priority. [Laughter]

Q. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. I think what the previous reporter, Shimon Shiffer, was asking the President—I don't think the President necessarily understood the question. Your comment at the Democratic fundraiser in Florida the other day, when you said you were as excited as a young kid with a new toy about the meetings that you're going to have with the new Prime Minister, which today have caused some consternation, headlines in Israel—that you were referring to the Prime Minister as a new toy.

President Clinton. No, no—I see, yes—

Prime Minister Barak. May I tell you Wolf, that I feel like someone who got the mission of diffusing a time bomb, and I believe that we are all under urgent need to deal very seriously not with a tricky interpretation of an innocent favorable statement but by looking into the real problems and focus on solving them.

President Clinton. Yes, let me say, though—I didn't understand, you're right. Thank you, Wolf. That is—in English, what that means is that you are very excited. It has no reference to the Prime Minister. For example—[laughter]—I would never do that. For example, if I—no, no, if I were taking a trip to Hawaii, I might say, I'm as excited as a kid with a new toy—doesn't mean I think Hawaii's a toy, if you see what I mean. It means that—it's a slogan, you know. In American English, it means I am very excited about the prospect of the rejuvenation of the peace process. And that's all it means. I would never say such a patronizing thing, ever.

So I thank you; thank you, Wolf. This is a historic moment. Blitzer helps me make peace with the press and the people of Israel. That's wonderful. [Laughter] Yes, now you get a real question.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, the Prime Minister has suggested that he's going to have to use up a lot of his domestic political capital in Israel in order to fully implement the Wye agreement. Would

it be wise to go right away to the final status issues and let them save some of that political capital for the tough decisions Israel is going to have to make down the road? Would you be willing to go along with deferring some of the agreements that were achieved at Wye?

President Clinton. First of all, I'm not quite sure that's what he said, but I think that those kinds of questions ought—may be properly to be asked of us after we have a chance to have our meeting. But the problem is, we have—maybe we ought to let him answer it—but there is another party there, and they have their expectations. So maybe I should let the Prime Minister answer that.

Prime Minister Barak. We abide by an international agreement, Wye agreement included. It had been signed by an Israeli freely elected government, by the Americans, and by Chairman Arafat. We are committed to live up to it. But there is a need to combine the implementation of Wye with the moving forward of the permanent status agreement. It could be this way: first Wye, then final status. It could be this way, but only through an agreement with Arafat after mutual, open, frank, and direct discussion.

If we together agree, whether with the Americans and Arafat, that something could be made in order to bring those two elements together, I hope and believe that even the international press would not resist it very forcefully.

Prime Minister Barak's Possible Meeting With President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Q. Prime Minister Barak, you have met with President Mubarak; you have met with President Arafat; you have met with King Abdullah. What are the possibilities of a meeting between you and President Hafiz al-Asad?

Prime Minister Barak. We still wait to see. When the time comes, I hope we'll be able to meet. It takes two to tango. I'm ready; the arena is ready; maybe the dancing instructor is ready. We have to find opportunity and begin.

President Clinton. Now, let me say that is not a patronizing remark toward President Asad as the Prime Minister's dancing partner. [*Laughter*]

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], go ahead.

Israeli Settlements

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, when do you plan to disband the heavily armed settlements in Palestine?

Prime Minister Barak. I'm not sure whether I understood the question, so could you please repeat it?

Q. There are more and more settlements being built around Jerusalem and so forth. Are you going to disband them?

Prime Minister Barak. No. I'm not going to build new ones. I'm not going to dismantle any one of them. Israeli citizens live in them. They came to these places, almost all of them, through an approval of the Israeli Government. We are responsible for them. But the overall picture will be settled once we end the permanent status negotiation and whatever will be agreed, we will do. I believe in a strong block of settlements that will include most of the settlers in Judeo-Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Arab-Americans

Q. Mr. President, many Arab-American organizations in this country are very skeptical about Arabs getting a fair chance in Israel, while Arab-Americans from Arab descent and from this country going to Israel having very harsh treatment. There are four people sitting in jail without due process. They are badly treated at the airport. Can you comment on that?

Prime Minister Barak. I will answer. I'm ready to look into this problem. We have no intentions to humiliate or to intimidate any Arab citizens, be it Israelis, Americans, or of other countries. And I cannot respond directly to the story you are telling since I don't know the details.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

Palestinian Right of Return/Location of U.S. Embassy in Israel

Q. Mr. President, do you personally believe in the Palestinian right of return, even though your comments perhaps at the press conference with Mr. Mubarak might not reflect a change in U.S. policy?

And to Prime Minister Barak, one issue here in the States has been the question of moving the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv. Do you think that that has to happen? I'm sorry—from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Thank

you. Do you believe that that needs to happen now?

Prime Minister Barak. Be careful about the directions. [Laughter]

Q. Do you believe that that needs to happen now, or can that wait for progress in the peace process?

President Clinton. Do you want me to go first?

First of all, as you correctly stated, nothing that I have said should be interpreted as a change in United States policy. I do think there will be a general atmosphere when the peace is finally made which will be positive. That's all I said.

On that question, the question you asked me, that is explicitly an issue stated for final status negotiations by the parties; that's part of the final status talks. The United States, as a sponsor of the peace process, has asked the parties to do nothing to prejudge final status issues. We certainly should be doing nothing to prejudge the final status issues. That is why I have had a consistent position on that, on the Embassy, on every issue. Whatever else we do, the United States has no business trying to prejudge these final status issues. That's what the parties have to work out in the final status talks.

Q. But Mrs. Clinton has certainly prejudged them.

Prime Minister Barak. As the Prime Minister of Israel, I would like to see all the Embassies from all around the world coming to Jerusalem, and we will do whatever we can to provide the preconditions for it. I feel that the essence of the peace effort that we are trying to drive forward right now is to bring within the shortest possible time a new landscape, political landscape in the Middle East that will make the

whole question irrelevant; you will see all the Embassies together, side by side, in Jerusalem.

Thank you very much.

Israeli Astronauts

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, is there going to be Israeli astronauts on the space station? Are you going to discuss this issue, and do you desire such?

Prime Minister Barak. I like Israelis, especially Israeli astronauts. There is an officer, highly competent officer in our air force, and I would be more than glad to see him walking in space when we enter the new millennium, maybe in 2001 or 2002.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you. We have to go to work.

First Lady's Views on Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what about Mrs. Clinton? She's prejudged the issues. What about Mrs. Clinton's prejudgment, Mr. President? Tell us about Mrs. Clinton's prejudgment, sir.

President Clinton. That's why Senator Moynihan's law is good; every individual Member of Congress can express a personal opinion, but because of the waiver, the United States does not have to prejudge the final status issue. That's good. That's the way the law is set up, and it's good.

Q. Also, she's not President, is she?

President Clinton. That's right.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:29 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. Prime Minister Barak referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A portion of the remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

July 15, 1999

I share the regret that the people of Ireland and Northern Ireland feel at the setback in the peace process. They have voted overwhelmingly for peace. They want a permanent end to violence and to the potential for violence. The cry

for a peaceful, inclusive, democratic society in Northern Ireland has never been stronger.

Real progress has been made on all sides toward fulfilling the solemn commitments spelled out in the Good Friday agreement. It is incumbent on all parties to carry out their obligations

under that accord. I am convinced that it is possible to achieve full implementation of this historic agreement in all its aspects by next spring, as contemplated by its terms.

The British and Irish Governments intend to conduct over the next few weeks an interim review of the implementation of the agreement aimed at overcoming the hurdles in the peace

process. For the future of all the people of Northern Ireland who want an enduring peace and a normal life, I call upon all those involved to find the way to get the peace process back on track. I am ready to assist Prime Minister Blair, Prime Minister Ahern, and the parties in any way I can to achieve this goal.

Statement on Senate Action on Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

July 15, 1999

Tonight's party line vote for a weak, unenforceable Patients' Bill of Rights is the wrong course for America. The Republican leadership's bill is a Patients' Bill of Rights in name only.

It fails to protect more than 110 million Americans including the vast majority of Americans in HMO's. For those it does cover, this bill fails to ensure patients' access to the specialists they need; fails to ensure patients the rights to keep their doctors throughout a course, a treatment; fails to prevent insurance company accountants from making final calls on medical decisions; and it fails to hold health plans accountable for actions that harm their patients.

If Congress insists on passing such an empty promise to the American people, I will not sign the bill. Passing a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights should not be a partisan issue. This should be about protecting patients, not insurance companies.

We will not stop working on this critical issue until we provide patients the protections they need. The American people know the difference between a good and bad bill. Every major doctors, nurses, and patients organization in the country knows the difference. I believe that the will of the people will still prevail in this Congress.

Memorandum on Occupational Illness Compensation for Energy Contractor Personnel

July 15, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Energy, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Assistant to the President for Economic Policy

Subject: Occupational Illness Compensation for Energy Contractor Personnel

Contractor personnel working for the Department of Energy (DOE) and its predecessor agencies helped our Nation win the Cold War but often faced dangerous working conditions. A small number of them were exposed to beryllium, a metal used in the production of weapons, and subsequently contracted chronic beryllium disease (CBD), a debilitating lung disease for which there is no cure. Most of those ex-

posed worked under contract for the DOE and are not covered by the Federal workers' compensation program. As a result many of those with CBD have not received the occupational illness benefits otherwise available to regular Federal employees.

Today, I am pleased to announce that my Administration will submit draft legislation to the Congress that would create a new program to give DOE contractor employees with CBD and beryllium sensitivity the same benefits—certain medical costs and lost wages—now available to Federal employees. The American people believe in fairness, and I am sure that they would

find it fair to provide this reasonable compensation to this small group of people who contributed so much to their country's well-being and who now are suffering from this incurable disease.

Under my draft legislation, the Department of Labor would administer a program similar to the Federal Employee Compensation Act (FECA) program, which currently provides Federal workers a proportion of lost wages, medical costs, rehabilitation, and training. My draft legislation also would compensate workers whose beryllium sensitivity forced them into lower-paying jobs. As with all workers' compensation systems, the program will serve as an "exclusive remedy," barring individuals with work-related illness

claims from bringing litigation against the Federal Government.

Recognizing that other toxic and radioactive materials also may contribute to occupational illnesses, I direct you to participate in an interagency review led by the National Economic Council focusing on whether there are other illnesses that warrant inclusion in this program and how this should be accomplished. This interagency review should be completed by March 31, 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Remarks at Amos Hiatt Middle School in Des Moines, Iowa July 16, 1999

The President. You know, when Tom Harkin said that anybody with any sense would take their coat off—[laughter]—I didn't know whether that meant I didn't have any sense or he just gets hot under the collar quicker than I do. [Laughter] Actually, I think the answer is a lighter suit.

I am delighted to be here, and I thank you all for your wonderful welcome. And I don't mind that it's a warm one. I always love coming to Iowa, coming back here to this wonderful city. I want to thank Ruth Ann Gaines for her dedication and her remarkable remarks this morning. I want to say that as long as young people like Catherine Swoboda are exhibit A for Iowa education, this country is going to do just fine. I thought she was terrific.

I thank Secretary Riley for coming with me. Many of you in Iowa may not know it, but Dick Riley and I began our careers as Governors together 20 years ago this year, and we've been working at education for a long, long time. I think that history will record that he is the finest Secretary of Education this country has ever had. And I'm very grateful to him, and I thank him.

I would like to thank Superintendent Witherspoon and your principal, Gary Eyerly, for welcoming us to this school. And I want to thank all the public officials who are here.

I know in addition to the Governor we have Lieutenant Governor Pederson, Attorney General Miller, Secretary of State Culver, and State Treasurer Fitzgerald. They're all over there. I thank them for joining me today. And Senate Minority Leader Michael Gronstal, thank you all for being here.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to my good friend Congressman Leonard Boswell, who is also a stout supporter of education. And I think it is appropriate that he's here because he's here with his wife, Dody, and I'd like to her to stand, because yesterday she retired as a teacher after 31 years. Thank you very much; bless you.

And I want to acknowledge that Ruth Harkin is here with Tom today, and to tell you that for most of my administration she was a very valuable member of the Clinton-Gore team and played a major role in our economic programs. And I want to thank her.

And finally, let me say that, as you can see, every time he talks, there is no one in the United States Senate who is more passionate about what he believes than Tom Harkin. And he believes in the education of our children. It's easy to understand why, from his own experience. Most of you probably know that his father was a coal miner who didn't finish the eighth grade; his mother was an immigrant with

little formal education. Thanks to an ROTC scholarship, he put himself through college. Now he sits next to a Rockefeller in the United States Senate. [Laughter] It's America, and Tom Harkin is the best of America.

You know, I must say, Jay Rockefeller always hates it when we do that to him. [Laughter] He is also a very good man. And you heard Tom Harkin say that because of his efforts, Iowa will receive another \$10 million this year to help renovate schools. But I want to do that for all our schools that need it.

I want to thank some people who are involved in this issue who are not here today: Congressman Charles Rangel, the House sponsor of our school bill; the many members of the AFT, the NEA, the Council of Great City Schools; the building and construction trades who have fanned out to Philadelphia, New York, New Orleans, Buffalo, Houston, Chicago, and Miami today to roll up their sleeves and help communities begin to repair their neediest schools.

You know, it is ironic that we're here talking about this school issue, because we are in America in the last year of the 20th century, in this millennium, enjoying the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history, nearly 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded, the highest homeownership in history.

Here in Iowa, unemployment is a whopping 2.6 percent. Homeownership is almost at 75 percent. Wages are rising nationwide for the first time in 20 years for all classes of workers, and even faster here. I feel good about that. I feel good about the fact that compared to 6½ years ago the air and water are cleaner, the food is safer, and 90 percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the entire history of our country.

I feel good about the 100,000 young people who have signed up to serve their communities in AmeriCorps and earn money to go to college. I am grateful, with the help of people like Tom Harkin and Leonard Boswell, that this administration has been able to preserve or set aside more land for the American people and our children's future—from the California redwoods to the Mojave Desert to the Florida Everglades—than any administration in history, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. I am grateful for all of that.

But what I came here to ask you is, what are we going to do with our prosperity, and what are we going to do with our surplus? This is a time of confidence and pride. But, as many people have said, the time to fix the roof is when the Sun is shining. And that is literally true in the case of school construction.

Are we going to develop some sort of collective amnesia and pretend that these times have always been here, always will be here, and we can do whatever we want to do that feels best in the moment, or seems most politically popular? Or are we going to think about the children here and the 21st century and what America will be like 10 years from now, 20 years from now, 30 years from now, when they will have children in these schools?

That is what I want to say. You know, you folks should be glad to see me in Iowa. I'm the only guy that's been here in weeks that's not running for anything. [Laughter] What I am doing is trying to think about everything we can possibly do in these last days of this century. The Clinton-Gore administration is not running out the clock, hoping the good times will last. We are trying to push the ball down the field. We are trying to think about what it takes to build that bridge to tomorrow that all our children can walk across, what it would take to give opportunity to all of our people, to build a community of all of our people, to maintain our Nation's leadership for peace and freedom and prosperity around the world, to look at the long-term challenges.

I'll just mention three today, to get to the school construction issue. But you have to understand where the school construction issue is; you have to see it as a part of the big debate going on in Washington: What are we going to do with our prosperity? How should we handle this surplus, the one we have today and the one we're projected to have tomorrow? Otherwise, you couldn't begin to figure out why in the world we just don't do this. I mean, you must all be sitting out there thinking this is a no-brainer, just from what everybody else has already said before I got up here.

I believe that when you look at where we were just 6½ years ago, we had quadrupled the national debt in 12 years. The deficit was \$280 billion. It was projected to go to 380 this year. Now we have the biggest surplus we've ever recorded, and we're projected to be able

to maintain those surpluses into the future, indefinitely.

Now, every farmer here knows that nobody can predict the future. That does not mean that every year we'll have exactly what is predicted. What it means is, if we have predictable economic performances, which is every so often we'll have a downturn, and then we'll have an upturn, then we'll have a downturn, then we'll have an upturn, on average, we will produce the surpluses we project to produce over the next 15 years. That's what it means. These projections are not based on everything will be hunky-dory every day of the next 15 years. So they're not unrealistic.

But we have to decide—since we haven't been in it—did you ever think when I was here running in '92 we would be back here having a debate about what to do with the surplus? [Laughter] This is a high-class problem. But it's just as important to get the answer to a high-class problem right as it is to one that you wish you didn't have to deal with. It's not like going to the dentist. But if we don't handle it right, we'll be going to the dentist, and nobody will give us a shot to deaden the pain. We have got to deal with this issue in the proper way.

Let me just mention three things. We have to deal with the aging of America. Iowa has got a high percentage of people over 65. The number of people over 65 will double in 30 years. The older we get the more people that will be drawing Social Security and Medicare and the fewer people will be paying into it. This is not rocket science; this is basic math.

I believe before we pass a big tax cut we should save Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit to Medicare for the 21st century so that—[applause]—why? That's going to save everybody a lot more money in the long run than a tax cut. What's going to happen? What's going to happen if we don't? This is not just about the elderly. I'm not just looking out for the baby boomers that are going to retire in a few years. You know what will happen.

How many family stories do you know right now where parents with little children are also taking care of their parents, because it's the right thing to do? But we have Social Security and Medicare so that we can balance the responsibilities of the generations and so that families can take of their own needs and look to

their children as they go along. So this is not just about the elderly. This is about the children and grandchildren of the baby boom generation.

The second thing we ought to do is take care of the economy. And I would like to mention just two things, one of which you know very well. One is, there is still a lot of places in this country that aren't participating in the economic recovery. The big problem on the farm is we've had 4 years in a row of worldwide record harvests for the first time in history and an economic collapse in 1997 in Asia, so markets shrink, the products go, prices collapse.

Audience member. Freedom to farm—

The President. Exactly right. As Senator Harkin and I warned—Congressman Boswell and I, we were all three laughing about it—we said, you know, the people who put in that freedom to farm act acted like there never would be a bad year on the farm. And now last year we dealt with it. Today I'm going to meet with some of your farmers, and we're working on it. The Vice President called me after he had a chance to meet with some farmers here this week, and we talked about it.

But the point I want to make is, you have farmers; you have people in Appalachia; you have people in the Mississippi Delta; you have people who live on the Indian reservations; you have people who live in the inner cities; and even though we're doing better than we've ever done, there's still a lot of people who aren't part of this train. And there are ways to give everybody a chance who's willing to work to be a part of it. That ought to be something we do with our prosperity. We ought to give everybody who's willing to work a chance to be a part of that prosperity. And I think it's very important.

One thing we can do that will help the economy more than anything else is, if we adopt the plan I put out to save the majority of the surplus for Social Security and Medicare, since it's not needed now—while we save it we can pay the debt down so much that by 2015, in 16 years, for the first time since 1835, this country can be out of debt.

If you're a middle class person, why should you worry about that? Because if we're out of debt it means lower interest rates; higher investment; more jobs; higher wages; lower college

loan, credit card, car payment, and home mortgage rates. It means a more stable world economy over the long run. It means a better environment for farmers and manufacturers and everybody else. It is a good thing to do.

Now, what I want to tell you is, we can do all that and still have a tax cut and still invest in education. But we cannot pretend that there are no consequences to proposing a tax cut that will cut education and prevent us from saving Social Security and Medicare and mean we can't pay off the debt and we can't do these other things. There are choices to be made, and we should be thinking about the children and the future. And as we have proved the last 6½ years, when you do things that are right for the long run, often they turn out to be right for the short run, as well.

And so I say to you, this school issue is a part of this debate, this school construction issue. We propose a tax cut to help people save for retirement, take care of long-term care needs of their family, take care of their child care needs, and also to induce people to invest in more school construction with a big tax break. It is very, very important.

And you've already heard about Iowa's needs. You've heard Secretary Riley talk about America's needs. In spite of all—what you have to understand is, the school enrollments, as big as they are, are fixing to explode. And we've got to do some things about it. We've got to do what Governor Vilsack wants to do everywhere in America. Hardly anybody has done as well as he has. We've got to hook up all the classrooms in the country to the Internet. And we've got to have teachers to go into the classrooms—2.1 million are going to retire over the next few years. Dody is the beginning of a wave in America. And we've got to find young people to go in there and take their places. And we've got to have good facilities for people to visit, to learn in.

You know, I can still remember every schoolroom that I ever was in in my life. And a lot of old schools can be modernized, but when you've got kids—I've been to school districts, literally, literally, with one elementary school with 12 house trailers out behind it. Not one or two. Twelve!

So we have to deal with this. And there are serious consequences to not dealing with it. Now, if our school construction initiative passes as a part of our tax cut proposal and our edu-

cation program, it will help communities have \$25 billion over the next 2 years for school construction. That's enough to build or modernize 6,000 schools.

Now, if you compare that to the Republican proposal you will see that their plan is 644 schools. Ours is nearly 10 to 1. So somebody can say, well, we have a school construction proposal—6,000 is better than 644.

We're having the same discussion about teachers. Last year I was thrilled—in the teeth of an election year, we had a bipartisan agreement to put 100,000 teachers in our schools, because the classes are getting bigger and it would allow us to lower class size in the early grades to an average of 18. We just had another national study come out the other day about how important that can be and how the learning gains can be permanent. And just 2 weeks ago Secretary Riley and I announced \$1.2 billion to help States and local school districts hire the first 30,000 of those 100,000.

But now the majority in Congress wants to back off from that. They have other ways to spend the money. They want to give the money out and not guarantee that it will go to hire new teachers. I feel that if you make a promise in an election year, you ought to keep it the next year, too. If it was a good idea last year, it's still a good idea.

So I say to you, these are two things that we ought to do. We need to do this school construction program. We need to finish the work of hiring 100,000 teachers. We need to finish the work that Governor Vilsack has done so much on here of wiring all of our schools. We need to finish these things. It all comes down to this: What do you want to do with this moment of prosperity?

And let me say one thing—you know, Washington tends to be a more partisan place than most places in America—maybe than anyplace in America. I've done what I could to try to unify this country. Most Americans, whether they're Republicans or Democrats or independents, that have kids in the schools want them to go to good schools.

I'll bet you there are a lot of school elections in Iowa where Republicans and Democrats vote the same way for school bond issues or on educational proposals. This is not always an ideological issue. This should be an issue that brings America together. But issues that unify people in the country have a way of dividing people

in Washington. We had the same thing happen with the Patients' Bill of Rights; you probably saw that.

We had this crazy idea, we Democrats did, that everybody in a managed care plan in America ought to be able to see a specialist if their doctor said they should see one. Or, if they lived in a big city and they got hurt in an accident, they ought to be able to go to the nearest emergency room, not be driven halfway across town. Or, if their employer changed managed care providers while a woman employee was in the middle of a pregnancy or a man or a woman was in chemotherapy, they ought to be able to keep their doctor until the treatment was over.

And if somebody hurts you with a bad decision, you ought to be able to get redress for it. Now those are rights that I enjoy under the Federal Health Care Plan and the Congress enjoys and every Federal employee enjoys. And the Congress—the Republican majority's own budget office said this would add at most \$2 a month to a managed care premium. In the Federal system, it added less than \$1 a month when I put them in.

Now, I don't know, but I believe in Iowa when you go to the doctor's office, they don't ask you if you're a Republican or a Democrat. [Laughter] And I don't believe when the children come to school here they ask you if you're a Republican or a Democrat. These are things that should unify us. And so I ask you to please, please do what you can to talk to all the members of this congressional delegation; ask them to support us on 100,000 teachers; ask them—it's still not too late to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights that gives the rest of you the protections we have in Congress and the White House and the Federal Government. And ask them to make a part of any tax cut plan a school construction initiative that will build or modernize 6,000 schools.

You think about this young woman who introduced me today. I have seen people like her all across America, marvelous kids in the poorest corners of this country—kids in schools that are 75 years old that haven't been fixed, where the kids walk up the steps and they see broken windows every day, where there are rooms, in some cases whole floors they can't even go on. They deserve better.

How in the world can we say to them, we had the most prosperous time in American history; we had the biggest surplus in history; we dug ourselves out of debt; but all we thought of was ourselves and the next election; we didn't have the time or money or vision to think about you and your future? We are a better country than that. All of us are, without regard to party. Everywhere else but Washington, DC, you would never hear anybody discarding this argument. I implore you, help us to get this done this year. The children of America deserve 21st century schools.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to 1998 Iowa Teacher of the Year Ruth Ann Gaines, who introduced the President; incoming eighth grader Catherine Swoboda; Eric Witherspoon, superintendent, Des Moines Independent Public Schools; Gary L. Eyerly, principal, Amos Hiatt Middle School; Gov. Tom Vilsack, Lt. Gov. Sally Pederson, State Attorney General Tom Miller, Secretary of State Chester J. Culver, State Treasurer Michael L. Fitzgerald, and State Senator Michael Gronstal of Iowa; Representative Leonard L. Boswell's wife, Darlene (Dody); and Senator Tom Harkin's wife, Ruth, former President and Chief Executive Officer, Overseas Private Investment Corporation. The President also referred to the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-127).

Exchange With Reporters in Des Moines

July 16, 1999

Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you have any reaction to Senator Lott's comments—

The President. I can understand why he'd be uncomfortable about what he did. He denied the American people the right to the patient

protections he has. So they feel uncomfortable. But it's not too late; they can still change their position. They ought to think about—it's not a matter of name calling. Their budget office told him it would only cost \$2 a month premium. They've ignored their own budget people; they've now ignored everybody, and they basically signed up with the health insurance companies against all the doctors and all the nurses

and all the patients in America and denied other people what those of us in the Federal Government enjoy. I don't think it's right. But it's not too late to do right.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 3 p.m. at Amos Hiatt Middle School. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on House Action on Proposed Legislation To Provide Assistance to African Nations

July 16, 1999

I welcome and applaud passage today by the House of Representatives of the African growth and opportunity act. This historic initiative will set the foundation for a stronger partnership between the United States and Africa. I urge the Senate to act quickly so that we can strengthen the ties between our Nation and a continent on the verge of a new era of democracy and prosperity.

This legislation offers the opportunity for increased trade and investment between the United States and Africa to the mutual benefit of both. By working with African nations to build their economies, strengthen democratic government, and increase opportunities for all the people of Africa, we will help build strong, capable partners with whom we can work to counter the growing threats of terrorism, crime, environmental degradation, and disease.

Statement on the Death of Congressman George E. Brown, Jr.

July 16, 1999

I was greatly saddened to learn of the death of Congressman George Brown. When he last visited the White House, I noted that he was affectionately known as Mr. Science. His legacy of service and lifetime of contributions helped sustain American leadership across the frontiers of scientific knowledge. George Brown's support for science was drawn from his deep belief that science and technology could help achieve a

peaceful world and a just society. For almost 40 years, from his earliest days fighting racial inequality, George Brown challenged us to build a better world. Our Nation has lost a good man and an irreplaceable voice for science and justice.

Hillary and I extend our deepest condolences to his wife, Marta, and to his family.

Statement on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 16, 1999

Today I am notifying the Congress of my decision to suspend for another 6 months implementation of provisions of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act that allow legal action against firms trafficking in confiscated properties in Cuba. I take this action because it is in America's national interest and because it will hasten the day when the people of Cuba enjoy freedom and democracy.

I allowed Title III to enter into force in July 1996. It has put businesses around the world on notice that by trafficking in expropriated American property in Cuba, they risk significant liability in the United States. Coupled with aggressive implementation of Title IV of the law, this provision has helped deter such activities.

Since 1996, I have exercised the authority provided by the law to suspend the right to file suit. This has enabled the United States, in efforts led by Under Secretary of State Eizenstat, to work constructively with our friends and allies for the promotion of freedom and democracy in Cuba.

During this last 6-month period, friends and allies, in both word and deed, have steadily increased pressure on the Cuban Government to respect human rights and move toward democracy. Many national leaders have publicly and privately pressed senior Cuban officials on the need for reform. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights passed a resolution, sponsored by Poland and the Czech Republic, condemning Cuban human rights abuses. The European Union renewed its common position, com-

mitting member countries to take concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba. A number of nongovernmental organizations have also increased support to democratic groups on the island.

The Cuban Government's disgraceful human rights record underscores the need for our coordinated international strategy. Showing disdain for universally recognized human rights, the Government in February promulgated a draconian law that criminalizes a wide range of democratic activities, including any journalism independent of the state. After a closed trial in March, the regime sentenced four courageous leaders of the internal dissident working group to harsh prison sentences merely for speaking out about their nation's future. International condemnation of these acts has been clear and swift. Countries long eager for warm relations with the Castro regime have clearly reassessed the wisdom of that approach.

The growing international consensus on the need for concrete steps to promote democracy in Cuba gives us confidence that our multilateral strategy is working. It is sending a strong message to the Cuban Government that the time for change is now and a strong message to the Cuban people that we stand with them in their efforts to build a democratic future. I once again pledge my administration's strongest efforts to work with our friends and hasten the day when our Cuban brothers and sisters enjoy the rights and freedoms that we all cherish.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

July 16, 1999

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-114), (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond August

1, 1999, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted

Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senator Tom Harkin in Des Moines July 16, 1999

Thank you very much. First of all, thank you, Jerry, for having me in your home. The last time, he took me to his golf club; now, he takes me to his home. I can't wait for my third trip. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, Linda. Thank you all for being here. Governor, thanks for spending the day with me, with your Lieutenant Governor and your distinguished array of officials and the First Lady from the great State of Iowa. I want to thank Tom and Ruth for giving me the chance to come down here and be with them. I want to say it's wonderful to see Congressman and Mrs. Smith. He did everything he could to educate me about agriculture before he left the Congress, and I did the best I could to learn. I'm a little slow, but he's working on me still. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to all of you, first, I want you to know that I wanted to come here to say thank you to the people of Iowa. We had a big crowd over at the middle school earlier today when we were promoting one of the many initiatives Tom Harkin is identified with: our efforts to get a modest tax cut through that will lead to \$25 billion in construction or modification or modernization of 6,000 schools in this country. And so we were over there, and there were, I don't know, a few hundred people there. And the air-conditioning was out, so the atmosphere was warm and friendly. *[Laughter]* Secretary Riley and I, having come from the Washington heat, felt right at home.

And so, anyway, we were there and having a good time. And I said, "You know, you folks in Iowa ought to be glad to see me; I'm the first guy that's been here in weeks that's not running for anything." *[Laughter]* And I must say, after 24 years, most of which—25 now—

most of which time I was running every 2 years, it's a little awkward for me to say that. But I want you to know that I am profoundly grateful to the people of Iowa for being so good to me and Hillary and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, for voting for us twice, for supporting our policies, for giving us a chance to serve.

And the second reason I wanted to come down here is I love Tom Harkin, and I am profoundly grateful. You know, I'm not sure—and this is no offense to the people of Iowa—but I bet you could get elected and reelected Senator from Iowa without being the world's number one opponent of abusive child labor in foreign countries. He just did that because he thinks it's wrong and because he doesn't want children anywhere to suffer when children everywhere should be going to school and growing up to decent lives.

Yes, he's one of the greatest advocates for farmers this country has, and we've got an earful again today about the terrible dilemmas that our farmers are facing. And there's a general consensus, I think, on what causes it. And Tom and I both said back in 1994 or '95, when they passed that freedom to farm bill, that without a safety net this would happen sooner or later; unfortunately, sooner came before later. And we have to act there, and we will.

He also is perhaps the foremost advocate for the disabled in the United States Senate, perhaps one of the two or three foremost advocates for research and development in new technologies in sciences. There is hardly anybody who serves in either House in the United States Congress that has the combination of wide interest, deep knowledge, genuine compassion, and effectiveness. I have rarely known anyone in

public office that I thought was as truly good a person and as truly good a public servant as Tom Harkin. And you are very lucky to have him.

And I just want to say a couple of things. You're going to become—Iowa is once again at the vortex of America's political concerns. And everybody is coming here to tell you how great they're going to be if you vote for them. And one of the things I think we should posit is that most everybody who comes here will actually believe what they say. Having been criticized, as Tom noted inside, fairly mildly for a few years—[laughter]—it has been my observation that most people in politics in both parties actually pretty much believe what they say and believe in what they do and show up every day and try to pretty well do a good job.

Forty years ago this year, I took eighth grade science from a guy who was a coach and a science teacher named Vernon Dokey. Now, to be charitable, he was not the most handsome man I had ever seen. And he knew it. He was—he looked sort of like a grizzly bear that had been through a meat grinder, but walked out. [Laughter]

And he would come—it wouldn't be politically correct to do so today, but in those days it was bearable—he used to smoke these cheap cigars that he had in a cigar holder which he would grit in his teeth like that—[laughter]—and he had this sort of highly prominent, well-chiseled nose, and he was a big, burly guy. And he was not particularly conventionally attractive. Interesting—he had a beautiful wife who was our social studies teacher, who had a beautiful sister who was my geometry teacher. [Laughter]

And we were 13, and we were crazy, and we were trying to figure out how the world works. So old Vernon Dokey says one day in science class, he says, "You kids won't remember a thing I teach you about science, but I want you to remember some things I teach you about life." He said, "Now, look at me." He said, "I want you to know something. Every morning, I get up, and I go in the bathroom; I throw water in my face; I put shaving cream on; I shave my face; I wash that shaving cream off; I look in the mirror, and I smile, and I say, 'Vernon, you're beautiful.'" [Laughter] And he said, "Now, if you kids remember that, you'll get a lot further in life." [Laughter]

Now, you think about that. Forty years later, I still remember. So if you notice when I fight

with the Republicans, no matter how hard I fight with them, I don't question their motives or their patriotism or their love of country. When I think they're wrong, I say they're wrong.

Iowa and New Hampshire, because you go first, have a heavy responsibility to help to render judgment, if you will, for the country about not only candidates but issues. What I want to say to you is that I came to the Presidency in 1992, having been Governor of what my predecessor affectionately called a small southern State. And I loved every day of it. And to me, politics was about ideas, action, and people. It was not about Washington rhetoric, personal destruction, and who looked good in the morning paper. It was about ideas, action, and people.

And we believed that we could bring new ideas based on old-fashioned Democratic philosophy that everybody who was willing to work for it ought to have opportunity in this country; that we had to change to meet the changes of the time; and that everybody who was a responsible citizen ought to be part of America's community. It was pretty simple, really.

But if that's what was guiding you, then we no longer believed that you couldn't, for example, balance the budget and still increase investment in education; that you couldn't have a strong and effective Government and reduce the size and burden of Government. When you heard Tom say that the Vice President ran our reinventing Government plan—this is one of those—if you do a survey on this, people say, "I don't care; I still don't believe it." People do not believe it, but we have the smallest Federal establishment since 1962 when John Kennedy was President. We have eliminated hundreds of programs, and you can't name one of them. I'll give \$5 to anybody in this audience who can name two of the hundreds of programs we have eliminated. And we have a more vigorous, more effective Government.

We've got the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, very high wage growth, high business startups, highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment in history—all that is only evidence of the important thing: All elections are about tomorrow. All elections are about tomorrow. And a good record is only evidence of what

will be good in the future—however, very important evidence.

And many of these things we've had to fight with our friends on the other side, and Tom Harkin was always leading the fight. We said we could lower the crime rate, but you had to help these communities put police on the street, and you had to take more guns out of the hands of criminals. Well, they said, "If you try to put 100,000 police on the street, it wouldn't make a lick of difference. And if we checked the backgrounds of people that tried to buy handguns in gun shows, all you would do is make the hunters mad. And criminals didn't buy guns at gun shows, anyway." Well, years later, we haven't inconvenienced a single hunter, and 400,000 people—400,000 people—were not able to buy guns, because of their criminal backgrounds, at gun stores. So our arguments were right, and theirs were wrong.

They said we couldn't balance the budget, and we were going to provoke a recession. But we balanced the budget, biggest surplus in history, and we doubled our investment in education while we were doing it. So we have evidence here.

So I say to you as you think about the future of your State and Nation, there is evidence here. And what I want to say to you is, Tom Harkin and I—I'm not running for anything, and he's not running for anything right yet—[laughter]—but we and all the people that are running who are in public office, we're still drawing a paycheck from you every 2 weeks, and we should show up for work, and we should do things. I tell all the Republicans and Democrats in Washington all the time, if we agreed on everything I'm asking us to agree on, there would still be stuff for us to fight about. There will always be something to have a next election on. But we get hired to show up for work.

Now, the big question we have before us today is: What are we going to do with the surplus; what are we going to do with this period of bounty we have? And I would argue—I don't want to repeat my whole State of the Union Address, but I want to tell you, I would argue three things for sure. Number one, we ought to do whatever we can to deal with the aging of America, because when the baby boomers retire, we're going to have more people retired and fewer people working to support them. And if you want the seniors of this country to be able to have their Social Security and

their Medicare, and you want them to have it in a way that is secure and does not bankrupt their children so they can't afford to raise their grandchildren, now is the time to set aside most of this surplus to save Social Security and Medicare and provide a prescription drug benefit with Medicare. So I think that is a big deal.

The second thing I think we ought to do is everything we can to keep this economy going and then, to reach out and touch the people who have not been affected by the recovery. And let me just say on the first, the way I want to save Social Security and Medicare will keep us from spending that surplus and devote the interest savings on the surplus to making Social Security last longer, so we'll make Social Security last for more than 50 years, make Medicare last for more than 25 years, and make the country debt-free in 15 years, for the first time since 1835. Now, these are big things. We should not wait for another election to deal with these big things.

On the economy, the last thing we've got to do is to try to reach the people that aren't affected by the recovery. There are a lot of disabled people, as Tom would tell you, who want to go to work and could go to work. There are still people on welfare who want to go to work, who could go to work. There are whole regions of our country—from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Indian reservations to the inner city—that need new investment. And of course, there is the problem of the farm, which you are very well familiar with.

But consider the irony of the lowest unemployment rates in the country being in Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, all these farming States where we're at risk of losing a huge percentage of our family farmers unless there is both an emergency response and a different long-term course that they have available. So I say to you, yes, have the election; yes, have the debate; but let's keep on working for what's good for America, and let's not avoid the big choices; let's not pretend that we don't have to make them.

We're in the shape we're in today because we made the tough choices and we kept at it, and that's what the country needs to do. And that's the gift I want to give you, is that when you see me, you think I'm working and not enjoying the sunshine of our prosperity.

The last point I want to make is this—I thought about this today when I was in Iowa.

Politics is really personal to me. You know, in this debate we just had over the Patients' Bill of Rights, several doctors who are here today thanked me for that, thanked Tom for fighting for that. Look, here's the issue: More people than not are in managed care plans. A lot of them have done a lot of good; they've cut down on a lot of inflation and health care costs. But if your doctor says you need to see a specialist, no accountant should be able to stop your doctor from sending you to a specialist. If you get hit in an accident, you ought not to have to go by the nearest hospital to one that's farther way because that's the one covered by your managed care plan. Now, if you are working for a small business and your small business—your employer has to change coverage at some point and you're 6 months into a difficult pregnancy, you ought not to have to get another ob-gyn to finish your pregnancy. If you are half-way through a difficult chemotherapy treatment, you ought not have to get another oncologist to finish your treatment. Now, every physician in this audience will tell you this happens all the time in America. This is not some radical notion; this happens all the time. So all we said was that basically everybody in America ought to have the same protections that I gave all the people in the Federal programs—Medicare, Medicaid, the Federal health employees program, the veterans program—by Executive order. And we were actually attacked by our friends in the other party. Tom was attacked, because, they said, "Oh, you're relying on personal stories. You're trying to play on the emotions of the people." Well, get a life. *[Laughter]* I mean, what is politics about anyway? Why are we doing this?

Every time I come to Iowa, I think of two things. One of them I got hit right between the eyes with today. When I was here for the flood in 1993, I'd go out to sack my—you know, my sandbags, you were talking about that—I'd go out and do my sandbag deal. And I look up, and there is this child about so big, with a head about so big—huge bones coming out of her eyebrows—very short, large head, knobby elbows, gnarled knuckles, knobby knees. This child has brittle bone disease. She's 12 years old. She has been operated on already more than a dozen times. Her bones shatter at will. She has come all the way from Wisconsin to stand in the flood in Iowa to help people who

are putting the sandbags up, literally risking her life.

So I talked to this kid, and I said, "Where are you from?" And she said—and I said, "Well, how's your condition?" Because I've seen—you know, she's actually done pretty well. There are a lot of children who have that disease never get out of bed, they have to be prone for their whole life. But this kid is up walking. She said, "I told my parents I wanted to go down there." She said, "I can't hide my whole life. I've got to serve; I've got to be a citizen. I've got to do this like everybody else."

Then that child started coming to the National Institutes of Health for help. Tom Harkin—you know, all this money is put in the NIH all these years. So am I playing on your emotions? You bet I am. What else is there? What else is life about? What is politics about? This child has a chance at life.

And you know what happened? Six years later I go to American University and give a speech, and here is this girl, beaming, a freshman at American University, still growing, still getting stronger, still out there taking chances, doing things other kids wouldn't do with those problems, being brave. We didn't—none of us—Tom Harkin and I didn't have a lick to do with her courage, her bravery, her heart, her soul, her character. But because of what he did, she had a better chance. She had a better chance.

And I'll tell you another story: 1992, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, huge rally we're having out in front of Quaker Oats. And I'm working the crowd—*[laughter]*—after the speech, grasping for votes. And there is this lady there, this tall white woman, holding an African-American baby. And I said, "Whose baby is this?" She said, "This is my baby." And I said, "Well, how did you get this baby?" She said, "From Miami." She said, "This child was born with AIDS, and no one would take her, and she was going to be homeless, and so I took her."

Now, this is a good story, right? But what you need to know is this woman was living in a rented apartment with her two kids because she had been left by her husband. And she barely had enough money to support her own kids, but she couldn't bear to see this child be left alone, so she took in the other child. Okay, fast-forward to today. Today, at that middle school, Mama was there, since remarried, doing fine, with her daughter, giving me a report on her son, holding that beautiful child

who is almost too big for me to hold. And she has come repeatedly to the National Institutes of Health.

And I held her today, and I said, "Jimiya, how you doing?" She is so beautiful. And I have seen her a half a dozen times. She is so beautiful. And she said, "Oh, Mr. President, I'm giving myself my own shots now, and I'm going to be just fine."

Now, is this playing on your emotions? You bet it is. What is life about anyway? Tom Harkin didn't put a heart in that little girl or a heart in the mother. But she has a chance because of the kind of things he's fought all his public life for. And it is a beautiful story.

So I just ask you to be faithful to your friend Tom Harkin, to fight for the things we believe in. If your friends and neighbors wonder whether the President is right or whether the Republicans are right in saying we ought to take all the non-Social Security surplus and spend it on a tax cut right now and make everybody happy right here before the election, tell them that you think we have earned the benefit of the doubt with our record, and that, you know, we should not squander this. We ought to think about our children's future. We ought to think about what we're going to do when the baby boomers retire. We ought to think about how we can make everybody a part of this economy.

And remember the stories. That's part of what makes us who we are.

It's not about power. It's about ideas and action, and in the end, it's about people. When you breathe your last breath, you are not going to be thinking about what some arcane political philosophy was that you embraced. You're going to be thinking about who you liked, who you loved, how you felt when the seasons changed, and what you're proud of that you did for somebody else. And I want to be part of a political party that tries to give those gifts to America.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Jerry and Linda Crawford; Gov. Thomas Vilsack of Iowa, and his wife, Christie; Lt. Gov. Sally Pederson of Iowa; Senator Harkin's wife, Ruth, former President and Chief Executive Officer, Overseas Private Investment Corporation; former Congressman Neal Smith and his wife, Beatrix; American University student Brianne Schwantes who suffers from brittle bone disease; and Laura Poisel and her adoptive daughter, Jimiya, who was born with AIDS. The President also referred to the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-127). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Tom Harkin in Des Moines July 16, 1999

Thank you very much. First of all, I'm delighted to be in a true Iowa museum, the place where Tom Harkin went to his high school prom. I'll tell you, he is a silver-tongued devil, but when he started talking about bringing the love of his life to the high school prom, old Ruth said, "I don't know how he is going to get out of this one." [Laughter] Sure enough, there he was on his feet again, before you know it. [Laughter]

I want to thank many of you for many things. I want to thank my good friend Secretary Dick Riley for coming with me today and going to the school in Iowa and talking about the need to build or modernize thousands of new schools for America's children for the 21st century. I

thank him. I want to thank my great friend, and Hillary's great friend, Congressman Leonard Boswell for going around with us today and for representing Iowa's farmers and workers and educators and children so well in the House of Representatives. And Dody, thank you for your 31 years of teaching. Thank you very much. Thank you, Rob Tully, for your role in making it fun to be a Democrat again in Iowa. Thank you. Thank you, Lieutenant Governor Sally Pederson, for your leadership. And thank you, Jim Autry. And I'm glad you got a better office, because you deserve it, Sally. Thank you. And I want to say to Governor Vilsack and to Christie, this has been a very impressive administration to watch from afar.

We were—everybody in the White House—Hillary and Al and Tipper and I and all of us who work there—we were thrilled when Tom was elected, and we have been so impressed by his intelligence and his energy and his direction and his leadership, and it's just quite amazing to watch unfold. You know, you could elect him for 32 years if you like and still be just trying to get even with the Republicans.

I want to thank Ruth Harkin for her service in our administration which she left for more lucrative fields, but I hope not more rewarding one. She did a wonderful job. Yes, give her a hand. *[Applause]*

I'm here basically for three reasons tonight. First, I want to thank the people of Iowa for being very, very good to me, to Hillary, to Al and Tipper Gore, to our whole crowd; for voting for us twice, in '92 and '96; for making us always welcome; for always telling us what was going on here and in the heartland of America. I will never forget that. I have been here a lot, and I have loved every trip.

We had several hundred people at the school we visited earlier today, and I told them all they should actually be quite glad to see me because I was the first person who had been here in weeks and weeks who wasn't running for everything. I just wanted to come see you and say hello and see how you were getting along.

The second thing I want to do is to thank Tom Harkin. You know, I didn't say this at the other place—Governor Vilsack asked me to repeat my speech. Since I didn't write it down, I have hardly any idea what I said; it's going to be hard to do. *[Laughter]* I want to tell you something. When Tom Harkin and I entered the primaries in '92, my mother was really the only person who thought I was going to win, and you know, we had this sort of spirited race. And I didn't come to Iowa because I didn't think I should, because you all were for him, and you should have been.

And I sort of admired Tom Harkin from afar, but you really get to know a person—and he—in Iowa you get to know a person, but you get to know a person if you just kind of travel around and you're out there, you're bone tired, and you're still trying to make one more speech, shake one more hand, go to one more forum. And then I was fortunate enough to be elected. He didn't have to do anything for me. I want you to know that on every bright and dark day

of the last 6½ years, my wife and I have not had a better friend in the United States Senate than Tom Harkin. And I will never forget it.

I want you to know—I also want you to know, even more important, for everything that we have fought for that has made this a better, stronger country, that has given children a better future, that has helped to bring us together as one community, there is nobody in the Congress that has a better combination of intelligence and experience and heart and sheer ability to get things done than Tom Harkin. He is a precious asset for Iowa and the United States, and I am glad you are here to support him tonight.

He was very generous; he talked about me going to Switzerland to speak for the children all over the world who are the subject of abusive child labor. It's the sort of thing a President is supposed to do. But a person could be elected and reelected Senator from Iowa and never say anything about abusive child labor around the world. Tom Harkin was out for that issue a long, long time before I was. I was there because of Tom Harkin and his leadership.

And today the Governor and Leonard and Tom and I, we sat around and we met with some farmers—and I want to say more about that in a minute—but we know we've got a terrible problem in farm country all over America. And you can be sure that when something is done to help America's farmers, Tom Harkin will be in the forefront of that. He won't be in the forefront of that. He won't be dragging up the rear; he'll be there pushing everybody to do more, to do better, to think through it. And he'll be—every time somebody wants to do something that doesn't make a lick of sense based on decades of history on the farm, he will be there to remind people to do the right thing by America's farmers.

You know, he says I've been a good President for the disabled of America. I hope I have been. But if I have been, half of it is because of what I learned from Tom Harkin.

Let me just close with this—because I hope you will think about this as caucus-goers, but also as American citizens. You have to ask yourself, why are you here tonight? Why do you have the political views you have? What really matters to you? What do you think politics is about? Is it about money and power, primarily, and the kicks you get if you get invited to the White House or the statehouse or whatever? Or is it about what I think it's about?

I'll tell you what I think it's about. I think politics is about ideas and action and people. And I believe that the reason the country is in the shape it's in today is in no small measure because we had a different set of ideas. We really believe that we could create an America in the 21st century with opportunity for every person responsible enough to work for it, an America that was a community of people who were very different but had a common citizenship and a common humanity, an America that was leading the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity. We believe that. And we believe that we could go beyond the paralyzing debates that had put this country in a terrible hole in 1992, when we were out there running.

We thought you could improve the economy and improve the environment. We thought you could make it so people would succeed at work without being able—and still be able to succeed at home in the most important job any American has, raising children. We thought that you could be tough on crime without giving up personal liberty. We thought that you could have sensible gun control without interfering with people's right to hunting and fishing and sporting season. These are things we thought.

Now, we thought we could balance the budget and increase our investment in education. We thought we could cut the size of Government and increase its effectiveness and its impact in ordinary people's lives. And every step of the way, we were opposed by people who believe differently. And what I want to say today is that, yes, I'm glad that we've got 19 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 30-year low in the welfare rolls, a 26-year low in the crime rolls, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment in history. I'm glad for all that. I'm glad. But at this moment, I tell you that the people hire us to win for them tomorrow. And if we did a good job yesterday, most taxpayers think that's what they were paying us to do.

And the reason I say that is, I am very grateful that I've had the chance to be your President and grateful that I have had a chance to be the instrument of this. But what we need to think about is, what are we going to do tomorrow? What are we going to do tomorrow? And in particular, what is our obligation at this moment of enormous prosperity when we went from having the biggest deficit in history in 1992

to the biggest surplus we've ever had? What are we going to do with it? What are we going to do with this opportunity? And there are big decisions to be made here.

Tom Harkin and I are on one side and most of our friends in the other party are on the other side. But let me just mention three things, because you want to have fun tonight and you don't want to have a serious talk, but I want you to think about three things. Number one, I'm the oldest of the baby boomers, and when we retire there's going to be a whole bunch of us retired, and there will be more people retired and fewer people working than ever before, and we had better use this surplus now to save Social Security and modernize Medicare for the 21st century.

Number two, as everybody who knows—a farmer knows—not everybody who is a part of this country has participated in this recovery. From Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Indian reservation to the inner city to the farm to the disabled and welfare populations who still want to go to work, we can't quit until we put everybody on a track to opportunity in this country. And if we set aside most of the surplus for Social Security and Medicare, we can, in 15 years, be debt-free for the first time since 1835. That's what we ought to do.

And finally, we ought to give our children a better future. We ought not—we ought not to squander this surplus in a way that has not enabled us to invest in world-class schools, connecting the classrooms to the Internet, world-class teachers and enough of them to do the job, education. Save Social Security and Medicare first; pay down the debt; take care of education; then give the country a tax cut. That's what we believe. That's good for the future.

Now, what I said was—what I said over there at the other place that I just want to say is, I noticed in the debate over the Patients' Bill of Rights, where the Republicans won the battle in defeating our attempts to give every American the right to see a specialist, go to the nearest emergency room, stay with the doctor through treatment, but we will win the war—you—work.

But in this thing—during this debate, the Republicans were actually making fun of the Democrats for talking about stories, human stories of people who had been hurt because we don't have a Patients' Bill of Rights, and they acted like there was something wrong because a lot of them think politics is about power and

position. But we think it's about ideas, action, and people.

I saw a little girl today at that school that I first met in Iowa in 1992, an African-American girl being held by a white woman in a rally in Cedar Rapids. And I asked this mother, I said, "Whose child is this?" And she says, "This is my baby." And I said, "Where did you find this baby?" She said, "This baby was born in Miami with AIDS, and no one would take it, so I did."

And I came to find out this woman was divorced; her husband had left her; she was raising her own two children with modest income; but she cared enough about a child she had never known of another race, afflicted with AIDS, to take this child into her home. Today, at that school, that child was in the audience. She is tall; she is beautiful; she got up in my arms, and she said, "Mr. President, I can give myself my own shots now. I'm doing well in school, and I'm doing well." And she has gone—the reason she is still alive is in these 6½ years since I first saw her mother holding her—7 years now—she's been able to come to the National Institutes of Health and get good health care, even though she comes from a family of modest needs. Why? Because of the leadership that Tom Harkin has exercised over the years for health research and other research.

Now, this is a story—am I trying to affect your emotions? You bet I am. Is that wrong? No. This is what politics is about to us. When I see nurses weeping, weeping because the insurance company tells them that the doctor they worked for can't send a patient that is sitting there in front of them to a specialist to save their lives—is that somehow illegitimate to make laws based on those stories? No. That's what counts in life. What we care about is our relationships with each other, whether we've all got a chance to live out our dreams and live up to our God-given potential.

I told another story. When I was here in the flood in '93, I met a little girl when I was putting those sandbags up that wasn't even 5 feet tall. But she was already 13 years old. And her forehead was real big and bony, and her elbows and knees were prominent, and her knuckles were, because she lived with brittle bone disease and had already had more than a dozen operations in her life, and could have broken all the bones in her body sitting there working with the people stacking sandbags. And

she came all the way from Wisconsin to do it, because she wanted to be a good citizen. And she told her parents she couldn't hide in her life; she had to do something. There was a flood, people needed her help, and even though she had bone after bone after bone after bone broken in her body, she showed up like everybody else to be a good a citizen in Iowa when the flood came.

Now, just a few months ago, I had a rally at American University in Washington, DC. The same girl was there, a freshman in college, with all of her roommates—up there, still being a good citizen, showing up. Now, why do I tell you that? And that child made several trips to the National Institutes of Health in the last 6½ years, becoming stronger.

Now, did Tom Harkin have anything to do with the character of this child? No. Did he have anything to do with the heart of the other little girl with AIDS? No. Did he affect the mother with her generosity and her love? No. But did he do things as an elected representative of you that gave those kids a chance to have better lives and make this a better country? You bet he did. You bet he did.

So I tell you, people ask why you came here, why you support Tom Harkin, why you're a member of our party. Tell them you believe that politics and citizenship is about ideas, action, and people. Power and money are incidental—incidental—to the ability to advance ideas, take action based on those ideas, and help people if your actions turn out to be right.

Now, all of you young people, I can tell you, I just celebrated—Sally was talking about her 30th high school reunion—in a couple of weeks I'm going to have my 35th. And I want you to know, by the way, I don't know if I can go to this one because of the efforts we're making in the Balkans, in Kosovo. But if I miss it, it will be the first one I've ever missed. And I want to encourage you not to miss yours. Why? Because, I'll tell you something, the older you get and the closer you get to the end of your life's journey, the more you know that when it's all over, what you really care about is who you liked, who was your friend in good times and bad, who you loved, how your children were, how you felt in the Iowa springtime and in the fall and the winter and the summer—all the things that make you alive.

Politics, the purpose of politics, is to allow free people to be more fully alive and to help

each other have better lives. That's what we believe. And so I say, let them make fun of us for telling our stories. That is all that matters in the end. There is nothing abstract about America. It's a bunch of people who believe in liberty and who believe in each other and who believe that they make life better for their children. It is the story of people. Even George Washington was a person. So you remember that. You remember that.

I'm going to tell you one thing, and I'll let you go. Last week I went to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation where the Oglala Sioux live. The most famous Oglala Sioux was Crazy Horse, and they're building a great monument to him there, even bigger than Mount Rushmore. But the unemployment there today is 73 percent.

Before I went out there, the chief of the Oglala Sioux and a number of others came to see me at the White House, from the high plains, from Montana and the Dakotas. And they had a meeting, and they told me about the problems, the problems in their States on the farm. They told me the problems of the Indians with education and health care and all of that.

But we had just come out of this conflict in Kosovo—we weren't actually quite out of it yet. And the chief of the Oglalas stood up in a very dignified manner, and he said, "Mr. President," he said, "we have a proclamation supporting your action in Kosovo against killing people because of their religion and their ethnic background." And he smiled in a very dignified way, and he said, "You see, we know something about ethnic cleansing." But listen; he said, "But this is America." Now listen to this story. He said, "My great-grandfather was massacred at Wounded Knee." He said, "I have two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy; the other was the first Native-American fighter pilot in the entire United States military." He said, "Now their nephew, me, I am in the White

House talking to the President. I have one son"—I later met the boy—"I have one son," he said. "He is more important to me than anything in the world. But I would be honored to have him go and fight for my country against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. America has come a long way, and we should stop this wherever we can."

Why do I tell you that? That is a story about liberty and freedom and the absence of oppression passing down through the generations. That is the story of America. It is the unending effort to form a more perfect Union, to widen the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of freedom, to strengthen the bonds of community. That's what this guy represents to me. That's what my party represents to me. That's the promise of the Governor's administration to me. That is everything that I have tried to do in these 6½ years. And I am telling you, when you walk out of here tonight and somebody asks you why you were here, you ought to be able to tell them that kind of answer. And you keep fighting for it. And if you do, America's best days will be in the new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:53 p.m. at the Val Air Ballroom. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Harkin's wife, Ruth, former President and Chief Executive Officer, Overseas Private Investment Corporation; Representative Leonard L. Boswell's wife, Darlene (Dody); Rob Tully, chair, Iowa State Democratic Party; Lt. Gov. Sally Pederson of Iowa and her husband, James A. Autry; Gov. Tom Vilsack of Iowa and his wife, Christie; Laura Poisel and her adoptive daughter, Jimiya, who was born with AIDS; and American University student Brianne Schwantes, who suffers from brittle bone disease. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's Radio Address *July 17, 1999*

Good morning. I want to talk to you today about a great debate now underway in Washington, the debate over how best to use America's recordbreaking budget surpluses. That we

can even have this debate is remarkable. Just remember, 6½ years ago, when I first became President, we faced budget deficits that were \$290 billion and rising. In the previous 12 years,

those deficits had quadrupled the total debt of America.

But beginning in 1993, we put in place a new economic strategy of fiscal discipline, coupled with greater investments in areas like education, training, and technology. That strategy has helped to produce a private sector-led economic expansion of historic proportions. It's also produced not only a balanced budget but budget surpluses of \$99 billion this year and a projected surplus over the next 10 years of about \$2.9 trillion, including Social Security taxes.

Now, America must decide how best to use the fruits of our hard work. I believe we should stay with the fiscal discipline that got us here and invest the surplus to meet our long-term challenges. That's why I've proposed that we set aside the vast bulk of this surplus to protect and secure Social Security and Medicare and to modernize Medicare by adding a long-overdue prescription drug benefit.

By saving most of the surplus for Medicare and Social Security, we can also pay off all our publicly held debt by the year 2015. That would make America debt-free for the first time since 1835. What would that mean? It would mean lower interest rates, more business investments, more jobs, higher wages, lower car payments, lower house payments, lower credit card payments, lower student loan payments.

Now, my balanced budget would do this, while increasing investments in areas like education, technology, the environment, and defense. It would also offer a quarter of a trillion dollars in targeted tax cuts to help middle income families meet the crucial needs for child care, for long-term care for aging relatives, for saving for their own retirement, and tax cuts for inducing people to invest in building modern schools or rehabilitating those that exist now, and for investing in the areas of our country which have not yet fully participated in our recovery.

But my plan puts first things first. It says, first strengthen Social Security and Medicare and pay down the debt, take care of the baby boom retirement, take care of our families and our children, take care of the long-term challenges to America. Then, we can allocate the rest of the surplus for other spending priorities like education and for tax cuts.

Unfortunately, the plan the Republican leadership put forward this week does not do that. Their plan would devote virtually all the non-

Social Security surplus, nearly \$1 trillion, to a tax cut, while failing to extend the solvency of Social Security and Medicare even by a single day. The plan also doesn't go far enough in paying down the debt, which will mean higher interest rates and a weaker economy down the road, and it would force drastic cuts in areas where we should be investing more.

In education, for instance, I've proposed an education and children's trust fund that will, among other things, guarantee our ability to hire 100,000 new highly trained teachers to lower class size in the early grades. Yet early next week, the House Republicans will offer legislation that would go back on the bipartisan commitment both Republicans and Democrats made just last year to the American people to hire those 100,000 new teachers. We've hired 30,000 now, or we've given the States and school districts the money to do that. We shouldn't go back on a commitment that we made last year; that's the wrong way to go. But that isn't the worst of it.

Republican leaders have estimated their tax plan would cost more than three-quarters of a trillion dollars between now and the year 2010. What they haven't said is what it would cost after 2010 when the baby boomers retire and the need for revenues for Social Security and Medicare will be most acute. Earlier this week, I asked the Treasury Department to analyze the Republican plan's long-term impact. And the answer I've received is quite disturbing.

According to the Treasury Department's preliminary estimate, the costs of the Republican plan will explode between the year 2010 and 2019 from \$1 trillion a decade to an unimaginable \$3 trillion. At the very time the Nation will be confronting the demographic challenge of the baby boom, the Republican plan will blow a \$3 trillion hole in the Federal budget, threatening our ability to secure Social Security and Medicare for the next generation and risking return to the era of deficits with high interest rates and economic stagnation.

Tax cuts that size quite simply are bad economic policy. It's bad not to save Social Security and Medicare; it's bad not to pay the debt off. It is certainly bad to cut education at a time when it's more important to our children's future than ever.

So I say to Congress: Put first things first. Set aside most of the surplus for Social Security and Medicare. Make sure we invest enough in

education. Then, together, we can budget for the kind of tax cuts we need and can afford while we pay off the debt and guarantee a strong America in the 21st century.

This is a very good time for our country. We're on the right path; let's stay on it, use our surplus wisely, think about our children's future. Then the 21st century will be America's best days.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:30 p.m. on July 16 in Room 136 at Amos Hiatt Middle School in Des Moines, IA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Representative Michael P. Forbes' Decision To Join the Democratic Party

July 17, 1999

Politics at its best is about ideas, ideas that lead to real advances for the American people. That is why I welcome Congressman Michael Forbes' decision to join the Democratic Party, a decision based on our shared commitment to a vigorous, innovative agenda for America's future.

Our party is inclusive and committed to a new direction for the 21st century. Today, we are fighting for the Patients' Bill of Rights, for using the surplus first to save Social Security and Medicare and provide seniors access to prescription drugs, for paying off our national debt and investing more in quality education for all

our children, and for a responsible middle class tax cut. Michael Forbes has embraced these ideas. The congressional Republicans have rejected them. We welcome him to the Democratic Party and to the fight for America's future.

Michael Forbes has changed parties because he believes it is best for his constituents, for the people of New York, and for our country. He is joining a party that welcomes independent thinking and the courage to change. I know he made a hard choice, but it is the right choice for his constituents, for his own children, and for our Nation.

Remarks on the Search for John F. Kennedy, Jr., Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and Lauren Bessette

July 18, 1999

As the search continues, I want to express our family's support, and offer our prayers and those of all Americans for John Kennedy, Jr.; his wife, Carolyn; her sister Lauren; and to their fine families.

I also want to thank the Coast Guard and all those who have worked so hard in this endeavor.

For more than 40 years now, the Kennedy family has inspired Americans to public service, strengthened our faith in the future, and moved our Nation forward. Through it all they have suffered much, and given more.

In recent years, in particular, John Kennedy, Jr., and Carolyn have captured our imagination and won our affection. I will always be grateful for their kindnesses to Hillary and Chelsea and me.

At this difficult moment, we hope the families of these three fine young people will feel the strength of God, the love of their friends, and the prayers of their fellow citizens.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:13 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the search and rescue efforts off

the coast of Martha's Vineyard, MA, to locate the aircraft that carried Mr. Kennedy, his wife, and her sister, who were reported missing on July 17.

Statement on Crime Rate Statistics

July 18, 1999

Today's Justice Department statistics confirm that our strategy of more police on the street and fewer guns in the hands of criminals is working. Violent crime has now dropped by 27 percent since 1993, and overall crime has fallen to an unprecedented low. We should stick to this commonsense strategy.

Unfortunately, some in Congress are willing to play politics with our public safety and threaten all of our progress. They want to shut down

our successful community policing efforts and riddle our gun laws with dangerous new loopholes. To keep driving down the crime rates, Congress should support more police on the street and fewer guns, not more guns on the street and fewer police.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16 but was embargoed for release until 4:30 p.m., July 18.

Remarks at a Dinner for Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

July 18, 1999

I want to, first of all, welcome you all and thank you for braving the rather lengthy receiving line. Prime Minister Barak has asked me to announce that you can relax, because our speeches will only be half as long as the receiving line. *[Laughter]*

It's a great pleasure and an honor for Hillary and I to welcome the Baraks to the White House. This is a good day. This is a good day for affirming the eternal friendship between Israel and the United States. It is also a hard day for those of us who are Americans, and we offer our prayers for John Kennedy, Carolyn Bessette, and Lauren Bessette and for their families. We are reminded again that life and its possibilities are fleeting, that we mortals are obliged to be humble and grateful for every day, and to make the most of every day, and that the obligation we bear for the search for peace in the Middle East should be assumed with that clear knowledge.

Mr. Prime Minister, 12 days ago you spoke to the *Knesset*, announcing your new government. Now, I read your speech with great interest, particularly your vow that you will, quote, "not sleep a wink" until peace is achieved.

Shortly after you gave that speech you came here; we went to Camp David; you kept me up until 1:45 in the morning. *[Laughter]* This is a man who keeps his commitments. *[Laughter]*

In that speech, you proclaimed that this moment is, quote, "a landmark and a turning point, a time of reconciliation, a time of unity, a time of peace." Many years of hard work have brought this day closer—some of it done on this very ground. Here Prime Minister Begin and President Sadat, with President Carter's assistance, made peace. Here Prime Minister Rabin, Chairman Arafat, and King Hussein committed to peace. Here last year, Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat agreed to build on that commitment.

Now the challenge is to make the promise of those days a reality every day from now on, to implement the Wye accords, to reach a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, to build a comprehensive peace for the region, including Syria and Lebanon. Mr. Prime Minister, you have made it very clear that Israel will keep its commitments. I want to make it equally clear that America

will do its part. And that should include the approval by our Congress of the commitments we made at Wye to help the parties promote the peace process.

Mr. Prime Minister, I know you are more than ready for the challenge ahead. Americans know you as a great war hero. They may not know you as a classical pianist, a systems analyst, a tinkerer who can take apart and repair any clock, and, I am told, pick any lock. [Laughter] I don't know what you're thinking about for a career change, but—[laughter].

They may not know about your parents' path to Israel, how your father saw his parents killed by Cossacks in Lithuania, while your mother's parents perished in the Holocaust. The qualities you have and the experiences you have known have shaped a leader of extraordinary breadth and depth. A leader who is a decorated warrior but, who, like another decorated warrior, Yitzhak Rabin, has the courage to make peace, the humanity to treat old adversaries with dignity and fairness, the wisdom to know that the land which brought forth the world's great religions, who share a belief in one loving creator, God,

that cares for us all, surely that region can be a land of milk and honey for all who call it home.

President Theodore Roosevelt, also a warrior turned peacemaker, said when he received the Nobel Peace Prize, "Words count only when they give expression to deeds." Much of the hard work of turning words to deeds remains to be done. I am grateful that the people of Israel have called upon you for your greatest command: to bring to life the cherished dream of *shalom, salaam, peace*.

Please join me in a toast to Prime Minister Barak, to Nava, to all of the friends of peace here, especially to you, Leah Rabin, and to the people of Israel.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 p.m. in the South Lawn Pavilion at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Barak's wife, Nava; and Leah Rabin, widow of slain Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Barak.

Remarks to the 1999 Women's World Cup Champion United States Soccer Team

July 19, 1999

The President. Good morning. Please be seated. Hillary and Al and Tipper and I are delighted to welcome all of you here, the members of the team, the Members of Congress, who are here. We want to welcome Marla Messing, the president of the Women's World Cup; Donna de Varona, the chairman of the Women's World Cup Organizing Committee. Thank you and—yes, give them a hand. [Applause] And we want to welcome this remarkable team. They are all here, but two, today; that's an amazing turnout. Give them a hand. [Applause]

We all know this is both a moment of celebration and a moment of sadness for the United States, and our thoughts and prayers are with the families of John Kennedy and Carolyn and Lauren Bessette. It is at times like this that we really stop to recognize that, as big and diverse as our country is, we can come together as a national family. We can come together in

sorrow or in joy if it reflects the values that we honor most.

This is one of those moments. The Women's World Cup champions, here at the White House, brought America to its feet, had us screaming our lungs out with pride and joy. They also didn't spare us the suspense. [Laughter] But their triumph has surely become America's triumph. We are all proud them, and we are thrilled to have them here at the White House today.

As someone who got to watch the game at the Rose Bowl, who sat so far on the edge of my seat I actually almost fell out of the skybox, I can't help recalling just a few moments of that game. Kristine Lilly heading away what would have been a game-winning goal for the other side, in overtime. She's not here, but I have to mention Michelle Akers charging up

and down until she collapsed from sheer exhaustion. The perfectly timed leap Briana Scurry made to the left to block China's third penalty kick.

I might say, I saw the last three games, and I concluded that if I had to do it all over again, I'd like to be a goalie. *[Laughter]* No pressure. *[Laughter]*

And of course, Brandi Chastain's perfect shot right into the top right corner of the goal to win the World Cup.

The day after the game, a lot of us who aren't so young anymore were trying to search the whole cluttered attic of our memories to try to think if there was ever a time when there had been a more exciting climax to an athletic event that meant as much to so many. I'm not sure that in my lifetime there has been. It's no wonder that so many young girls like Stefaney Howell here are following the lead of our World Cup champions.

Over a half million girls and young women have begun playing soccer in the 8 years since America won the World Cup in 1991. Thanks to these women, America's passion for women's soccer and women's sports in general is growing, and we owe them a lot for that.

I also can't help mentioning briefly, again, the role that Title IX has played in all this, and for all of you who have supported it, I thank you very much. I can say this: For the Clintons and the Gores, the proud parents of daughters, it is always a wonderful thing to see women finding new ways of expressing their God-given talents and abilities. Because what we want for our children is what I think all Americans want for all of our children, whether they're girls or boys, which is a chance to find their way and to follow their dreams.

These women have sent a signal, loud and clear, to millions and millions and millions of girls that they can follow their dreams. And I thank them for that.

Now, you will be happy to know I have exercised some leadership today. It's over 90 degrees out here, and I cut my speech in half. *[Laughter]* Who's next? Are you next? I don't know who's next—I think Hillary is next, the First Lady.

[At this point, the First Lady, DC SCORES youth soccer program participant Stefaney Howell, Tipper Gore, Vice President Al Gore, and team cocaptain Julie Foudy made brief remarks. Team cocaptain Carla Overbeck then presented several gifts to the Clintons and Gores.]

The President. You have all been very patient in this warm, hot sun. I want to, again, say thank you all for coming. Thank you for supporting America's soccer team. I want to thank the women on the team. I would be remiss if I did not say, also, how profoundly impressed I was at the quality of their opposition.

You know, when we had the last NCAA men's basketball championship, and UConn beat Duke, the Duke coach said something I think every coach would like to say. He said, "We did not lose this game; we were defeated." The German team, the Chinese team, the Brazilian team, they can honestly say that, too. And this is something happening all over the world, for which I am very grateful. And again, I am very grateful that our women are leading the way.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Marla Messing, president and chief executive officer, 1999 Women's World Cup Organizing Committee; and Duke University men's basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski. The President also referred to Title IX, Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Public Law 92-318).

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

July 19, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated. Prime Minister Barak and I have had

a very good series of meetings over the past few days. Of course, we have focused primarily

on the Middle East peace process. We strongly agree that a negotiated peace is the best way to make Israel more secure, the best path to lasting stability and prosperity for all the peoples of the Middle East.

The Prime Minister is determined to accelerate that process, to reach with Chairman Arafat a permanent status agreement between Israel and the Palestinian people, and to achieve a broader regional peace that includes Syria and Lebanon. As he has said, the objective now is to put the peace process back on all its tracks.

But we should have no illusions. The way ahead will be difficult. There are hard decisions to be made. Knowing his long record of accomplishment, both as soldier and civilian, and having spent a good deal of time with him these past few days, I believe the Prime Minister is ready to move forward decisively. And America is clearly ready to help in any way we can. As Israel takes calculated risks for peace, we will continue to support Israel's defense.

Today we have agreed to strengthen our security assistance to Israel so Israel can best meet the threats to its citizens, including terrorism and the growing threat of long-range missiles and weapons of mass destruction. We've also agreed to establish a high-level joint planning group to consult on security issues and to report back regularly to the Prime Minister and to me personally.

I intend to work closely with our Congress for expedited approval of a package that includes not only aid to Israel but also assistance to the Palestinian people and Jordan in the context of implementing the Wye River agreement. Making Israel stronger and making Palestinians and Jordanians more secure and more prosperous: all these are crucial to building a just and lasting peace in the region.

Finally, I want to announce that America and Israel will be taking our partnership to new heights, literally. As part of an effort to enhance our scientific cooperation, we will create a working group between NASA and the Israel Space Agency to advance scientific research, educational activities, and the peaceful uses of space. And an Israeli astronaut and a payload of Israeli instruments will fly on a space shuttle mission next year.

All these efforts will strengthen the bonds between our two democracies. They will help us to build a better future together. I am proud

that Prime Minister Barak is my partner in this work. I look forward to seeing him again soon.

Mr. Prime Minister, the floor is yours.

Prime Minister Barak. Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen. President Clinton and I have just concluded the last in our series of meetings. Those meetings were held in an atmosphere of deep friendship and understanding that characterizes the bilateral relationship between Israel and the United States.

Our policy is based on the following: We are committed to the renewal of the peace process. It is our intention to move the process forward simultaneously on all tracks—bilateral, the Palestinian, the Syrians, and the Lebanese, as well as the multilateral. We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to reinvigorate the process, which must be based upon direct talks between the parties themselves and conducted in an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Any unilateral steps, acts or threats of terrorism, violence, or other forms of aggression have no place in a process of peace. The peace we seek to establish is only the one that will enhance the security of Israel. Only a strong and secure Israel is capable of making the difficult choices that the process requires.

I will not shy away from those difficult choices, but I have responsibility to the people of Israel to do all that I possibly can to minimize the risks and dangers involved. From here, I call upon our Arab partners and their leaders to embark with us together on this historic journey, which requires tough choices from all parties.

Mr. President, Israel and America share a unique friendship and a very special partnership. Our relationship is built upon common values, shared interests, and a mutual vision as to the future of the region. A strong Israeli-American relationship must be the cornerstone on which to build a peaceful Middle East. Mr. President, the road ahead may be long and arduous, but together with our peace partners, we can and will make it happen.

We know, Mr. President, that in the pursuit of this sacred mission, a mission of peace, we can count on your wisdom, experience, good advice, and continued support all along the road.

For Nava and for myself, thank you again for your warm hospitality accorded us throughout our visit and for your consistent friendship and support.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, the Prime Minister has committed himself to implementing the West Bank pull-back agreed upon at Wye River. You just talked about accelerating the peace process. Realistically speaking, looking ahead, how long before the final status talks get underway on the tough issues like Jerusalem, the Palestinian hopes for a homeland, refugees? And what specific steps can the United States do to facilitate this process? Maybe if each of you could address those.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, the United States will continue to do what it has done all along. I believe that we should be prepared to support a final status agreement in the way we have supported all these other agreements, going all the way back to Camp David and through those that have been reached during my tenure. We should support the security of Israel, the stability of the region, the economic development of the region. And we should help to work out any of the particular problems as they arise.

In terms of the timing, I don't think it's for the United States to set the timetables here. I think we should just be supportive of moving ahead as vigorously as possible. But it's not our role—and shouldn't be—to impose an outside timetable on the process.

Prime Minister Barak. We are committed to agreements signed by Israeli governments. We are committed to Wye. We will implement it. We are committed to the permanent status negotiations, and we intend to go forward and do it.

We have to consider, together with Chairman Arafat, the way to combine the Wye agreement implementation with the pushing forward of the permanent status negotiations and implementation. And we will do exactly that in the coming months.

I would suggest a kind of framework of about 15 months, within which we will know whether we have a breakthrough and are really going to put an end to the conflict, or alternatively—I hope this will not be the case—we are stuck once again. I use the kind of framework of 15 months to signal to all publics and ask the players that we are not talking about a miraculous solution, magic solution, that will drop upon us

from heaven in 3 weeks, and we do not intend to drag our foot for another 3 years.

President Clinton. Want to take a question from an Israeli journalist?

Prime Minister Barak. Please.

President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Q. Mr. President, do you intend to have talks or to meet with President Asad at the present time and maybe shoot for a summit meeting here with President Asad?

And, Prime Minister Barak, another question also on Damascus. Today terrorist organizations there were urged to leave the country by the Syrian Government. Is there any proof of this news that you heard, and if it's true, do you see any significance?

President Clinton. Well, let me answer the first question. I have had regular contact, as you know, and a lot of contact with President Asad over the last 6½ years. He knows very well that I am committed to the peace process between Israel and Syria, and that I believe that he has a golden opportunity now to resume that process and that I hope he will do so. And I intend to reaffirm that in the appropriate way at the conclusion of our meeting.

We, too, would like more normal relations with Syria, and we would like Syria to be reconciled to all its neighbors in the region. And I think anything that Syria does to disassociate itself from terrorists is a positive step in the right direction.

Yes, ma'am. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], you're next; I'll take you next.

Future Israeli Security

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, a question to you. As Israel moves now to resume peace talks with its Arab adversaries, what and who do you regard as the real existential threats to Israel in the coming century? Do you look more toward Iran and Iraq? Do you have different views on these issues than your predecessor? Thank you.

Prime Minister Barak. Unlike this part of the world, our neighbor—unlike North America—Western Europe is a very tough neighborhood, you know, kind of merciless environment, no second opportunity for those who cannot defend themselves. And many threats might loom over the horizon without very long early warning. We, of course, see the risk. This is one of the reasons

why I'm so determined to do whatever we can to achieve peace.

I spent all my life in uniform fighting for the security of our country, and we know from our experience that by strengthening Israel and going toward peace, we will reduce this kind of threat. There are a lot of conventional armed forces around us. If you combine them together it's more weapon systems in the Middle East than in NATO. And of course, the prospect of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missile technology to places like Iran or Iraq create a major threat to the stability of the whole Middle East, to the free flow of oil from this region that helps to sustain the economies of both Europe and Japan, and, of course, to Israel. And we are watching very carefully these kinds of threats.

We do not aspire to eliminate any future risk from the globe by making peace with our neighbors, but we're clearly determined to make our future and the future of our neighbors better by reaching a full agreement about peace with all our neighbors around.

Q. Iraq and Iran, sir?

Prime Minister Barak. Iran and Iraq is a sources of potential threat to the stability of the Middle East and to Israel if they reach missile technology, nuclear weapons, and, by this, the combination to really launch them.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. President Clinton, you have met with Prime Minister Barak for many hours, and we all know that you have concluded some sort of a program to advance the peace process. Can you please tell us some of these details that you can tell us? What is expected in the coming days or weeks, and when is the talks between Syria and Israel are going to be resumed? Is there any date?

And a question to Prime Minister Barak, what is your reaction to the meeting of Abd al-Halim Khaddam in Damascus with a few Palestinian organizations that are imposing the Oslo—the peace process? Do you think that it's a significant step for peace?

President Clinton. First of all, we have issued a very detailed joint statement. I don't know if you have it yet or not.

Q. I've read it, but it doesn't say specifically what are the coming moves.

President Clinton. That's right; that's on purpose. [Laughter] So you know, sometimes in

this process, the less you say, the better. Let me say that you know that Prime Minister Barak has talked to Chairman Arafat, and they intend to talk again. And I have said that I will make it known to President Asad what I consider to be the very satisfactory results of this meeting and that this is an important time to restart the peace process. I think to go beyond that right now would be an error on my part, not because I don't intend to push ahead in every way I can, but I just think it would be a mistake.

Prime Minister Barak. I can just add to this that I'm fully confident that when we will have something to tell, we will be interviewed by you, and we'll tell you, and the public will know. There will be no secrets when something really happens in the open.

On the other part of your question, I did not get a real report about this meeting, but if there was such a meeting and the Syrians really asked the terror organizations to reduce their level of activity, if that is true, it is, of course, good news for all of us.

President Clinton. Helen.

Israeli-Palestinian Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, there's an expression—

Prime Minister Barak. I awaited you. [Laughter]

Q. —that if you walk in someone's moccasins, then you'll know how they really feel. If you were walking in a Palestinian's shoes, how would you feel about occupation, annexation, incarceration for months, for years without a charge, without a trial?

Prime Minister Barak. I was elected Prime Minister of the State of Israel. I'm fully focused on the security and future of the Israelis. I am aware that the same way that a person cannot choose his parents, a nation cannot choose its neighbors. They are there, the Palestinians; we respect them. We want to build a peace with them that will put an end to the conflict with all the sufferings that happen on both sides of this conflict. We are determined to do it. I believe that focusing on how to solve the problems of the future is a more, may I say, productive way to consume our time than dealing with analyzing past events or their interpretation.

Q. Well, they aren't past. They're very current.

Prime Minister Barak. We are working on bringing a peace that will create a different environment in the Middle East, and I am fully focused on this future, rather than on analysis of the past.

President Clinton. Do you want to take another question?

Prime Minister Barak. Please.

U.S. Role in Middle East Peace Process

Q. How do you reconcile between the Prime Minister's expectation to get your support to the further negotiations with the Palestinians, the potential difficulties that Israel will face, with your role as an honest broker?

President Clinton. Why are they inconsistent? I'm not sure I understand the question.

Q. It's a cultural gap.

Q. No, it's not cultural gap.

President Clinton. No, no, explain the question. I'm sorry; I don't mean to be dense, but I don't understand the question.

Q. We understand that the Prime Minister strove to get your understanding to Israel's point of view with regard to the negotiations that he will have with the Palestinians.

President Clinton. Yes, that's correct.

Q. On the other hand, America is going to play the role of an honest broker between Israel and the Palestinians. So probably there is a kind of conflict between these two roles.

President Clinton. Oh, I see what you mean. Actually, in this case, I disagree with that for the following reason. The Prime Minister has made it clear—this goes a little bit to the question Helen asked in a general way—the Prime Minister has made it clear that however he proceeds into the future in negotiating with the Palestinians that it must all be done by agreement, including the ideas of synchronizing Wye and going to the final status talks. I'm convinced that at the end of the road, anything they could both agree to would be in both their interests.

And I must say, I think—some of you may think this is naive, especially as long as I've been doing this—but I honestly believe that the most important element for success for an Israeli Prime Minister in negotiating an agreement with the Palestinians is being able to set aside the accumulated burdens of the past to at least see them with respect and understand how they perceive the legitimacy of their aspirations. And I have seen that with this Prime

Minister. And I think when you do that, then there will be a way to work this out.

I think that in a peculiar way, the United States can only be of value to the Palestinians because we are so close to Israel. Otherwise, of what value are we to them? And because we are, if we believe they have a good point that I privately and personally communicate to the Prime Minister or his designated representatives, it should carry more weight because they know how close we are.

So I don't see the two things as in conflict. I think that, in the end, they both have to believe they have won or there will be no agreement. If either side believes that it has lost, why should they agree?

Convicted Spy Jonathan Pollard

Q. Mr. President, did the subject of Jonathan Pollard and his possible release come up in any form during your discussions? It's now 8 months since White House Counsel Chuck Ruff requested the major U.S. Governmental agencies to offer their opinions on this. Did any of those agencies recommend or indicate that they would recommend his release?

And, Mr. Prime Minister, did President Clinton give you any reason to expect that Pollard's release may be a possibility?

Prime Minister Barak. Maybe I'll answer first, and it will make it more—smoother in a way. I clearly want to see Jonathan Pollard released, but I am of the position that any public discussion of this issue doesn't push forward the purpose of having him released. For many reasons, this is a subject that should be dealt with not in public, but at most, between the leaders of the two nations.

President Clinton. One more over here, and then we'll take—Sam [Sam Donaldson, ABC News], you want a question?

First Lady's Position on Middle East Process

Q. Sir, I'd like to take another crack at a question you've been asked before. You've said that when Mrs. Clinton expresses her opinions publicly she's just doing something in public which you've done in private before—that is, have disagreements. That's the American way. But when she talks about an opinion in which she takes the Israeli position on Jerusalem, doesn't this make it more difficult for you to be that honest broker that one of your colleagues talked about, sir?

President Clinton. No, no. For one thing—let me say, that issue is not one that—that's not the public-private distinction. The Government of the United States, the executive branch, the President, is a sponsor of the peace process and a facilitator of it. In that context, those of us with positions of official responsibility who are all the time asking Israel and the Palestinians, we're all the time asking both sides not to do anything which prejudices final status issues—I have taken the position that my government should not prejudice final status issues.

There are many American citizens who consider, for example, Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel; Israel considers Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel. You heard the Prime Minister say that he hoped that when we had all this worked out, everybody's Embassy would be there.

The genius, I thought, of the legislation which was passed by the Congress and sponsored I think primarily by Senator Moynihan was that it permitted each individual Member of Congress and, therefore, imposed on everybody who might want to be in Congress, the responsibility of expressing their opinion on it, while allowing the United States to continue to be an honest broker through the waiver authority so we don't have to prejudice the final status issue.

The status of Jerusalem is, under the Oslo accords, something that the parties themselves have to work out at the end. So that's my position. I don't think there is any inconsistency there at all. I think that anybody who is ever going to consider being a candidate for Congress in any place in this country, or the Senate, where people care about this, might be asked about it. But we have a framework in our law, which I think is quite good, where people can express their opinion about it, vote for a law, support the law, but the President, whoever the President is, is permitted to honor the obligation of the United States not to prejudice the final status issue.

Q. But sir, the thrust—

Prime Minister Barak. —of Israeli TV—

Q. Sir, may I just follow up?

Prime Minister Barak. Please, let the young lady—beauty before age. [Laughter] I'm not quarreling with your wisdom, but look, a young Israeli. [Laughter]

Palestinian State

Q. To both of you, Prime Minister Barak was mentioning that 15-month framework for the negotiation; do you see, Mr. President, and you, Prime Minister Barak, a Palestinian state at the end of this period of time?

Prime Minister Barak. I think it's too early to think of the results of the negotiations about permanent status that were hardly begun. And I don't think that you should interpret this 15-month framework as a kind of a deadline where everything should be either fully concluded and implemented, or the whole thing is blown up, blown apart. I don't think that is the case.

We have this framework in order that different players on different tracks with only partially transparent membranes between them could make up their judgment about what should be concluded in their own track, vis-a-vis Israel, while taking into account the fact that the others are continuing.

So without providing them with a certain timeframe they might be lost or suspicions would be heightened, which as you know, happens very often in the Middle East. So in order to produce a certain kind of common basis, common framework, and common understanding about how we intend to move, we shaped this timeframe. It could not be interpreted as more than this.

Q. What about the possibility of a Palestinian state?

Prime Minister Barak. Oh, this was the question, I thought—[laughter]. It's part of the permanent status negotiations, and I'm confident that the nature of the Palestinian entity will emerge quite naturally out of these permanent status negotiations. We are concentrating on solving at the same time all the problems that are on the table—the refugees, the border, the future of settlements, the problem of Jerusalem. And I don't think it's a very easy task to solve part of the problem without solving, at the same time, the other parts.

President Clinton. Joe says we were about to draw this to a close. But if you want to chew on me, I'll be back Wednesday; we're going to have a press conference. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Oh, wait, wait, I'll answer the Coast Guard question. Go ahead. This is important—further—what's going on for America today, so I'll answer this. Go ahead.

John F. Kennedy, Jr.

Q. Mr. President, I'm told that you were briefed earlier today by the U.S. Coast Guard about their search for the wreckage of the Kennedy plane. Can you tell us what the results of that are to date? And also, sir, since the search became a—quote, unquote—"recovery operation" last night, have you had a chance to speak with any members of the Kennedy family, and if so, can you relate some or all of those conversations?

President Clinton. Well, let me say, first of all, I did speak with Admiral Larrabee this morning, and again I want to say I think the Coast Guard, the National Transportation Safety Board, the FAA, all the State and local entities who have worked for them have done quite a fine job here; and I'm grateful to them.

He was actually, Admiral Larrabee, somewhat optimistic that they would eventually be successful in this area they have identified, in finding further—at least further parts of the plane. And I believe it's appropriate that this search continue. So I think they've done a good job.

I have had, over the last 3 days, several conversations with Senator Kennedy, and I have talked with Caroline, and I have—but I think it would not be appropriate for me to talk about the merits of it.

Let me say that John Kennedy and his sister and later his wife, were uncommonly kind to my daughter and to my wife, and this has been

a very difficult thing for us, personally, as well as because of my position. They are very strong people, and I think they are carrying on as well as any human beings could. But they need the support and prayers of our country.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Barak. Allow me please to add to it—to extend on behalf of myself and the Israeli people our prayers and thoughts to the Kennedy family that faced so many tragedies and now is facing another one, a tragedy that I believe touched hearts of billions all around the world.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 178th news conference began at 4 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, the President referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; First Coast Guard District Commander Rear Adm. Richard M. Larrabee, USCG, who headed the search and recovery efforts off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, MA, to locate the missing aircraft that carried John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister Lauren Bessette. The President also referred to Mr. Kennedy's sister, Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg. Prime Minister Barak referred to his wife, Nava; and Vice President Abd al-Halim Khaddam of Syria.

Joint Statement by the President and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel July 19, 1999

During several days of close consultations, the President and the Prime Minister conducted a comprehensive review of the U.S.-Israel bilateral relations, the peace process, Israeli as well as regional security, economic and scientific development and cooperation. These fruitful discussions have produced important agreements and understandings in all of these areas.

Prime Minister Barak expressed his deep appreciation of President Clinton's special efforts to enhance the U.S.-Israeli relationship and advance the cause of peace in the Middle East.

President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak have reached a broad new understanding that

significantly enhances the already unique bilateral relations between the United States and Israel, and raises their friendship and cooperation to an even higher level of strategic partnership. This new partnership is designed to underpin their joint effort to put an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict and achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

The President and the Prime Minister have agreed on the need to assign a top priority to the pursuit of peace in the Middle East. They have also reached a meeting of minds on the desirability of making an intensive effort to move ahead simultaneously on all tracks of the

peace process, bilateral and multilateral, as well as on the important role that would be played by the United States in support of the process.

President Clinton assured Prime Minister Barak that the United States would be ready to assist and contribute in any way it can to achieving an historical reconciliation that will usher in a new era of peace, security, prosperity and cooperation in the Middle East. In this context, he reiterated the U.S. commitment to help Israel minimize the risks and costs it incurs as it pursues peace and affirmed the broad U.S. backing that would be accorded to Israel, to facilitate the pursuit of peace.

Recognizing that the U.S.-Israel relationship serves as a cornerstone for pursuing peace, they vowed to strengthen and deepen this unique relationship, which is based on shared democratic values, bonds of friendship, common interests and joint cooperation in so many areas of human endeavor. President Clinton reiterated the steadfast commitment of the United States to Israel's security, to maintain its qualitative edge, and to strengthen Israel's ability to deter and defend itself, by itself, against any threat or a possible combination of threats.

The United States and Israel will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will express their joint intention to restructure U.S. bilateral assistance to Israel. The MOU will state the United States' intention to sustain its annual military assistance to Israel, and incrementally increase its level by one-third over the next decade to a level of \$2.4 billion subject to Congressional consultations and approval. At the same time, the MOU will provide for a gradual phase-out of U.S. economic aid to Israel, over a comparable period, as the Israeli economy grows more robust, less dependent on foreign aid, and more integrated in world markets.

The two leaders also reviewed the status of the U.S.-Israeli defense relationship and agreed that existing defense channels of coordination and cooperation work effectively. These would have to be further consolidated and strengthened under a Defense Policy Advisory Group (DPAG) to meet the new challenges of WMD, counter proliferation (CP) and theater missile defense (TMD). The Group will coordinate and plan the cooperation between the U.S. Department of Defense and the Israeli Ministry of Defense.

In addition, the two leaders agreed on the components of the \$1.2 billion military aid pack-

age for Israel that the Administration has already requested from Congress. The President assured the Prime Minister of his intention to work closely with the Congress to seek expedited action for funding, starting in FY 1999, for this package to support Israel as it implements the Wye River Memorandum. The package will have three components:

- Assistance to the Israeli Defense Forces as they carry out further redeployments, including projects which will be managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

- Assistance in meeting Israel's broader strategic requirements, including Theater Missile Defense (TMD), helicopters, and communications equipment and munitions.

- Assistance in meeting the increased cost of Israeli counter-terrorism efforts.

The two leaders also agreed on the importance of spreading the benefits of peace to all those who participate in the process. In that context, they expressed support for the \$400 million in assistance to the Palestinian people and \$300 million for Jordan that is part of the Administration's request to Congress to support implementation of the Wye River Memorandum.

President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak agreed that Israel faces new challenges in the strategic arena, particularly the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles that threaten to undermine Israel's security. In this context, the two leaders agreed to step up the overall bilateral cooperation and coordination, as well as to implement a number of measures designed to help Israel meet these emerging threats:

- The United States will provide funding for Israel's acquisition of a Third Arrow battery that will enhance the protection of Israel's citizens from ballistic missile attacks.

- The United States and Israel will expand their collaborative efforts to develop new technologies and systems designed to deal with ballistic missiles.

- The two leaders will establish a Strategic Policy Planning Group (SPPG), composed of senior representatives of the relevant national security entities of both countries. It will be tasked to develop and submit recommendations on measures to bolster Israel's indigenous defense and deterrent capabilities, as well as the bilateral cooperation to meet the strategic threats Israel faces. The SPPG will also consider ways

to minimize risks and costs, to enhance Israel's security, and address its other needs related to national security which arise in the context of steps Israel might take to achieve a comprehensive peace. The SPPG will report to the President and the Prime Minister at four month intervals. The two leaders agreed to meet in joint session at regular intervals.

Another area of mutual concern that was discussed between the two leaders was the growing threat of WMD terrorism. This was acknowledged to be an area in which both countries stood much to gain from each others knowledge and experience. In order to enhance their capability to deal effectively with this threat, it was agreed to sign a new MOU between their respective national security institutions. It would facilitate broad cooperation between the various government agencies in both countries in all areas associated with preparing and responding to WMD terrorism.

One specific area of economic cooperation discussed between the two leaders pertains to water resources. They have noted the growing scarcity of water in the Middle East, and also recognized the potential inherent in bilateral, as well as regional, cooperation to turn water from a potential source of conflict into a force of regional stability and prosperity in the region. Toward that end, the United States has pledged to work with Israel, both bilaterally and with other regional partners and their private sectors, to promote the development of new and additional sources of water, including desalination, and to examine ways to transfer water to arid lands, and to manage existing water resources more efficiently. A joint task force will explore specific measures that could be carried out in this domain, and will submit its recommenda-

tions to President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak by the end of 1999.

The President and the Prime Minister have also agreed that promoting tourism to Israel and the entire region presents a unique opportunity to promote cooperation and spread economic benefits to the peoples of the Middle East. Both sides agreed to explore specific steps to develop this unique potential together, and with other interested regional partners and their private sectors, beginning the fall of 1999.

Finally, President Clinton and Prime Minister Barak agreed that scientific cooperation between Israel and the United States will benefit the peoples of both countries, as they enter the 21st century. In this context, they agreed to enhance cooperation in the peaceful uses of space. A joint working group of NASA and the Israel Space Agency (ISA) will be established to develop new areas of joint cooperation, including educational activities, scientific research and the development of practical applications in the peaceful use of space for the benefit of people around the world. The President also informed the Prime Minister that an Israeli astronaut and payload of Israeli experiments would fly on a shuttle mission in the year 2000.

Upon concluding the Prime Minister's visit, the two leaders expressed their shared conviction that these meetings have laid the foundations for a vigorous effort to bring an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as for even closer American-Israeli ties based on the U.S. iron-clad commitment to Israel's security. The two leaders called upon the other leaders of the region to lend their support to this effort to bring comprehensive peace, security, and prosperity to the peoples of the Middle East.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Emigration Policies and Trade Status of Albania

July 19, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and

policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration. In

fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania is not in violation of the freedom-of-emigration criteria in sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974. That action allowed for the continuation of normal trade relations status for Albania and

certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver. This semiannual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 19, 1999.

Message to the Congress Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to Libya

July 19, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I hereby report to the Congress on the developments since my last report of December 30, 1998, concerning the national emergency with respect to Libya that was declared in Executive Order 12543 of January 7, 1986. This report is submitted pursuant to section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c); section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c); and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c).

1. On December 30, 1998, I renewed for another year the national emergency with respect to Libya pursuant to IEEPA. This renewal extended the current comprehensive financial and trade embargo against Libya in effect since 1986. Under these sanctions, virtually all trade with Libya is prohibited, and all assets owned or controlled by the Government of Libya in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked.

2. On April 28, 1999, I announced that the United States will exempt commercial sales of agricultural commodities and products, medicine, and medical equipment from future unilateral sanctions regimes. In addition, my Administration will extend this policy to existing sanctions programs by modifying licensing policies for currently embargoed countries to permit case-by-case review of specific proposals for commercial sales of these items. Certain restrictions apply.

The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Department of the Treasury is currently

drafting amendments to the Libyan Sanctions Regulations, 31 C.F.R. Part 550 (the Regulations), to implement this initiative. The amended Regulations will provide for the licensing of sales of agricultural commodities and products, medicine, and medical supplies to nongovernmental entities in Libya or to government procurement agencies and parastatals not affiliated with the coercive organs of that country. The amended Regulations will also provide for the licensing of all transactions necessary and incident to licensed sales transactions, such as insurance and shipping arrangements. Financing for the licensed sales transactions will be permitted in the manner described in the amended Regulations.

3. During the reporting period, OFAC reviewed numerous applications for licenses to authorize transactions under the Regulations. Consistent with OFAC's ongoing scrutiny of banking transactions, the largest category of license approvals (20) involved types of financial transactions that are consistent with U.S. policy. Most of these licenses authorized personal remittances not involving Libya between persons who are not blocked parties to flow through Libyan banks located outside Libya. Three licenses were issued authorizing certain travel-related transactions. One license was issued to a U.S. firm to allow it to protect its intellectual property rights in Libya; another authorized receipt of payment for legal services; and a third authorized payments for telecommunications services. A total of 26 licenses were issued during the reporting period.

4. During the current 6-month period, OFAC continued to emphasize to the international banking community in the United States the importance of identifying and blocking payments made by or on behalf of Libya. The office worked closely with the banks to assure the effectiveness of interdiction software systems used to identify such payments. During the reporting period, 87 transactions potentially involving Libya, totaling nearly \$3.4 million, were interdicted.

5. Since my last report, OFAC has collected 7 civil monetary penalties totaling \$38,000 from 2 U.S. financial institutions, 3 companies, and 2 individuals for violations of the U.S. sanctions against Libya. The violations involved export transactions relating to Libya and dealings in Government of Libya property or property in which the Government of Libya had an interest.

On April 23, 1999, a foreign national permanent resident in the United States was sentenced by the Federal District Court for the Middle District of Florida to 2 years in prison and 2 years supervised release for criminal conspiracy to violate economic sanctions against Libya, Iran, and Iraq. He had previously been convicted of violation of the Libyan Sanctions Regulations, the Iranian Transactions Regulations, the Iraqi Sanctions Regulations, and the Export Administration Regulations for exportation of industrial equipment to the oil, gas, petrochemical, water, and power industries of Libya, Iran, and Iraq.

Various enforcement actions carried over from previous reporting periods have continued to be

aggressively pursued. Numerous investigations are ongoing and new reports of violations are being scrutinized.

6. The expenses incurred by the Federal Government in the 6-month period from January 7 through July 6, 1999, that are directly attributable to the exercise of powers and authorities conferred by the declaration of the Libyan national emergency are estimated at approximately \$4.4 million. Personnel costs were largely centered in the Department of the Treasury (particularly in the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Office of the General Counsel, and the U.S. Customs Service), the Department of State, and the Department of Commerce.

7. In April 1999, Libya surrendered the 2 suspects in the Lockerbie bombing for trial before a Scottish court seated in the Netherlands. In accordance with UNSCR 748, upon the suspects' transfer, UN sanctions were immediately suspended. We will insist that Libya fulfill the remaining UNSCR requirements for lifting UN sanctions and are working with UN Secretary Annan and UN Security Council members to ensure that Libya does so promptly. U.S. unilateral sanctions remain in force, and I will continue to exercise the powers at my disposal to apply these sanctions fully and effectively, as long as they remain appropriate. I will continue to report periodically to the Congress on significant developments as required by law.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 19, 1999.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of Military Forces for Stabilization of Areas of the Former Yugoslavia

July 19, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of January 19, 1999, I provided further information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), which began its mission and assumed authority from the NATO-led Implementation Force on December 20,

1996. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to continue SFOR for a period of 12 months in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1247 of June 18, 1999. The mission of SFOR

is to provide a continued military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities, stabilize and consolidate the peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and contribute to a secure environment to facilitate the civilian implementation process to which SFOR provides broad support within its means and capabilities.

The U.S. force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia is approximately 6,200. In the first half of 1999, all NATO nations and 19 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. forces are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered around the city of Tuzla. In addition, approximately 2,200 U.S. military personnel are deployed to Hungary, Croatia, and Italy in order to provide logistical and other support to SFOR. The U.S. forces continue to support SFOR in efforts to apprehend persons indicted for war crimes. In the last 6 months, U.S. forces have sustained no fatalities.

The United Nations mandate for the U.N. Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP) in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia expired on February 28, 1999, and it was not renewed or extended. The U.S. military contingent that had been deployed to Macedonia as part of UNPREDEP remained in Macedonia under U.S. operational control in anticipation of providing logistical support to U.S. forces that

could support future NATO operations in the area. That contingent subsequently redeployed and was replaced with other U.S. forces more suited for this possible support mission. The new contingent has been incorporated into the U.S. national support element operating in Macedonia that, as I reported in my letter to the Congress of June 12, 1999, is supporting the International Security Presence in Kosovo (KFOR).

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, and in accordance with various statutory authorities. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Education Legislation *July 19, 1999*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

Nothing will do more to prepare all of our people to succeed in the 21st century than strengthening our public schools. That's why I am deeply concerned about the legislation that the House is preparing to consider that undermines a bipartisan commitment to reduce class size in the early grades across the nation. If the Congress sends me H.R. 1995 in its current form, I will veto it in order to protect our nation's commitment to smaller classes and better schools.

Last year, Congress came together across party lines to make a down payment to begin hiring 100,000 well-prepared teachers to reduce class size to a nationwide average of 18. Earlier

this month, the Education Department released \$1.2 billion in grants to help states and local school districts begin hiring the first 30,000 well-trained teachers for the new school year. Now is the time to work together to keep our bipartisan commitment on class size, not walk away from it.

After all, research confirms what parents and teachers understand: smaller classes with well-prepared teachers have a lasting impact on student achievement, with the greatest benefits for lower achieving, minority, and poor children.

Earlier this year, I sent to Congress my proposal to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that would help all students reach high standards by strengthening accountability, improving teacher quality, and building on our progress to reduce class size in the early grades all across America. Regrettably, in its current form, H.R. 1995 abolishes a dedicated funding stream for class size reduction and replaces it with a block grant that fails to guarantee that any funding will be used for hiring new teachers to reduce class size. It eliminates the focus on early grades where smaller classes make the most difference and help children learn to read and master the basics. Moreover, the block grant could be used simply to replace state or local funding instead of increasing overall investment in our public schools. I urge the House to approve a substitute measure

that I understand will be offered by Representative Martinez, that would improve teacher quality and maintain our commitment to the class-size reduction effort begun last year.

Last year we made a promise to America's children to provide smaller classes with well-prepared teachers. I urge Congress to keep that promise by enacting legislation that improves our nation's schools by ensuring greater investments in education, improved teacher quality, and smaller classes all across America.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard A. Gephardt, minority leader, House of Representatives.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner July 19, 1999

Thank you very much. John, that was so nice. I hope somebody got a tape of it. *[Laughter]* Next time somebody gets mad at me, I'll just turn the tape on and play it. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank you and all your officers and Governor Romer and all the people from the DNC here. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to some people who are here, without whom I could not do my job: my political director, Minyon Moore; and Karen Tramontano, who's done so much work with all of you. I thank them for being here. And someone who's here who spends more time with you than me now, but without whom I would not be here, my good friend Harold Ickes. And Janice Enright, who's also here, thank you very much.

And I'm delighted to see all of you, but I'm especially glad tonight to see emerging from his own rather unique diet control plan, Gerry McEntee—*[laughter]*—thank you for coming back to us tonight. Thank you. I told him how good he looked, and he said, "I don't recommend it to anybody." *[Laughter]*

Let me say the most important thing I can say to you is thanks. Thank you for being so good to me and to Al Gore, to Hillary, to Tip-

per, to our entire administration. We are very grateful to you. And thank you for fighting not only for your own members, but for the interests of Americans everywhere who are not fortunate enough to belong to an organized group who can give them voice.

I sat down 3 or 4 years ago—I wish I had done it again tonight before I came here—just one day I had a little time in my office, and I wrote down the list of all the things that the labor movement was fighting for, with me and the Congress. And only about half of them directly affected your members. Most of our members wouldn't benefit from an increase in the minimum wage. Most of your members even had family and medical leave. Most of your members had the health care protections you were trying to get for other people. And I wish that more Americans knew how much time and effort and money you spend doing things because you believe that you'll be better off if the rest of America is better off.

And I guess—I was in the home of a very wealthy man in Florida a couple of days ago—well, what's today—Monday—4 or 5 days ago—who said that he had stayed a Democrat all these years because he really thought he'd be

better off if everybody else was better off. And I think that is the fundamental issue.

We were talking around the table here. I have a friend who is the head of one of America's largest companies, one of America's most profitable companies, who told me that he had taken to going around New York telling his fellow business executives, if you paid more in taxes in 1993 than you've made in the stock market since, by all means support the Republicans in 2000. [Laughter] But if you didn't, you better stick with us, and you'll do well. [Laughter] I thought it was an interesting argument.

One of the things that I would like to emphasize tonight, as we look at where we are today and we look to the future, is that the ideas that we have fought for and the issues we have fought for and the initiatives we have pushed are no longer seriously a matter of debate. And that is something that you ought to share not only with your members, but they ought to share with their friends and neighbors in every community in this country.

It is no longer open to debate whether we were right to reduce the deficit while we doubled investment in education and training, starting in 1993. We do have nearly 19 million jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years. It's not open to debate now. It's not open to debate that the approach we took on crime, which was to prevent as much as we could, put more police out there, focus on taking guns away from people with criminal records, get our kids more prevention, and then, punish more severely the relatively small number of people who commit a very high percentage of the crime—we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. It's not a matter of debate anymore. And I think this is important.

Our country is better for the fact that we have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food, 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time in the entire history of the country. So we have a lot, all of us together, to be proud of. And helping other people to do well turns out to be better for all of us.

John mentioned all those labor issues. If you really go back and dissect every issue he mentioned, basically, the contrary position, the people that were against us were arguing to their

people, if we just take a little more away from the working people we'll be better off. Well, the truth is, they're doing very well because the working people have more.

We're in a big debate in the Congress right now about whether, in the financial reform legislation working its way through Congress, there should or should not be a continued, profound commitment to the Community Reinvestment Act, that basically says, if you've got a bank and a community and you take the community's paychecks as investments in your bank, you need to make investments in that community. The law was passed in 1977. But it was pretty well moribund until we took office. Over 95 percent of the community investment, \$17 billion, made in the 22 years of that law have been made in the 6½ years that I've been in office—investing money into poor areas and in neighborhoods and to businesses that normally couldn't get credit.

Unbelievably enough, there are people in the Congress trying to weaken that law. Our financial institutions have never been healthier—for obvious reasons. The more you spread economic opportunity, the better the rest of us do. And we have always believed, as Democrats, that if we widen the circle of opportunity, if we broaden the meaning of our freedom, if we reward every responsible citizen, if we create a community that's a bigger and bigger and bigger tent where everybody who is doing right has a chance to do well, then our country will be stronger in ways that go way beyond economics.

And every single indicator of social health—from unemployment to the rates of teen pregnancy and drug abuse and smoking—is going in the right direction. Not because all of us are always right on every issue, not even because all of us agree on every issue; but our animating philosophy is we will make the changes necessary to fit America for the 21st century and we will do it in a way that gives everybody a chance to do well and helps us to grow together, not grow apart. And I think that is profoundly important.

But what I think we should think about in the next year and a half, as we continue to fight to move forward in Congress and as we go out into the country in a new political season, is saying to people, this is not a matter of debate anymore. The evidence is in. The argument cannot be refuted. We have shown you that this is right.

And if you look at where we are now—I'd just like to mention two or three things. We've got a lot of issues before us in Congress. But if I might, let me just start with the lamentable defeat of the Patients' Bill of Rights in the Senate. Now, why in the world would anybody be against that? Well, you saw all the ads, and they say, "Oh, this is going to really raise health insurance premiums, and we wouldn't want to do that and reduce the number of people with health insurance." Remember, that's what they said. They said, "You know, if you vote for Bill Clinton's health program, the number of people with health insurance will go down." Remember they said that? "And the number of people being insured by the Government will go up." And as one Democrat said the other day, he said, "I voted for Bill Clinton's health insurance program, and sure enough, the number of people with health insurance went down and the number of people the Government was insuring went up." That's exactly what has happened. Why? Because of the cost of the burden.

Now, again, this was an argument where you had rhetoric and money on one side and reality on the other. I put in the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights by Executive order for everybody covered by the Federal Government—Federal employees, the veterans, people on Medicare and Medicaid, they all have it. Do you know what it cost us? Less than a buck—a buck—a month a premium.

And then the Republicans had the Congressional Budget Office estimate the cost of the Patients' Bill of Rights in the private sector. And you will all remember all the arguments we've had over the Congressional Budget Office, right, as they have—they've erected a veritable statue of truth for the Congressional Budget Office. So the CBO comes in and says, well, it might cost \$2 a month. And then all of a sudden the CBO was like Rodney Dangerfield and the Republican caucus—no respect any more. And they just discarded it, said, "Well, I don't believe it. I don't believe the evidence; I don't believe the study by my own people. I don't believe it. I believe what the health insurers told me."

And what happened? For the first time—did you ever believe you'd see an article which said that the doctors of the country are thinking about joining a union, organizing a union? Did you ever think? Why? This is not rocket science. If we're going to move into the 21st century, should we manage our health care system as

well as possible? You bet we should. Is there a person in this room or in this country that has a vested interest in seeing a dollar wasted when people's lives are at stake? Of course not.

Take McEntee—suppose—no, look, wait a minute. Suppose he goes to a doctor at an HMO and says, well, you might have a little blockage, come back in 6 months and I'll decide whether you should see a specialist or not. Wait a minute. This is the kind of thing that happens all the time. The doctor says, "I think you should see a specialist;" the person at the HMO says, "No, I'm not sure." And I've got a lot of sympathy—I've said this a million times—I've got a lot of sympathy for those young employees at the HMO's. Those of us who aren't so young anymore, put yourself in their position. Suppose you're 25 years old and you're the first entry point on the claim. What do you know if you like your job? You will never get in trouble for saying no. Right? You never get in trouble for saying, no. They'll just kick the decision up. And you think, "Well, sooner or later this will get to a doctor, and if I'm wrong, the doctor will do right." Now, it may take too long and the damage may be irreparable.

So we said, let the doctors make the call. Maybe they'll do it when they shouldn't, but it's worth the risk to save lives and to save quality of life and to save health care. We said that if you get hurt—God forbid—going out to dinner tonight, a car runs up on the curb and hits you, you ought to go to the nearest emergency room, not the one your plan happens to cover. And we said that if you're 6-months pregnant and you're having a difficult pregnancy, and you work for a small business and your employer has to change plans in the middle of your pregnancy, you shouldn't be forced to change your ob-gyn, your obstetrician. You shouldn't be forced to. Or if you're in the middle of a chemotherapy treatment which may determine whether you live or not—which is traumatic enough anyway—and your employer has to change providers, you ought to at least finish the treatment.

And all this stuff would cost, they said, two bucks a month. So what harm could it do to give that kind of peace of mind to the country? But the HMO's said, no; so they beat it. Now, I think the HMO's would be better off if America were healthier. I mean, we'd all pay premiums, and they'd get to keep more of them because they wouldn't have to spend as much

on hospital bills and surgical bills. It's just what I think.

I believe that we ought to always think about what's best for the largest number of our people and the rest of us are going to do fine. And if you look at the decisions facing us over this budget—the big issues here involve a debate that if I had told you in '92, when you were helping me get elected President, we'd be talking about now, you'd say, "You know, I like that young fellow, but he's crazy." [Laughter] If I had said to you, vote for me and in 6 years we'll be debating what to do with this surplus—you think about it; we had a \$290 billion deficit, we quadrupled the debt in 12 years—I say, "I want you to vote for me because we'll have a huge debate 6 years from now about what to do with the surplus"—you'll say, "That kid is too nuts to be President." You will never be for him. Right?

So, we're having the debate. And what they say is, don't let—we seem to have an agreement, although it's not complete, on not spending the Social Security tax portion of the surplus, and putting that against Social Security. And that's a very good thing; I don't want to minimize that—although, the agreement is not complete. But then they say, "Well, we'll spend the rest of the surplus on a tax cut; we'll give the people back their money." It's very appealing—and that their tax cut is bigger than our tax cut.

What they don't say is to fund their tax cut you can do nothing to add a day to the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, with the baby boomers coming down the pike. You will have to have massive cuts in education and other domestic spending. They can't even fund my defense budget, much less the one they say they're for. And we won't pay the debt off.

What I have done is to ask the American people to think about today, but also think about 10 and 20 years from today—what made us strong. And I just mention three things: the aging of America, the education of our children, and the health of our economy.

The aging of America means that we'll have twice as many people over 65 in 30 years as we do today—twice as many. I hope to be one of them. And we'll have more people drawing Social Security and Medicare and fewer people working. How are we going to bridge the gap? We have to make some changes in the programs, but we also have to put more money into Medicare.

Now, my plan saves most of the surplus for Social Security and Medicare. It also makes some reforms in Medicare that require people to pay more for the copay for the lab tests that often are overdone, and a modest increase in the part B premium according to inflation—which is pretty small, anyway—but in return, gets rid of all the copay for all the preventive screenings that keep us alive and keep us healthy in the first place, and starts a modest, but important, prescription drug benefit which would pay half the cost of prescription drugs, up to \$5,000, for most beneficiaries, and will give subsidies up to 150 percent of the poverty level and require no copay up to 130 percent, and no premium.

Now, I think this is a good thing to do. I think it will save money over the long run. It will keep people out of hospitals. It will keep people out of surgery. It will help people who are going to live longer anyway to live better, as well as helping a lot of people to prolong their lives. And it will relieve—it is not just a program for the elderly, because it will relieve their children of the financial burden of caring for them so they can invest their money raising their grandchildren.

So I believe that we should save Social Security and Medicare first. Then I believe we should continue what we've been doing the last 6 years, our investments in the things that are fundamental to our future, especially the education of our children. You know, by next year we'll have every classroom in this country hooked up to the Internet. And because of the E-rate we'll be able to subsidize the poor schools, so even the poorest children will be able to take advantage of that. That means that it won't matter as much as it used to if they don't have enough books in the school library. All they've got to have is that hook-up and a printer, and they will have just as much access to what is in the great libraries of the world as children in the wealthiest schools in this country. And I think it's important.

We gave this HOPE scholarship, this \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college, and tax credits for the other years of higher education. And we've got a proposal now that will provide people access to funds for a lifetime of training. And I think we should continue to do this. I think this is important. I don't believe that we, in this time of good economic fortune, should have a tax cut that is so big it would

require us to cut education when, plainly, we need to continue to invest in it.

And the third thing I want to talk about is the health of the economy itself. You know, I used to carry around with me a sort of 10 rules of politics. And one of my rules of politics was, when someone tells you it's not a money problem, they're talking about somebody else's problem. [*Laughter*] They're never talking about their own problem. Life is far more than economics and politics is about more, but this is a better country in no small measure because more good people can find work and be rewarded for it. And, therefore, it is important for us to try to keep this economy going and to spread its benefits.

And I would just mention two things in that regard that I think are profoundly important. First of all, this new markets tour I took last week—I went to Appalachia; I went to the Mississippi Delta; I went to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, to East St. Louis, south Phoenix, and to East L.A. I saw the urban and rural face of continuing need in America. Secretary Slater was there with me; many others went. I saw all these people who are dying to work, saw a lot of people who are working who are poor. I saw people living in conditions that you would think are unconscionable at a time when homeownership is at an all-time high and construction is doing well.

Now, one of the big debates we have in the White House and in the Treasury Department is, how can you keep this economic growth going with unemployment under 5 percent for 2 years in a row without inflation? One way is to extend that to the areas that haven't felt it—because you get more workers and more consumers and, therefore, you won't have inflation. You'll just be literally adding to the whole rounded economic picture.

So I have asked the Congress, yes, to fund a second round of the empowerment zone program the Vice President has done such a brilliant job of running; but also to pass laws which would give people the same financial incentives to invest in the poor areas of America we give them today to invest in poor areas overseas—from the Caribbean to Latin America to Africa to Asia. That is important. And that's something we ought to do. And our friends in the Republican Party ought to be for this. They always say they want tax incentives to do everything. This is one where I agree with them, because

we should lower the relative risk of taking a chance in a place that has not known this recovery. But anybody who analyzes it will tell you this is the number one opportunity we have to keep this economy going.

And the last thing I want to say about that is, if you adopt our plan for saving the surplus, most of it—for Social Security and Medicare—we cannot only provide a tax increase for families that's worth hundreds of dollars a year—to save for retirement, for child care, for long-term care—we can actually make America debt-free in 15 years for the first time since 1835.

Now, you ask yourself, why would the progressive party of America care about that? Because in the world in which we live—as opposed to the world we lived in 60 years ago, when Franklin Roosevelt had to help spend us out of the Depression—in the world in which we live the interest rates are set globally and money can cross the globe in the flash of an eye. Just think about it. If we keep paying this debt down until we're out of debt, what does that mean? That means lower interest rates; that means more investment, more jobs, more money for wages at low inflation. It means working people have lower interest rates for house payments, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments. It means that when there's a global financial crisis, as there was in Asia 2 years ago, we will be less affected by it. And it means the people we sell things to around the world will be able to borrow the money they need at a lower cost, too, because we won't be in there taking it away to fund our bad habits. I'm telling you, it is a gift we could give our children. It would save the lives—the lives of working people by keeping interest rates low for a very long period of time.

Now, I think we have to say, yes, America should get a tax cut, but we should save Social Security and Medicare first, and we ought to do it in a way that allows us to pay off the debt and continue to invest in education, in defense, in the environment, in the things that we have to have to keep this country going. And it will keep us coming together.

Now, I believe that is the right thing to do. But like I said, it's not just an argument anymore. Look at the evidence. Look at the evidence. When you think about all these people that are out there that are still looking for a chance, if we give them a chance, the rest of us will do better. That's what I believe.

Let me just close with this story. I went to Iowa a couple of days ago, had a great time. They had this big crowd of folks. I said, "You all ought to be glad to see me, I'm the only person that's been here in months not running for anything." [Laughter] But I was in Iowa, and I was reminded of two things—in 1993 I went to Iowa when they had that flood—you remember the flood we had along the Mississippi—500-year flood. And there I was in Des Moines, all this flood and the water everywhere. And I went over and I was stacking those sandbags and visiting with the people that were doing it. And I looked down and there was this tiny child who was 13 years old, but was the size of about a 6- or 7-year-old. And I noticed that her bones were bulging everywhere. It turned out she has that brittle bone disease that some children are born with. Some children never get out of bed with it. She was up and walking but there around people stacking sandbags, actually working.

And she had had, I think, 12 or 15 operations already, and was—never had been able to grow—and the knots where her elbows were and in all of her joints because her bones had been broken so many times. The child's name was Brianne Schwantes. I'll never forget her. And I said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Do you live here?" She said, "No, sir, I live in Wisconsin." But she said, "You know, I saw this on television, and I told my parents we ought to go down there and help those people." And I said, "Aren't you afraid of getting hurt?" She said, "Yes, but you know, I could get another break at home. I want to be part of what my country is doing." She said, "These people need all the help they can get."

Last year I went to American University to give a speech. There was Brianne Schwantes, 18 years old, a freshman at American University, with all of her friends. I brought them to a radio address, let them come see me. But what I want you to know is, every year from that year, the time I first met her till then, she kept coming to NIH getting help. NIH—paid for by taxpayers. Well, my daughter—thank God—didn't have brittle bone disease, but I think I'm better off that I live in a country that gives a child like that a chance to grow up and go to college.

I was giving a speech in Iowa, and I looked out, and there was this beautiful African-American girl smiling. The first time I saw her she

was a baby, in 1992, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I spoke at this rally in front of the Quaker Oats plant. I was working my way through the crowd, and there's this real tall white lady holding this African-American baby. And I said, "Where did you get that baby?" She smiled, and she said, "That's my baby." I said, "Well, where did you get the baby?" She said, "This baby was born in Miami with AIDS and abandoned, and no one would take her. So I thought I should."

So I got so interested in this woman and I figured, well, gosh, it's nice that a nice middle class lady in a place like Iowa would do this. Guess what—this woman had been abandoned by her husband, was raising two children on her own, living in an apartment where she could barely pay the rent. But she cared enough about a baby she never knew to take this child with AIDS, not knowing whether she would live.

I have seen that child about once a year since 1992. That child was permitted to come to the NIH to get good treatment. And when I was giving that speech in Iowa and I looked out—she is tall now, probably above average height for her age, a perfectly beautiful child, smiling, lighting up the room. She jumped in my arms, and I said, "Jimiya, you're about to get so big I can't hold you anymore."

What I want to tell you—what's all that got to do with this? I'm glad I live in a country which gave that child a chance to have a life. I'm glad I live in a country where people like her mother, who had no rational way in the world she should have given that child a home, but she did. And what I want to say to you is, I'm not running for anything, but, darn it, we were right. We have evidence. We were right about Social Security and Medicare. And we're right about keeping our commitments to education. And we're right about trying to reach out and give people who haven't been part of this economic recovery a chance to be part of it. And we're right about trying to secure our economic health for the long term. And we're right about not cutting anybody out, but cutting everybody in.

And so you gave those ideas the chance to be proved right. I am profoundly grateful that I had the opportunity to be President. I am very grateful I am still President, because I think we can do some of the most important things that this administration has done in the next year and a half. But what I want you to

do when you go home tonight is to know in the marrow of your bones that what you always believed was right is right, and that you have had a chance to demonstrate that you don't have to debate anymore; you don't have to worry; you don't have to argue.

And tomorrow and every tomorrow from now on, you will be able to stand up with greater confidence in what you believe because it works. And when you get discouraged and when you worry whether if they outspend us by \$3 million or \$4 million, we can prevail, just think about those two little girls. And you will know, you will know, that it's worth fighting for that kind of America for all the children of this country in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. in the State Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; former Deputy Chief of Staff Harold Ickes; former White House assistant Janice Enright; Gerald W. McEntee, president, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; Laura Poisel and her adoptive daughter, Jimiya, who was born with AIDS; and Alfonso Fanjul, who hosted a Democratic National Committee dinner in Coral Gables, FL, on July 13.

Remarks on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and an Exchange With Reporters

July 20, 1999

The President. Good morning. I have just had the privilege of meeting with the three Apollo 11 astronauts who, 30 years ago, carried out the first landing on the Moon: Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins. They and everyone at NASA over the years have made an extraordinary contribution to our Nation and to humanity. I am very grateful to them.

President Kennedy, who set a goal of putting a man on the Moon by the late 1960's, was committed to using technology to unlock the mysteries of the heavens. But President Kennedy was also concerned that technology, if misused, literally could destroy life on Earth. So another goal he vigorously pursued was one first proposed by President Eisenhower, a treaty to ban for all time the testing of the most destructive weapons ever devised, nuclear weapons.

As a first step, President Kennedy negotiated a limited test ban treaty to ban nuclear tests except those conducted underground. But for far too long nations failed to heed the call to ban all nuclear tests. More countries sought to acquire nuclear weapons and to develop ever more destructive weapons. This threatened America's security and that of our friends and allies. It made the world a more dangerous place.

Since I have been President, I have made ending nuclear tests one of my top goals. And in 1996 we concluded a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; 152 countries have now signed it, and 41, including many of our allies, have now ratified it. Today, on Capitol Hill, a bipartisan group of Senators is speaking out on the importance of the treaty. They include Senators Jeffords, Specter, Daschle, Biden, Bingaman, Dorgan, Bob Kerrey, Levin, and Murray. I am grateful for their leadership and their support of this critical agreement.

And today I want to express, again, my strong determination to obtain ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. America already has stopped nuclear testing. We have, today, a robust nuclear force and nuclear experts affirm that we can maintain a safe and reliable deterrent without nuclear tests.

The question now is whether we will adopt or whether we will lose a verifiable treaty that will bar other nations from testing nuclear weapons. The Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty will strengthen our national security by constraining the development of more advanced and more destructive nuclear weapons and by limiting the possibilities for more countries to acquire nuclear weapons. It will also enhance our ability to detect suspicious activities by other nations.

With or without a test ban treaty, we must monitor such activities. The treaty gives us new means to pursue this important mission, a global network of sensors and the right to request short notice, onsite inspections in other countries. Four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff—David Jones, William Crowe, Colin Powell, and John Shalikashvili—plus the current Chairman, Hugh Shelton, all agree the treaty is in our national interests. Other national leaders, such as former Senators John Glenn and Nancy Kassebaum Baker, agree.

Unfortunately, the Test Ban Treaty is now imperiled by the refusal of some Senators even to consider it. If our Senate fails to act, the treaty cannot enter into force for any country. Think of that. We're not testing now. A hundred and fifty-two countries have signed, 41 have ratified, but if our Senate fails to act, this treaty and all the protections and increased safety it offers the American people cannot enter into force for any country. That would make it harder to prevent further nuclear arms competition, and as we have seen, for example, in the nuclear tests in India and Pakistan.

Do we want these countries and other regional rivals to join a test ban treaty, or do we want them to stop nuclear testing? Do we want to scrap a treaty that could constrain them? The major nuclear powers, Britain and France, Russia and China, have signed the treaty. Do we want to walk away from a treaty under which those countries and scores of others have agreed not to conduct nuclear tests? I believe it is strongly in our interest to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

The American people consistently have supported it for more than 40 years now. At a minimum, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee should hold hearings this fall. Hearings would allow each side to make its case for and against the treaty, and allow the Senate to decide this matter on the merits. We have a chance right now to end nuclear testing forever. It would be a tragedy for our security and for our children's future to let this opportunity slip away.

I thank those Senators in both parties who today are announcing their clear intention not to do that.

I thank you.

China and Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, did Jiang Zemin tell you that he would use force to counter Taiwan's independence? And would you use force in Taiwan's defense?

The President. First let me tell you I'm going to have a press conference tomorrow, and I will answer a lot of questions. The answer to that question is, we had a conversation in which I restated our strong support of the "one China" policy and our strong support for the cross-strait dialog, and I made it clear, our policy had not changed, including our view under the Taiwan Relations Act that it would be—we would take very seriously any abridgement of the peaceful dialog. China knows very well what our policy is, and we know quite well what their policy is. I believe that the action of the United States in affirming our support of the "one China" policy and encouraging Taiwan to support that and the framework within which dialog has occurred will be helpful in easing some of the tensions. And that was the context in which our conversation occurred.

So I thought it was a very positive conversation, far more positive than negative. And that is the light in which I meant it to unfold, and I think that is the shape it is taking. So—

Q. The Chinese seemed to make it clear that he would use force—

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and Kyoto Treaty

Q. On the treaty, Senator Helms says that he would be happy to hold hearings if you would send up the ABM Treaty and the Kyoto treaty. Will you?

The President. Look, the ABM Treaty—we have to conclude START II first; that's in our national interest. The Kyoto treaty—all the people who say they're not for the Kyoto treaty insist that we involve the developing nations in it; I agree with them. Even the people who are against the Kyoto treaty under any circumstances say, well, if you're going to have it you've got to have the developing nations in there. So it's inconsistent for me to send it up when we're out there working ourselves to death to try to get the developing nations to participate.

Now, this is a relatively new issue, the Kyoto treaty. And the other issue is not ripe yet, clearly, not ripe yet. So to take a matter that has been a matter of national debate for 40 years

now, and it is finally a reality—a treaty that has been ratified by 40 other countries, the prospect of dramatically increasing the safety of the American people in the future—and hold it hostage to two matters that are literally not ripe for presentation to the Senate yet would

be a grave error, I think. And I hope that we can find a way around that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China.

Remarks to Representatives of the Legal Community

July 20, 1999

Thank you. Let me say to all of you, I can't do any better than that. [*Laughter*] It was terrific. I wish every newspaper in American would reprint those remarks. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

I want to thank you all for coming. What a wonderful group we have here. First, I thank Attorney General Reno and Deputy Attorney General Holder for the wonderful job they do in so many ways. Associate Attorney General Fisher is here with them and Bill Lann Lee of the Civil Rights Division. One big civil rights issue is getting him confirmed, I might add.

I thank Secretary Slater and Secretary Daley for joining us, and Ben Johnson, who runs our one America initiative; and Chris Edley, who used to be part of our administration—still is—I just don't have to pay him anymore. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Senator Leahy and Congressman Becerra, for coming. I think there are at least two people in this room, Jerry Shestack and Bill Taylor, who were here in 1963 with President Kennedy. I thank them for coming. Thank you, Mayor Archer, for coming—former Secretary of State Warren Christopher, former Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti.

There are so many people here—I just have to mention one person because it's my most intimate, personal acquaintance with affirmative action, the president of the American Bar Association, Phil Anderson, gave me a job in 1981, when I was the youngest former Governor in American history—[*laughter*—]with dim future prospects. So I thank him for being here, as well.

And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to the man who directs our national service program, Senator Harris Wofford, who was very

intimately involved with President Kennedy's civil rights initiatives. Thank you for being here, sir, today.

As has been pointed out, President Kennedy called more than 200 of America's leading lawyers to this room 36 years ago, the summer of 1963, when America was awakening to the fact that in our laws and in our hearts, we were still far short of our ideals.

It is difficult today to imagine an America without civil rights. But when I came here 36 years ago in the summer of 1963, as a delegate to American Legion Boys Nation, there were only four African-American boys there, and the hottest issue was what we were going to do about civil rights.

It didn't seem so inevitable back then. Across my native South, there were sheriffs, mayors, Governors defying the courts; police dogs attacking peaceful demonstrators; firehoses toppling children; protesters led away in handcuffs; and too little refuge in the hallowed sanctuary of the law.

It was in this atmosphere that the President turned to America's lawyers and enlisted them in the fight for equal justice. With Vice President Johnson and Attorney General Robert Kennedy at his side, the President asked the lawyers there to remember their duty to uphold justice, especially in places where the principles of justice had been defied.

The lawyers answered that call, creating a new Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and a new tradition of pro bono service in the legal profession. I asked you here today because we need your help as much as ever in our most enduring challenge as a nation, the challenge of creating one America. We have worked hard on that here. In the audience today I see

Dr. John Hope Franklin, Governor William Winter, Judy Winston. I think Angela Oh and Dr. Suzan Johnson are here, but I haven't seen them yet—people who worked on this for me to shine a special spotlight on the issues. And we have now institutionalized that effort insofar as we can in the White House. But there is a limit to what we can do without you.

Just as your predecessors, with the Constitution as their shield, stared down the sheriffs of segregation, you must step forward to dismantle our time's most stubborn obstacles to equal justice—poverty, unemployment, and yes, continuing discrimination. Behind every watershed event of the civil rights struggle, lawyers, many pro bono, remain vigilant, securing equal rights for employment, education, housing, voting, and citizenship for all Americans. Their success, as you just heard from Bill—every time a lawyer does that, it inspires a whole new generation of people to seek the law as a career. I suspect many of us were inspired to go to law school because we thought lawyers were standing up for what was right, not simply because they were making a good living.

Thirty-six years ago, in that 200, there were 50 African-American lawyers. They came to the White House, but they couldn't have found the same welcome in the hotels, restaurants, and lunch counters of America—a cruel irony.

Today, thanks in large measure to the efforts of our lawyers, Americans of all backgrounds and colors and religions are working, living, and learning side by side. The doors of opportunity are open wider than ever. We are living in a time of unprecedented prosperity, with the longest peacetime expansion in our history and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded since we began to keep separate data in the early 1970's. Our social fabric is mending, with declining rates of welfare, crime, teen pregnancy, and drug abuse.

But the challenge to build one America continues. It is different, but it is just as real as it was when Vernon Jordan started with the Urban League as a young man, or before he was working in the South on registering voters. I saw firsthand in the new markets tour I took a couple of weeks ago, we will never be one America when our central cities, our Indian reservations, our small towns and rural areas here in the most prosperous time in history are still living in the shadows of need and want. They're struggling with unemployment and poverty rates

more than twice the national average—over 70 percent on some of our reservations. Your fellow Americans, many of them, are living in houses that it would sicken you to walk through—at the time of our greatest prosperity.

Everything President Johnson worked for and dreamed of that he thought could happen after all these years has still not reached quite a large number of your fellow Americans. So, what are we going to do about it?

We know that two out of five African-American and Latino children under the age of 6 are still in poverty, in spite of all of our prosperity, in spite of the fact that a million children were lifted out of poverty just in the last couple of years. We also know that we can't be one America when a lot of minorities still distrust law enforcement and our legal system generally and shy away from entering the legal profession.

We can't be one America when, here we are, on the eve of the new millennium, when we act as if everything good will happen and all the rationality will fade away, but we still have to read about brutal killings like those in Indiana and Illinois, allegedly conducted on the basis of religious conviction; or what happened in Jasper, Texas; or to Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming.

The struggle for one America today is more complex than it was 36 years ago, more subtle than it seemed to us that it would be back then. For then, there was the clear enemy of legal segregation and overt hatred. Today, the progress we make in building one America depends more on whether we can expand opportunity and deal with a whole range of social challenges. In 1963 the challenge was to open our schools to all our children. In 1999 the challenge is to make sure all those children get a world-class education.

And of course, if I could just expound on that for a moment, we've worked hard on that. And one of the things we have to do is to bring teachers to the communities where they're needed most. I offered an initiative to give scholarships to young people who would go and teach in inner-city or rural schools that were underserved. And I call for these scholarships as part of our race initiative. I believe they will make a real difference.

The efforts we have made to make the class sizes smaller and to bring the Internet to all of our kids, even in the poorest classrooms, these things are beginning to make a difference.

The hundreds of thousands of people who have gone into the elementary schools to teach people to read are making a difference. I can tell you that in the last 3 years we have seen, for the first time in a very long time, at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade level substantial improvements in reading scores, our children moving up about half a grade level. But there is a long way to go.

Last year, just before the election, the Congress came together across party lines, and I shouted, "hallelujah," because they voted to create and fund—to create 100,000 school teachers to lower class size in the early grades, something we know that is particularly important to poor children and people who don't come from strong educational backgrounds. And we now have the research that shows it has continuing benefits. I just released the funds to hire the first 30,000 of those teachers.

But now, unbelievably, in this non-election year—although you wouldn't know it from reading the press—[laughter]—there are some who propose to kill the class size initiative and replace it with a program that doesn't guarantee that one red cent will go to hiring a single teacher or reducing the size of a single class. Now, this is very important because we now, finally, for the last 2 years, have a student population that is bigger than the baby boom generation. So it is not only the most diverse in history, it is the largest in history; and about 2 million teachers are scheduled to retire in the next few years.

I'm happy to report, I hope in part because of the importance of education rising in the national consciousness, as the Secretary of Education told me 2 days ago, that we now have 10 percent of our college students saying they're considering being teachers. That's twice the percentage of 5 years ago, and that's encouraging. But we have to get them in the classroom.

So if the research says it's a good idea, if we voted to do it, if we've already funded 30,000 of the teachers, why in the world would we turn around and reverse field? The people who want to kill the 100,000 teacher initiative say they want to do it because they want to improve the quality of the existing teacher core. Well, I'm for that, and we've set aside sums to do it. But that shouldn't be a cover for the fact that we've got to do more to lower class size in the early grades, especially for our poorest children, especially for our minority children,

especially for all these children whose first language is not even English.

Across the river here in Alexandria we have kids who literally speak 100 different languages as their native tongue, from 180 different racial and ethnic groups. We cannot afford to back up on this. I also believe very strongly that it would be wrong to pass a risky tax scheme before we first fund education and make sure we can save Social Security and Medicare, something that also has a big impact on minority communities in our country and will have a huge impact on the ability of the baby boom generation to retire in dignity without imposing new burdens on their children and their grandchildren, just as many of them are moving into the middle class for the first time in their family's history.

So I hope that—this is a nonlegal issue, but since all of us, as our detractors never tire of saying, are overeducated—those of you who believe in education will stand with us as we try to preserve this important reform. Well, strengthening our schools is important, and bringing economic opportunity to those places that I visited and all those places like them in America, it is absolutely essential. But what I asked you here today for was to simply say we still need lawyers. We need the work lawyers do. We need the ideas lawyers get. We need the dreams lawyers dream. We still need people to fight for equal justice.

And so I ask you to do two things today. First, I ask you to recommit yourselves, as Bill has asked, to fighting discrimination, to revitalizing our poorest communities, and to giving people an opportunity to serve in law firms who would not otherwise have it. You can help inner-city entrepreneurs negotiate loans to start new businesses. You can help neighborhood health clinics navigate the regulatory mazes they have to do to stay open. You can help nonprofits secure new supermarkets and merchants in underserved communities. Just for example, those of you who come from urban areas, today in the highest unemployment urban areas in America, there is still at least a 25 percent gap between the money that the people who live there earn and have to spend to support themselves and the opportunities they have to spend it in their own communities.

In East St. Louis, where I visited, there is a 40 percent gap. We went to a Walgreens store that was the first new store to open in the

inner city in 40 years. Mayor Archer here is exhibit A. The unemployment rate in Detroit is less than half what it was in 1993 when I took office, because he convinced people that there were people in his community that could work and that were already working and that had money to spend and that they ought to be part of the future. And we need to do that everywhere, and that work cannot be done without legal assistance.

And it is a civil rights issue. It is a civil rights issue for people to have jobs and dignity and a chance to start businesses and the chance to be able to shop in their own neighborhoods and walk to the grocery store, instead of having to ride a bus and wait on the schedule and stand in the rain and do all the things people have to do. It is a huge issue. And if we can't do it now, we'll never get around to doing it. So I ask you to help us with that.

I hope you will help me to pass my new markets initiative, because what it says is, we're going to give people the same incentives to invest in inner cities and rural areas and Indian reservations, the same incentives to invest there we give them to invest in the Caribbean, in Africa, in Latin America and Asia. I don't want to repeal those incentives; I want Americans to help poor people all over the world rise up. But they ought to have the same incentives to invest in poor people right here at home, and I hope you'll help me do that.

The second thing I want you to do is to set the best possible example. Mr. McBride has spoken better than I can. We may have torn down the walls of segregation, but there are still a lot of walls in our hearts and in our habits. And sometimes, we can—we are not aware of those walls in our hearts, but we have to test them against our habits. So invite more lawyers of all backgrounds to join your firms. How are we going to build one America if the legal profession which is fighting for it doesn't reflect it? We can't do it.

I am so pleased that the organizations here have made the commitments they've made to diversity and to pro bono work. I thank the American Bar Association, the Corporate Counsel Association, for pledging to launch new initiatives to promote greater diversity in the profession. The ABA will bring together lawyers and academics, law firms and bar associations, to provide financial aid to minority law students and to mentor them as they embark on their

legal careers. We've got to do more work to mentor them before, in the places that have tried to do away with affirmative action—I believe wrongly—sometimes under court decisions with which I respectfully disagree. But if you don't get there in the first place, it won't matter if there's someone helping you once you do get there.

The Counsel Association has promised to encourage its 11,000 members to hire more minority-owned law firms and to dedicate more of their resources to pro bono legal work in communities. I thank the hundreds of law firms who have agreed to dedicate at least 3 percent of billable hours—about 50 hours a year per lawyer—to pro bono work, which is the ABA standard. As Bill pointed out, this booming economy has been pretty good to America's lawyers and law firms. Last year, top firms increased their revenues by 15 percent. There will never be a better opportunity to help those who need it most. If Mr. McBride's firm thought it was a good idea, it's probably a pretty good idea for other firms, as well.

And there's one other point I would make, following on what he said. I think it's good business strategy over the long run, not only for all the reasons you said, but because the recovery of the last 6 years has proved a fundamental thing about a community: that is, when other people, particularly people who haven't had a chance, do well, those of us that are in a position to take it, that are going to do all right, regardless, do better. When the least of us do well, the rest of us do better. We are all stronger. And we should never forget that.

So I hope every American firm will meet the ABA standard. Just imagine this: if every lawyer in America—about 800,000—dedicated just 50 hours a year to pro bono work, that would be 40 million hours of legal help. That's a lot of personal problems solved, a lot of headaches gone away, a lot of hurdles overcome, a lot of business started. Think of what we could do.

A 1993 ABA study found that half of all low income households had at least one serious legal problem each year, but three-quarters had no access to a lawyer. Now we can fill that gap. Now America's lawyers can afford to fill that gap. And I would argue, if we really believe in equal justice we cannot afford not to fill that gap.

I want to thank the Association of American Law Schools for pledging to help more schools incorporate community service in their curriculum—something I strongly believe in—so that more law graduates will come out of law school predisposed to do volunteer work and pro bono work. All these are wonderful pledges. I thank the presidents of the ABA, the Minority Bar Associations here, the American Corporate Counsel Association, the representatives of the San Francisco and New York City bars, the co-chairs to the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights for agreeing to meet every month.

You heard what Eric Holder said—for our part the Justice Department, working with Ben Johnson and the White House Office on One America, will do whatever we can to support these efforts. And a year from now, we'll gather again and see where we've succeeded and where we need to do more. I don't want to wait another 36 years. I ask you to work on this. I want it to be steady work for America's lawyers.

I ask Eric Holder and Neal Katyal of the Justice Department to report to me on the progress. We will know we have succeeded if more lawyers begin to make community service a vital part of their practice. We will know we will have succeeded when we have more businesses, more health clinics, more affordable housing in places once bypassed by hope and opportunity. We'll know we'll have succeeded

when our law schools, our bar associations, and our law firms not only represent all Americans, but look like all America.

One of the best things Dr. King ever said was that "the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Our Nation's lawyers have bent that arc toward justice. Our Nation has been transformed for the better. So I ask you again to lead us along that arc from the America we know to the one America we all long to live in.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Robert B. (Ben) Johnson, Assistant to the President and Director of the President's Initiative for One America; Judith A. Winston, Executive Director, One America in the 21st Century: The President's Initiative on Race; John Hope Franklin, Chairman, Christopher Edley, consultant, and Angela E. Oh, Suzan D. Johnson Cook, former Gov. William Winter of Mississippi, and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, members, President's Advisory Board on Race; Jerome J. Shestack, former president, American Bar Association; civil rights attorney William W. Taylor III, Zuckerman Spaeder law firm; and Bill McBride, managing partner, Holland & Knight law firm, who introduced the President.

Statement on Signing the Y2K Act

July 20, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 775, the "Y2K Act." This is extraordinary, time-limited legislation designed to deal with an exceptional and unique circumstance of national significance—the Y2K computer problem.

In signing this legislation, I act in the belief and with the expectation that companies in the high technology sector and throughout the American economy are serious in their remediation efforts and that such efforts will continue. Many have worked hard to identify the potential for Y2K failures among their systems and products, taken reasonable measures to inform those who might be injured from Y2K failures of steps they could take to avoid the harm, and fixed

those systems and products, where feasible. If nonetheless there are significant failures or disruptions as we enter the Year 2000, plaintiffs will turn to the courts seeking compensation. Responsible companies fear that they will spend millions or more defending Y2K suits, even if they bear little or no responsibility for the harm alleged. Frivolous litigation could burden our courts and delay relief for those with legitimate claims. Firms whose productivity is central to our economy could be distracted by the defense of unwarranted lawsuits.

My Administration sought changes to make the Y2K Act balanced and fair, protecting litigants who are injured and deserve compensation. We achieved some additional protections. For example, the Y2K Act was modified to ensure that the Federal law leaves intact the State law doctrines of unconscionability that protect unwary consumers and small businesses against unfair or illegal contracts and that public health, safety, and the environment are protected, even if some firms are temporarily unable to comply fully with all regulatory requirements due to Y2K failures.

In addition, the Y2K Act expressly exempts Y2K actions involving private securities claims arising under the Securities Act of 1933 and other Federal securities laws that do not involve actual or constructive awareness as an element of the claim (e.g., section 11 of the 1933 Act). More generally, actions by the Securities and Exchange Commission are excluded from the definition of "Y2K Action."

This is narrow, time-limited legislation aimed at a unique problem. The terms of the statute should be construed narrowly to create uniform Federal rules for Y2K actions in the areas speci-

fied in the bill, and to leave in place State law not in direct conflict with the bill's provisions. Moreover, my signature today in no way reflects support for the Y2K Act's provisions in any other context.

I hope that we find that the Y2K Act succeeds in helping to screen out frivolous claims without blocking or unduly burdening legitimate suits. We will be watching to see whether the bill's provisions are misused by parties who did little or nothing to remediate in order to defeat claims brought by those harmed by irresponsible conduct.

In the remaining days of 1999, I hope that the business community redoubles its efforts at remediation. Preventing problems before they start, and developing contingency plans when necessary, are still the best solutions to the Y2K problem.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 20, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 775, approved July 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106-37.

Remarks at a Democratic Business Council and Women's Leadership Forum Dinner July 20, 1999

Thank you very much. I want to thank you all for your welcome, and I want to thank my good friend Janice for her instruction. I did know, as a matter of fact, that she was from a place called Hope. I didn't know that I had the endorsement of her father in quite that way. [Laughter] But I appreciate it more than I can say.

I want to thank John Merrigan and Penny and Susie, and I want to thank Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz and all of you who have worked so hard to put our party on the soundest financial footing. I think Mr. Merrigan said we were out of debt for the first time since '91. I should point out that we were outspent by \$100 million in 1998 and still picked up House seats, the first time it had happened in the sixth year of an administration since 1822.

I say that to say that it is not necessary that we have as much money as the other side does. You know, the economy the Democrats have built has been an equal opportunity beneficiary. And so we have showered benefits on Republicans, as well as Democrats. And if they choose to misspend their money, there's nothing we can do about it, is there? [Laughter] It's a free economy. But it is necessary that we have enough. And if we have a good message and we stand for the right things and our people are excited, then that is enough, and I thank you for that.

We were talking at our table—I have a friend who is a New York Democrat who heads quite a large American company, and he said he'd gotten so exasperated with these Republicans throwing their money around he started going up to his friends in New York saying, "You

should give money to the Republicans—if your taxes went up in 1993 by more than you’ve made in the stock market, support them. But if the balanced budget and the low interest rates and the tripling of the stock market have benefited you more, you ought to be for us. And if you’re not, you’re not even acting in your own best interest, much less the country’s.” [Laughter]

I want to talk to you just very briefly tonight, not so much about your own best interests, but about our own best interests. And I want to begin by thanking all of you. Thank you for your support, many of you for your repeated support over these years; some of you for your involvement in this administration, like Dr. Susan Blumenthal—thank you very much for being here. Thank you for being so good to me and Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore. And thank you for doing something that has been very good for America.

I want to make just a few brief points, in case somebody tomorrow gives you a quiz and asks you why you came tonight. This country was in trouble in 1991 and 1992. It was in trouble because we had been in a prolonged recession, but even more because we kept coming out of these recessions and dripping back in, coming out and drip back in. We hadn’t had any sustained growth for some time. It was in trouble because the crime rates and the welfare rolls were rising. It was in trouble because our country was becoming more divided. It was in trouble because the political debate in Washington left most Americans cold, because there seemed to be a debate between people who essentially were against the Government doing anything and people who wanted to preserve the status quo of what the Government had been doing. The country was in trouble.

I ran for President because I had some ideas about how we could change things. I believed that we could create a country again in which there was opportunity for every responsible citizen, in which we had a community of all Americans who were responsible for themselves and for each other, in which we led the world for peace and freedom and prosperity. But I didn’t think we could do it by having the same old fights in the same old way. And I knew if the people gave me a chance to serve, some difficult decisions would be required.

Well, it worked out. And we said, look, we’re going to cut this deficit, get interest rates down,

and grow the economy; but we still have to invest in education, in medical research, in technology, and the environment. We have to do that. We said we want more money in education, but we want higher standards and more competition, too. We said we believe you can grow the economy and improve the environment. We said we thought that you could create a society where people who had to work and had children could succeed at work and at home. And a lot of that just kind of sounded like political rhetoric at the time.

But what I want to say to you tonight is when people ask you why you were here, say, “Look, the country was in trouble; we elected the Clinton-Gore administration; they had friends and allies in the Government and the Congress and in the private sector; they implemented their ideas; most of the time—not all of the time, but most of the time—they were opposed by members in the other party, and it worked out.” Our approach turned out to be right. That’s what Janice was saying. This is no longer subject to serious debate.

I was told for 2 years—I saw the Republicans go into the ’94 election telling everybody how we’d raise taxes on people we hadn’t raised taxes on and how terrible it was and how it was going to bankrupt the country and run the debt up. And we went from the biggest deficit in history to the biggest surplus in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history, almost 19 million new jobs, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded since we started keeping that data almost 30 years ago. In addition to that, we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; and teen pregnancy, teen drug abuse, teen smoking are declining. Things are moving in the right direction in this country.

So I say to you, first, thank you because we have moved this country in the right direction. We did it and proved you could have a better environment. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against childhood diseases for the first time in the history of America. Over 100,000 young people have served their communities in AmeriCorps in 4 years; it took the Peace Corps 20 years to get to 100,000 people. We have virtually opened the doors of college to every American with the HOPE scholarship and the other tax credits and student

loans. This is a stronger country than it was in 1992.

And we have done it by relentlessly pushing to bring people together, standing against discrimination and against hatred and against the politics of division. When I say "we," I don't mean "me," "we"—I mean, "we": we, our party, our allies, the people that believed as we did. And along the way we've been a force for peace in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, in Kosovo. We stood up against terrorism and stood up for trade and human rights around the world.

Today I asked the United States Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, first advocated by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, first signed by the United States. I signed it at the U.N. a couple years ago. We are moving the country in the right direction, toward a world that works better for all the people. That's the first thing I want to say.

We're entitled to the benefit of the doubt on the great debates going on in Washington today because we just had 6 years of argument and it turned out we were right. And I say that in all humility. I am grateful for that. The point I'm trying to make is, Joe Andrew always says, "Well, why is Bill Clinton doing this? He's not running for anything." I came here to say not that I was right, but that our ideas were right. And I am grateful that I had the chance to be President, to be the instrument of bringing the country together and moving it forward. But it wasn't me; it was that the ideas we had were right. And you've got to get out there between now and the next election cycle and hammer that home.

Before I took office they were killing family leave because it was going to bankrupt small business. I signed the family leave bill, first thing I did—so we'd have 15 million people take advantage of it. The largest number of small businesses formed in any given year—every single year I've been President has broken a new record. So the family leave law did not wreck the small business economy; it made America a place where you could have work and family.

And they vetoed and killed the Brady bill before I became President. So I signed it first chance I got. And 400,000 people couldn't get guns because they had criminal backgrounds. And we have a 26-year low in the crime rate. And we've got 100,000 more police on the

street, even though on the other side of the aisle they said, "This won't make a lick of difference; these police will never get out there." Well, we funded them ahead of time and under budget, and we have a 26-year low in the crime rate.

So as Democrats we should be proud—not proud as if we did it, proud that the ideas we stood for were the right ones and that it actually works when you try to create a society where everybody has a chance, all the rest of us who are going to do fine regardless, do even better; that we all do better when we try to create opportunity for each other, when we try to make sure we're responsible for each other in an appropriate way and we try to pull together.

Now, the second thing I want to say is we have to take that fast-forward to today. What's the great debate in Washington today? What are we going to do with the surplus? Now, if I had been running in '92 and I had come to you and you had never seen me before, and I said, I want you to vote for me so that 6 years from now we'll be having a debate about what to do with the surplus, you would have sent me home to Arkansas. [Laughter] You would have said, "This guy has lost it; he doesn't understand. We've got a \$290 billion deficit; we will always have deficits."

So what are we going to do with it? First, the good news. There's a bipartisan agreement that we shouldn't spend the Social Security surplus. That means until we need it to pay for Social Security, we can use it to pay down the debt, and that's good. I think we have that agreement. I want to see the details, but I think we do. That's good. Now the question is what to do with the rest of the surplus.

Here's what we feel. We feel what we should do is to do the following things. Number one, we should fix Medicare and provide a prescription drug benefit. Number two, we should have appropriate money set aside to continue to invest in education, national defense, biomedical research, and the environment. Number three, we believe that as the interest on the debt comes down, because our interest payments will come down as the debt comes, we should put the savings into Social Security so we can run the Trust Fund out to 2053. So when I leave office everybody will know Social Security is all right for at least 50 years, and we can quit worrying about it. Now, that's what we think.

And you can do what we suggest and still have a tax cut, a substantial one. They believe that virtually all the non-Social Security surplus should go to a tax cut. And they think it sounds really popular—"my tax cut is bigger than your tax cut." Well, if that were the whole story that would sound like a pretty good argument. But I say we ought to save Social Security and Medicare and not just pay down the debt but make this country debt-free for the first time since 1835 and continue to invest in education.

We'll still have money for a tax cut to help families save for long-term care, for child care, for investments in our country. But we will continue—we will not risk running a deficit, destroying the education budget, not meeting our defense responsibilities, or not doing one single thing to add a day to the solvency of Medicare, and not providing the prescription drug benefit. That's the difference. That's the choice.

So it's just all back to 1993 again, or even back earlier than that. Most of you in this room, what are you doing here? You're all in upper income groups; you ought to be at their deal, not ours. Why are you here? You get more money out of their tax cut. This is very important, why you're Democrats, why I am. But 5 years from now you're going to be a lot better off, and so is America, if we pay down the debt, save Social Security and Medicare, continue to invest in education, and have a modest tax cut we can afford.

You know, if you just think about just three great challenges this country faces, we're going to double the number of people over 65 in 30 years. We hadn't been in this kind of financial shape in forever and a day. What in the world are we going to say to our children if we walk away from this opportunity to run the Social Security Trust Fund out at least 50-plus years? What are we going to say if we walk away from our obligation to run the Medicare Trust Fund out until 2025 or beyond, and to provide all these elderly people—not all of them poor, a lot of them middle class—a little help in dealing with the prescription drug program?

What are we going to say if we adopt a tax cut which causes us to cut education when we ought to be investing more in it? What are we going to say when 5, 10 years from now some Kosovo comes along and America is asked to stand up for human rights around the world? We'd say, "Well, we'd like to do it, but we

had that tax cut"—[laughter]—"and I needed that tax cut."

Closer to home, what are we going to say—I've been waiting for this, and I never wanted to be the first to raise it because I wouldn't have had credibility on it, but now it's in the press—what are we going to say if they cut taxes and the markets say, "Well, we don't need a tax cut in the economy like this; we better raise interest rates?" So you get it with one hand and get it taken away with the other, and everything gets squeezed.

So I say to you we ought to save Social Security and Medicare; we ought to continue to move forward in education. And I want to talk just a minute about this paying the debt down. A lot of people—it just seems so alien; it's like an alien subject—we haven't been out of debt since 1835. And for most of this century we shouldn't have been out of debt. We needed to have a little debt to invest in infrastructure or to expand the economy in times of recession or outright depression. But it's different now. Why is it different now?

I want you all to think about this. You may not agree with me on this. I've really thought about this a lot. Why should the Nation's progressive party be for taking the country out of debt in 1999 when we have still an unconscionably large number of poor children and any number of things that we ought to be spending this money on? Here's why. We're living in a global economy. Interest rates are set globally; money moves globally. The best thing we've done for poor people in America is create 19 million new jobs and give tax relief to lower income working people and raise the minimum wage—to create an economy, in other words, that they could be a part of; to support the Vice President's empowerment initiative and the community development banks and all the things we've done to try to bring jobs.

Now, if we get out of debt and if everybody knows we're on the target, we're going to be out of debt in 15 years, what happens? Interest rates stay down, investments stay high, more jobs are created with inflation low, more money for wage increases. Average people pay lower interest costs for home mortgages, car payments, credit card payments, and college loan payments. And the next time a global financial crisis comes along, like the one in Asia, nobody has to worry about America gobbling up scarce dollars and driving the price of money up. So when

our trading partners, who are poorer than we are, need to get money because times are tough, they can get it and get it at a lower cost, which means they will recover more quickly and we'll start doing business more quickly.

And if you don't think that's a big issue, look what is happening to America's farmers because of the collapse of the markets in Asia. Here we are at the most prosperous time perhaps in this country's history with an absolute disaster in the family farms of America.

So that's why it makes sense in a global economy for the world's richest country to be debt-free, and why it is a progressive thing to do—and why, by the way, when you do it, we won't be paying interest on the debt anymore. If you were a Member of Congress, you would find that before you did anything else you'd have to take about—it used to be 15 and now 14 cents on every tax dollar to pay interest on the debt we have accumulated, largely in the 12 years before I took office. So don't forget, you get out of debt, you've also got 14 cents you used to not have. And 14 cents of every dollar, all of you pay in taxes, is a pretty tidy sum of money. So that's why this is a good thing.

So I say to you we need to go to the country and say, tax cut, sure, but first things first: Save Social Security and Medicare and deal with the challenge of America's aging; continue to invest in our children's future and in the other basic things we have to have; pay that debt off for the first time since 1835, and guarantee America a generation of prosperity. Then have a tax cut that we need and can afford. That is the debate we ought to have.

And I can tell you there are lots of other examples. I think we were right on closing the gun show loophole, and I think they were wrong. I think we were right on the Patients' Bill of Rights, and I don't think they were. I say that not because I take any joy in that. I liked it when we got together. I liked it when we had big majorities of both parties in both Houses voting for welfare reform. I liked it when we had big majorities of both parties in both Houses voting for the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. I wish it can be that way again.

But I am telling you, we've got to stand up for what's right for all the people. What brings us together as a community? What gives other people opportunity they wouldn't otherwise have? What purges our spirit from the kind of awful, arrogant hatred that led that terribly dis-

turbed young man to kill those people because they were of different races in Illinois and Indiana and claim it was a religious imperative?

I had today a bunch of civil rights lawyers in my office and a bunch of high-toned business lawyers who don't practice civil rights law, to commemorate the 36th anniversary of John Kennedy bringing 200 lawyers to Washington to ask them to lead America's charge in civil rights. And I asked them to lead America's charge in trying to integrate our law firms, integrate our corporations, and use pro bono legal work to help solve the economic and social problems of low income people around the country.

I'll just close with this. One of the greatest weeks of my Presidency was a couple of weeks ago when I had the privilege of going to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to East St. Louis, to the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota, to south Phoenix, and East L.A., because I believe that we can keep this economy going better if we get people to invest in the areas that have felt none of our recovery. And I have a simple proposal: Give Americans like you the same tax incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest today in the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia, and Latin America. I want you to have those incentives. I just want poor areas in America to be as attractive. Our best new markets for America are here in America.

But what it reminded me of is all these people, they're just like us. Just because they don't have a nice necktie and a nice suit to wear, life dealt them a little bit different hand. You know, Janice and I, we'd like to have you believe we were born in log cabins we built ourselves. [Laughter] But the truth is, you take one or two different turns in life and she and I both are back in Hope, Arkansas, doing business with each other in our little hometown. Some days I think it wouldn't be too bad. [Laughter]

But I'm just telling you, you think about it, every one of you—you think about this when you go home tonight. Why did you come here? Why did you come here? If they ask you why you came, tell them because you believe we're better off when we all go forward together. Tell them because you believe this ought to be one community. Tell them, guess what, we tried our ideas in the crucible of excruciating combat for 6½ years, and the country is better off.

So it's not like there's no evidence. And before we squander this surplus, let's take care

of the aging of America; let's take care of the children of America; and let's get this country out of debt so we can go forward together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:22 p.m. in the Main Ballroom at the St. Regis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Janice Griffin, chair, and

Susan Turnbull, vice chair, Women's Leadership Forum; John Merrigan, chair, and Penny Lee, vice chair, Democratic Business Council; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Susan Blumenthal, former senior adviser to the President for Women's Health; and alleged murderer Benjamin Nathaniel Smith.

Memorandum on the Ninth Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation July 20, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Ninth Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation

Under the provisions of section 1008(b) of title 37, United States Code, every 4 years the President must direct a complete review of the principles and concepts of the compensation system for members of the uniformed services. You shall be my Executive Agent for this review, consulting with me and my other senior advisors as required.

The past decade has been a time of dynamic change for our military. We achieved dramatic victories in the Persian Gulf and Kosovo, performed peacekeeping missions around the world, and completed a significant downsizing of our military forces. As the major superpower, we have maintained global commitments even as our forces have been reduced. Although our military compensation system remains competitive, enabling us to recruit and retain enough dedicated men and women to achieve the highest quality uniformed forces in the Nation's history, the restructuring of our military forces presents certain challenges. I have asked our smaller military to work even harder and therefore want to ensure that the compensation of military members is fair and effective as we enter the 21st century.

To that end, I have proposed significant enhancements to the compensation system in the

FY 2000 budget. These changes include an across-the-board pay raise for all military members; reforms to the military retirement system; and a targeted pay increase for noncommissioned officers and mid-grade officers who gained the skills, education, and experience so valued by our thriving private sector.

The Ninth Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation should encompass a strategic review of the military compensation and benefits system, veterans benefits and services provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and other Federal entitlements directly affecting military members. The review should assess the effectiveness of current military compensation and benefits in recruiting and retaining a high-quality force in light of changing demographics, a dynamic economy, and the new military strategy. As Executive Agent, you shall ensure that representatives of other executive branch agencies participate in this review as appropriate.

I look forward to reviewing your progress in this important undertaking.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 21. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

July 20, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Iraqi emergency is to continue in effect beyond August 2, 1999, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

The crisis between the United States and Iraq that led to the declaration on August 2, 1990, of a national emergency has not been resolved. The Government of Iraq continues to engage in activities inimical to stability in the Middle

East and hostile to United States interests in the region. Such Iraqi actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and vital foreign policy interests of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to apply economic pressure on the Government of Iraq.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 20, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 21. The notice of July 20 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's News Conference

July 21, 1999

The President. Please be seated. Good afternoon.

Q. Mr. President, you don't know it, but there is such a bright light on you—[inaudible]—we can't see you for the light. [Laughter]

The President. I've been waiting a long time for the halo to appear. [Laughter]

Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief opening statement, but before I make that and take questions, I'd like to say that, as you might imagine, I have been briefed on this morning's developments in the search off Martha's Vineyard. Again, let me commend the Coast Guard and all the officials at the local, State, and national level for the fine work they have done under extremely difficult circumstances.

Again, I think we should keep our thoughts with the families as events unfold, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

Today I want to make a brief statement about the choice we face here in Washington and in our country about how best to move forward

into the new century and what to do with the surplus.

When we look toward the future, it is helpful to remember at least the recent past. Six and a half years ago, the budget deficit was \$290 billion and rising. Wages were stagnant; inequality was growing; social conditions were worsening. In the 12 years before I took office, unemployment averaged more than 7 percent. It's almost difficult to remember what it was like. No one really thought we could turn it around, let alone bring unemployment to a 29-year low, or turn decades of deficits, during which time the debt of our country was quadrupled in only 12 years, into a surplus of \$99 billion.

Our Nation has made a seismic shift in the last 6 years, from recession to recovery, from a crisis of confidence to a renewal of resolve, from economic disorder to a fiscal house finally in order. Now, as we debate what to do with our prosperity, we face a critical choice, whether to move forward with the fiscal discipline that got us to where we are today or return to the

kind of risk taking that got us into recessions and deficits before.

We must decide whether to invest the surplus to strengthen America over the long term, or to squander it for the short term. I think the right course is clear. And a bigger surplus only means that the mistake could be bigger and the missed opportunity greater if we take the wrong course.

I have proposed a balanced budget that puts first things first. I believe we must maintain our sound economic strategy and invest the surplus in long-term goals: saving Social Security; saving and strengthening Medicare, modernizing it by providing a long-overdue drug benefit; and continuing to meet our basic responsibilities in education, defense, the environment, biomedical research.

Tomorrow I will release a report that shows a great and growing need for prescription drug coverage. What the study shows is that 75 percent of our older Americans lack decent, dependable private-sector coverage of prescription drugs; that's three out of every four seniors. Clearly, America needs a prescription drug plan that is simple, universal, and voluntary. Anyone who says we don't, I believe, is out of date and out of touch.

As I've described, my plan meets these national priorities, while paying off the debt by 2015; while investing in America's new markets, the places that have not yet felt our prosperity; and while providing substantial tax relief, \$250 billion of it targeted to help families save for retirement, pay for child care, long-term care, for modern schools.

So let's be clear about something. We're not debating whether to have tax cuts or not. We should have tax cuts, but tax cuts that provide for us first to save Social Security and Medicare, not undermine them; tax cuts we can afford, not ones that would demand drastic cuts in defense, education, agriculture, the environment; tax cuts in the national interests, not special interests.

Now, these are the risks that are posed by the Republican tax plan that the House is about to vote on. Let me tell you what their plan would do. It would pile up \$3 trillion in debt over the next two decades, right when the baby boomers start to retire—that's what it costs—right when Social Security and Medicare feel the crunch.

Because of the cost of the tax plan over the next two decades, I should say what it doesn't do. It doesn't do anything to extend the solvency of Social Security, to extend the solvency of Medicare, to provide the prescription drug benefits, and it would require significant—significant—cuts from where we are today in education, defense, biomedical research, the environment, and other critical areas.

If we don't save Social Security, it's not because we can't. If we don't strengthen Medicare and add the prescription drug benefit, it's not because we can't. If we don't meet these clear national needs, it's because we choose not to do so. It will be because, instead, we choose to reward ourselves today by risking our prosperity tomorrow.

I hope Congress will make the right choice. When Members cast their ballots on the Republican tax plan, they're really voting also on whether to save Social Security and Medicare. They're voting on whether to pay off the national debt for the first time in over 150 years, something that would guarantee us lower interest rates; higher investment; more jobs; higher incomes; and for average citizens, lower home mortgage payments, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments. They're voting whether to meet our most pressing national priorities in education, defense, nearly every other domain in our people's lives. I think the choice is clear between the plan the Republican leadership has outlined and the national priorities of the American people. I hope we can still work together across party lines to save Social Security and Medicare, to safeguard our priorities, and have the right kind of tax cut.

If Congress passes the wrong kind, of course, I will not sign it. I will not allow a risky plan to become law. And as I said, we now have 6½ years of evidence. This is not really a debate that's just about ideas without any evidence. We clearly know what works now, and we ought to stay with it.

As I said, I will work with any member of any party willing to put first things first. We can have a tax cut and do the right thing for the long term in America. That is my commitment, and I hope that together we can fulfill it for our people.

Thank you very much. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

"One China" Policy and Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, in U.S. treaty relations, is it obligated to defend Taiwan militarily if it abandons the "one China" policy? And would the U.S. continue military aid if it continues, if it pursues separatism?

The President. Well, let me say, first of all, a lot of those questions are governed by the Taiwan Relations Act, which we intend to honor. Our policy is clear: We favor the "one China" policy; we favor the cross-strait dialogs. The understanding we have had all along with both China and Taiwan is that the differences between them would be resolved peacefully. If that were not to be the case, under the Taiwan Relations Act, we would be required to view it with the gravest concern.

But I believe that both China and Taiwan understand this. I believe that they want to stay on a path to prosperity and dialog. And we have dispatched people today, as the morning press reports, to do what we can to press that case to all sides. This is something that we don't want to see escalate, and I believe that what Mr. Lee said yesterday was trying to move in that direction. We all understand how difficult this is, but I think that the pillars of the policy are still the right ones. The "one China" policy is right; the cross-strait dialog is right; the peaceful approach is right. And neither side, in my judgment, should depart from any of those elements.

Q. So we would still have to go to war with China if it decided to break away?

The President. I will say what I've already said. The Taiwan Relations Act governs our policy. We made it clear. And I have—as you remember, a few years ago we had a physical expression of that, that we don't believe there should be any violent attempts to resolve this, and we would view it very seriously. But I don't believe there will be. I think that both sides understand what needs to be done.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Q. Mr. President, do you think that President Lee was unnecessarily provocative in trying to redefine the nature of the Taiwan-Chinese relationship? And is the United States trying to send a signal by delaying a Pentagon mission which was going to Taiwan to assess its air defense needs? And further, finally, you said that you still believe in a "one China" policy. How do

you address Senator Helms' criticism that it's a—that that policy is a puzzling fiction?

The President. Well, I don't think it's a puzzling fiction. I think that—but if Senator Helms means that today they're not, in fact, unified, then that's true. But the Chinese tend to take a long view of these things and have made clear a sensitivity to the different system that exists on Taiwan and a willingness to find ways to accommodate it, as they did in working with Hong Kong, and perhaps, even going beyond that.

So I think the important thing is to let—they need to take the time necessary to work this out between themselves in a peaceful way. That is clearly in both their interests. And I'm still not entirely sure, because I have read things which seem to resonate both ways on this, exactly what the Lee statements were entitled—trying to convey.

But I think that both sides are now quite aware of the fact that they need to find a way to pursue their destinies within the framework that we have followed these last several years, which I might add has allowed both places to prosper and to grow, to do better, and to have more contacts, more investment, and underneath the rhetoric, quite a bit more reconciliation. So I would hope that we would stay with what is working and not depart from it.

Q. Is that the meaning of the delay of the Pentagon mission to assess the—

The President. I didn't think this was the best time to do something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative. If you really think about what's at stake here, it would be unthinkable. And I want—I don't want to depart from any of the three pillars. I think we need to stay with "one China"; I think we need to stay with the dialog; and I think that no one should contemplate force here.

Randy [Randy Mikkelsen, Reuters].

Federal Reserve Board Chairman

Q. Economists have been calling on you to indicate now whether you intend to reappoint Alan Greenspan in order to avoid having the issue to become mired in election-year politics and upsetting financial markets next year. Would you like to see the Chairman stay on, and has he given you any indication of his plans?

The President. I have, as you know, enjoyed a very good relationship, both personally and

professionally, with Mr. Greenspan. I think he has done a terrific job. I have no idea whether he would even be willing to serve another term. I will make the decision in a timely fashion. I do not expect it to become embroiled in election-year politics; there's no evidence of that.

You heard—I think the Vice President said yesterday or the day before that he thought he was doing an excellent job. So we believe that as long as the United States is fiscally responsible, then the Fed will respond to developments in our own economy and in the world economy in a way that is clear, transparent, and, I think, designed to keep our growth going. So I'm not concerned about it.

Peter [Peter Maer, NBC Mutual Radio], go ahead.

Q. I think the Vice President indicated he was sending a signal by saying that Chairman Greenspan had been doing an excellent job. Do you endorse that interpretation?

The President. I don't know. All I know is he said he was doing a great job, and I agree with him.

Go ahead.

John F. Kennedy, Jr., Aircraft Tragedy/Medicare

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned the Kennedy tragedy at the beginning of the news conference. Could you please give us a better understanding of what the White House role has been in the conduct of the recovery operation and the decisionmaking on the release of information about it?

The President. Well, I think that—I am unaware of any role we have played in the decisionmaking of the release of information, except, let me say that today a lot of things are breaking in a hurry, and I believe there are some decisions that ought to be announced by the Kennedy family and others that ought to be properly announced by either the Coast Guard or the NTSB.

So we have not tried—to the best of my knowledge, had any role in the timing or substance of the release of information. And we have had no role in the conduct of the operation except that I did talk to Admiral Larrabee, I think it was the day before yesterday, at a time when the operation might normally have ceased, and he said, "I think we have a chance to find something else because of the equipment we have here, even though it's difficult; and I'm inclined to believe, because of the circumstances

here and because who's involved, that we ought to go on a little more." And I said that I would support it and defend it. And I think it was the right decision.

Q. Mr. President, if you'll allow me to ask you about two different topics. On the Kennedy search, sir, there have been conflicting reports about whether or not Mr. Kennedy's body has, in fact, been recovered. I understand that based upon the answer you just gave, that might not be a question that you'd want to address, but, perhaps, given the fact that there is this conflicting information, you could answer that question.

And secondly, sir, on this notion of a drug benefit, prescription drug benefit, you chided the Republicans about targeting tax cuts at the wealthy, saying that they're too steered in that direction. How do you reconcile that philosophically with allowing rich Americans, rich older Americans, to get a prescription drug benefit which even you just said this new study will show one in four don't need?

The President. Well, first of all, it's voluntary. And most wealthy Americans are well taken care of under the present program they have and won't exercise it. So that's the first point I want to make.

The second thing I would like to say is I don't think most people know this, even some of you may have forgotten, but in the 11th hour of the balanced budget, of the deficit reduction package negotiations in 1993, in order to get up to \$500 billion in cuts in the deficit projected over 5 years—we did much better, as all of you know—the cap was taken off. The income cap was taken off of the Medicare tax, which means virtually every single upper income person in America will pay far more into the Medicare program than they will ever draw out in health care or benefits.

They are making a net significant contribution today because, unlike Social Security taxes where there is still an earnings cap, there is no longer an earnings cap on Medicare. And I think a lot of folks have forgotten that. So that in that sense, this is the most progressive program we have. The upper income people, particularly once you get over about \$250,000 in income, they're paying far more into this program over the course of their life than they could ever draw out if they were sick every day from the time they're 65 on.

Q. Sir, the question—[inaudible]—Mr. Kennedy's body?

The President. I just don't think I should make an announcement about that. I am aware of what the Coast Guard has done and what they have found as of 5 minutes before I came out here. But I simply—I just don't think it's appropriate for me—I'll be glad to comment on whatever they want to say, but I think I should leave it for them to talk.

Yes, go ahead.

Congressional Budget Office Estimates

Q. Sir, you talked about how expensive the Republican tax cuts would be. But the Congressional Budget Office has now just come out with a report saying that even with their tax cuts, almost \$800 billion in tax cuts, they would save about \$277 billion over a 10-year period, whereby your program would save only about \$50 billion; that's about \$227 billion difference. How do you reconcile that? And, you know, people on the Hill listen to the CBO.

The President. They listen to the CBO except where it's inconvenient for them, like the Patients' Bill of Rights. The Republicans have freed us all now to question the CBO, since they ignored the CBO in the Patients' Bill of Rights; they have discredited their own CBO.

Let me say, I haven't seen that CBO accounting. All I can tell you is that all of our budget people were rolling their eyes and saying that it was a very creative study.

Let me just say this: You have 6½ years of experience with the numbers we have given you and the estimates we have made. And every single year, our numbers have not only been accurate, but we have done better than we said we would do—every single year, for 6½ years now.

Our studies show that their tax cut over the next two decades will cost, first, a trillion dollars, and then 3 trillion in the second decade, and that—then an enormous loss to the American people in interest savings. That is, we'll have to keep spending more and more of our tax money paying interest on the debt, and it will require huge cuts in education and defense and other things.

You cannot—they simply cannot credibly make that statement. And they don't put any new money into the Medicare program. And they don't have a Medicare reform package out there. So unless they just simply propose to

bankrupt all the teaching hospitals and a lot of the other hospitals in the country and let the Medicare program wither away, as one of the previous leaders so eloquently put it, they can't possibly finance this tax program without doing serious damage. I can't comment on the CBO study, but it doesn't make any sense to anybody I've talked to about it.

Q. May I just follow up?

The President. Yes.

Q. The CBO estimates the cost of your Medicare reforms are more than twice what you say they are.

The President. Well, again you have evidence. Let me just say this: In the 1997 balanced budget agreement we agreed to a Medicare savings figure, okay. And this is the reason all these teaching hospitals are in trouble today. We agreed to a Medicare savings figure, and we said, "Okay, here is our health information"—this is what we do in the executive branch; we deal with these hospitals—"here are the changes you need to make in the Medicare program to achieve the savings that the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress and the White House agreed on." And the CBO said, "No, no, no, no, that won't come close; you need these changes plus these changes." And we said, "Okay, we're following the CBO; we put it in there." What happened? And that's one of the reasons the surplus is somewhat bigger than it otherwise would be—the cuts in Medicare were far more severe. Our numbers were right; their numbers were wrong; and that's why you've got all these hospitals all over America, every place I go, talking about how they're threatened with bankruptcy.

So when it comes to estimating Medicare costs, again, we have evidence. And whenever there's been a difference between us and the CBO, we've been right, and they've been wrong. That's all I can tell you. No serious person—so what are they going to do about Medicare? They say our drug program will cost more. They don't put a red cent into it; what are they going to do about it? Even if you don't have a drug program, if you adopt their tax cut program, they won't be able to do anything to extend the solvency of Medicare, and they will have to have huge cuts.

For them to produce those savings, they are going to—they can't even fund my defense budget, much less the one they say they want. They're going to have cuts in defense, cuts in

education, cuts in the environment. That's all their savings assumed, that they're going to stay with the present budget levels, which they, themselves, are trying to get out of even as we speak here today. So this is—the American people are not—I mean, this is not rocket science; this is arithmetic.

And we've been dealing with—we went from creative supply-side mathematics to elemental arithmetic in 1993. And it has served us very well. And all I'm trying to do is stick with basic arithmetic and get this country out of debt, save Social Security and Medicare, provide this prescription drug benefit, keep us moving forward.

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Go ahead, John [John King, Cable News Network].

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Next. Let me take John's first, then I'll take you, Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Telephone Conversation With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority

Q. Sir, in your conversation with Chairman Arafat this morning, did you ask him to take any specific steps to advance what you believe is new momentum toward peace, and did you discuss with him his complaints yesterday that he found Prime Minister Barak's 15-month timetable unacceptable?

The President. Well, I told him only this, I said that—I generally described my meetings with Prime Minister Barak to him. I told him that he was committed to working in partnership with Chairman Arafat and honoring any agreements that had been made to this point and that any modifications they made, going forward, to the benefit of either or both sides would have to be done by mutual agreement; that I thought he was completely committed to resolve all the issues outstanding in the peace process in an expeditious manner. And what I urged him to do was to have this one-on-one meeting; hear him out; think it through; and if he wanted to talk to me again after the meeting occurred, that I would be happy to talk to him.

So I went out of my way not to describe Prime Minister Barak's proposals or to advocate or not advocate, but simply to say that I was convinced they were being made in complete good faith and that they would—that the peace process would be revitalized, and whatever they did from here on out is something that they

would do together. And I think he felt good about that. And I did say, "After you have the meeting, if you want to talk about this around, I'll be glad to talk to you." And he said he did. So that's where we are.

Sarah. Go ahead, Sarah.

Public Posting of Daily White House Activities

Q. Sir, your microphone is not working apparently; it seems like you're talking very low. We can barely hear you. But in the meantime, don't you think it would be a good idea if we announced for the country's sake the list of conferences to be held at the White House each day, and the list of the people whom the President has appointments with?

The President. I don't know. I never thought about it. Don't you have a list of the conferences we have every day here?

Q. No, indeed. We do—and what if we find out you haven't any?

The President. Well, I think I ought to talk to our folks about it, but I will consider that.

Go ahead.

Balkan Summit and Aid to Serbia

Q. Will you be taking any concrete contributions with you to the Balkan summit on investment next week? And you've said that you would give only humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia as long as Milosevic is in power. Will you have any trouble defining that? Will that cause any problems in distinguishing between humanitarian and other aid?

The President. Well, let me say that I hope very much that there will be some positive, concrete commitments that come out of the meeting that we're going to have. I do not believe we can achieve the future we want in the Balkans and avoid future ethnic conflicts unless there is a unifying vision which both brings the Balkan States closer together in their economic and political self-interests and then brings the region as a whole closer to Europe.

And so I think that we have to have some incentives to move in that direction. And there are direct—there are also indirect things the United States can do to help to contribute to that goal. And because of all the other things that have been going on—you know it's been a very busy 2 or 3 weeks—we haven't actually had an opportunity to sit down and go through what our options are, so I can't give you a more specific answer.

But I will say this: If what we have done in Bosnia and what we have done in Kosovo is to have lasting benefits, we have got to find a way to create closer unity among the Balkan States themselves, and then with the region and Europe. And that is what I am working on.

And what was the second question you asked?

Q. On the humanitarian aid, how will you define it?

The President. Oh, yes. There may be—frankly, there may be some differences of opinion. As you know, I tend to take a rather narrow view of it because I don't think that we should, in effect, reward Mr. Milosevic's political control by doing things which are not humanitarian in nature. But based on the virtual daily reports I get about where we all are on this and where we are operating in Kosovo, I now no longer expect them to be big debates. I don't expect there will be a big difference of opinion.

Yes, go ahead, John [John M. Broder, New York Times].

F-22 Funding

Q. Mr. President, the House of Representatives appears to be on the verge of terminating funding for the F-22 fighter. Will the White House fight hard for full funding for that program, even if it means sacrificing other Pentagon airplane programs or even pay for servicemen?

The President. Well, I don't think we should sacrifice the pay for our service personnel because we now are getting back in the ballgame in recruitment. You know, we've really been—the good economy and the increased deployments and the low pay, all combined, it'd be making it hard for us to both recruit and retain people. And the people are still the most important part of our military, their quality and their training and their morale and their commitment and the condition of their families. So I don't think that.

Now, the Congress every year puts other things into the defense budget which are not priorities for the Pentagon and are priorities for the Congress. We can fund the F-22; we can fund the plane without compromising the basic priorities of our national defense within the funds set aside, and that is what I will fight to do. I think it would be a mistake to abandon the project. I think it has real potential to add to our national defense. I have always supported it, and I hope that it can be preserved.

2000 Elections

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You had some fun, recently, with George W. Bush and his slogan of "compassionate conservatism." But you went beyond the notion that he's not offering many details as policy and seemed to ridicule his slogan and even question his sincerity. Were you just trying to help Mr. Gore's candidacy, or were you taking the opportunity maybe to just needle the leading Republican candidate?

The President. No, I was just having a little fun. [Laughter] You know, this is such a long time; if we don't have any laughs, it's going to be a very tedious struggle between now and November of 2000.

Let me say this. I think that every person struggles to find a phrase or something that will sort of stand for what he or she is trying to do. So I was really just having a little fun.

I think the most important thing is that all the candidates make their positions clear on the great debates going on now, and make their positions clear on what they would do if they got the job. To me, that's the most important thing. You know, I am not involved in this campaign as a candidate, and I have a full-time job, so I'm not involved in any sort of full-time consulting role. [Laughter] So I look at this more from the point of view of the average American voter: What will change the lives of America?

For example, every candidate should tell us, are you for the Patients' Bill of Rights; are you for closing the gun show loophole; are you for raising the minimum wage; are you for the House Republican tax plan, or do you favor our plan on Social Security and saving Social Security and Medicare, making America debt-free, and having a smaller tax cut that enables us to continue to fund education and defense and these other things? What are you going to do if you get elected?

To me, the best thing the Vice President had done is to talk about dramatically intensifying the war on cancer; making preschool universal; increasing access to college by helping people save without tax consequences; what he could do to make America a safer country; what he would do in communities to have faith-based organizations cooperate with governments more. I think these are interesting ideas about how you build on the progress the country has made the last 6½ years.

So I would say to everyone, use whatever slogans you want, but tell us where you stand. I think that's the most important thing.

Susan [Susan Page, USA Today].

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Yes, I'll come over here. I know I'm left-leaning, but I will give you—[laughter].

Q. Mr. President, the economy is going great. In a new USA Today-CNN poll this week, your approval rating was at a very healthy 58 percent. But that same poll showed that by 50 percent to 38 percent, Americans said they wanted to see a change from Clinton administration policies, not a continuation of them. What do you think accounts for that sentiment for change, and do you think it means that you present something of a mixed blessing to Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore in their campaigns next year?

The President. I think what that means is people think things are going well, but they want a change in policy. I think that's right. If you asked me that question, and you worded it in that way, I'd be in the 50 percent, because I think that—my own view is that in a—particularly in a dynamic time, where things are changing, you should want continued change. But is change—the question is, should we change in a way that builds on what has been done and goes beyond it, which is what I would argue; or should you change and go back to the policies we were following when we had \$290 billion deficits and we averaged over 7 percent unemployment for 12 years? I mean, I think that's really the question the American people have to ask themselves.

I think change is good. The great thing about this country is that it works best when it's sort of in a perpetual stage of renewal. So I would, myself, as a citizen, I would vote against somebody who said, "Vote for me, and I'll keep it just like it is; everything that Bill Clinton did is exactly what I'll do." I would vote against that candidate, because I do not believe that is the right thing to do.

But what I think we should do is we should build on the progress of the last 6 years and go beyond it and not adopt a completely different approach which has been proven not to work. So all I want the American people to do is to remember what it was like before, think what it's like now, recognize that ideas and policies have consequences. And the American peo-

ple usually get it right; that's why we're all still around here after more than 200 years.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. No.

Q. [Inaudible]—for Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gore?

The President. No, because I—he has done—look at what the Vice President's done. He's staked out new issues here. He said, "Here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in cancer research; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in education; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in crime"—but not to reverse what we've done, but to build on it and go beyond it. So I think that's very, very—that's the sort of thing that's worthy of debate. That's not the same; that is change.

What the American people have to decide is what kind of change do they want. Do they want to build on what has worked for the last 6½ years, or do they want to abandon it and go back to what failed them for 12 years before? That will be the decision they have to make.

Yes, go ahead.

Syria-U.S. Relations/Iran

Q. In your last press conference, sir, with Prime Minister Ehud Barak, you mentioned you wanted better, normalized relations with Syria. Now, have you received any response, positive response or indication from Syria towards that? And on Iran, can you share with us the administration's views of the last events and administrations in Iran? Thank you.

The President. Well, on Syria let me say, the only thing I can tell you is that the statements, at least, that have been coming out of Syria have been quite encouraging in terms of the regard that President Asad seems to have for Prime Minister Barak, and the willingness, the openness that there is to negotiating and moving toward peace. So I'm encouraged by that.

And on Iran, frankly, I'm reluctant to say anything for fear that it will be used in a way that's not helpful to the forces of openness and reform. I think that people everywhere, particularly younger people, hope that they will be able to pursue their religious convictions and their personal dreams in an atmosphere of greater freedom that still allows them to be deeply loyal to their nation. And I think the Iranian people obviously love their country and are

proud of its history and have enormous potential. And I just hope they find a way to work through all this, and I believe they will.

Health Insurance

Q. You mentioned the Patients' Bill of Rights. It seems like that was an argument by both parties over providing more for people who already are lucky enough to have health insurance. And in fact, neither party dealt with some very fundamental issues that energized you and the First Lady 5 and 6 years ago. The question is, with such a robust economy and the budget surpluses, if not now, when, and if not you, who, would provide the leadership to provide for those folks?

The President. Yes, but I think the bigger question is how. That is, it is true that just as we've predicted in 1993 and 1994, that the percentage of people who have health insurance on the job is going down, just as we said it would, if nothing was done. So what we have tried to do is to isolate discrete populations that seem to be most in need and try to offer them help.

In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, we reached bipartisan agreement on a proposal that would fund providing health insurance for up to 5 million more children through State-designed programs. Now, I've been a little disappointed—and I'm not being critical of any of the States, either, here—but I've been a little disappointed that the uptake on the program has been a little slow. That is, I would have thought by now we'd have almost 3 million of those 5 million children enrolled already because we've got the money there, and we're well behind that.

So we are looking at whether there are things that we can do at the national level to work with the States to simplify access to the children's health insurance programs that the States have set up. And I also had a talk with Senator Kennedy the other day, who believes that for little or no more extra money, we could actually adjust the program and take in several million more children. So the children are the biggest group.

Then, I have a proposal, as you know, that's part of my Medicare reform proposal that I didn't mention today, but I want to reiterate it, that would allow the most vulnerable group of people without health insurance, people between the ages of 55 and 65, to buy into the

Medicare system in a way that would not compromise the integrity of the system. So I think that is quite important.

In addition to that, there are a lot of States—excuse me, there are some States—Tennessee was the first State to do this under the former Governor, Mr. McWherter; they started it—which are allowing lower income working families to buy into their Medicaid programs on a sliding scale.

So if all these things were done, we would dramatically reduce the number of people without health insurance, and we'll eventually, probably, get down to—if we keep pushing in this direction, get down to the point where the largest group of people without health insurance are young, single people who believe that they're going to live forever and be healthy forever and don't want to bear the cost. And we'll have to think about, then, what to do.

But I think the best thing to do is try to get as many kids as we can covered and then try to get these people who are out of the work force who are older, but they're not old enough to get Medicare, to get them at least where they can all afford, on a sliding scale, to buy into the Medicare program.

Go ahead, Scott [Scott Pelley, CBS News].

John F. Kennedy, Jr., Aircraft Tragedy

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On the Kennedy tragedy, sir, will you authorize the Navy to participate in a burial at sea ceremony? Why do you believe it's justified to spend so many Federal resources on this tragedy? And finally, sir, I wonder if you would give us your thoughts on Mr. Kennedy's last visit here to the White House. I understand you and the First Lady took him on a tour.

The President. Well, we have received—I have received no official word, personal word from the family about what burial arrangements they want. Until they make a statement about it, I just don't feel that I can say anything.

Secondly, I will say that until just a couple of days ago the recovery efforts—the rescue, then the recovery efforts that were undertaken, were consistent with what would have been done in any other case. Because the Coast Guard felt that they had the capacity to succeed in this if they had a few more days, and because of the role of the Kennedy family in our national lives, and because of the enormous losses that they have sustained in our lifetimes, I thought

it was appropriate to give them a few more days. And if anyone believes that was wrong, the Coast Guard is not at fault; I am. It was because I thought it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

Now, you asked about—John Kennedy had actually not been back to the White House since his father was killed, until I became President. First, he was on an advisory committee that made a report to me, and he came back to the Oval Office, where he saw the desk that he took the famous picture in—coming through the gate—for the first time since he was a little boy.

And then last year, maybe you would have a better memory than I would, but it seems to me it was last May, when we had the event at the White House celebrating the series that HBO did on the Apollo program. Do you remember they did a series on the space program that was done after the movie came out? And Tom Hanks came; a lot of people came. And he was invited because of his father's role in starting the space program. And he and Carolyn came. And afterward I asked them if they would like to go upstairs, and he said he would. So I took him upstairs and showed him the residence, which he'd not seen since he was a tiny boy.

And I showed him some of my—the memorabilia that I had from his father's service. I have a picture of his father speaking to the Irish Parliament, and a number of other things which he thought were very interesting. And we took a—we had a very nice evening. And I sent him the pictures from it. And then, in return, he sent me a signed copy of his favorite picture of his father, which is now upstairs. It's John Kennedy campaigning in Virginia, in Charlottesville, in 1960. It's quite a lovely picture, interesting picture.

But it was a nice night. I think that he really wanted to kind of come to terms with all of it. And I think he and Carolyn, they were delightful young people, and they had a great time here that night. And Hillary and I loved having them here. It was quite a great night.

Q. To just follow on that, sir, just one question, if I may. Is there anything that Mr. Kennedy said to you that night that particularly struck you?

The President. We just had a friendly conversation. You know, I knew him pretty well by then. We'd been—I met him years ago when

he was a law student, doing a summer internship with Mickey Kantor's law firm out in Los Angeles, long before I ever thought I'd be here, and before I ever thought we'd have any other contacts. He just happened to be—Mickey asked me if I'd speak to his law clerks, because I was in L.A. to give an education speech, and I went by and visited with them, and he was there. And we had been together on many occasions since then.

The thing that struck me was I thought he was—he said he was glad to be back. And I think he was a very deliberate person, as many people have noticed, about when he would be publicly exposed and all of that. He had his mother's care for having a private life. And I think that he had not—I'm not sure he had really felt he wanted to come back to the White House before he did. But especially in light of everything that's happened, I'm glad he had the chance to come back here one more time and see the residence and know where he was when he was a little boy. I'm glad he did that. I'm grateful that that happened.

Yes, go ahead. Yes, yes, please.

Colombia and Mexico

Q. On Colombia, the Pastrana administration are asking the United States for \$500 million to support the military against the guerrillas. Is your administration ready to respond to that request? And also, the Colombians are asking for more direct intervention from the United States. Are you considering this possibility? And also, Mexico, you're going to meet with President Zedillo in October. And the Mexican Government is still rejecting the extraditions of major drug lords. What are you going to ask him? You're going to get assurance from him to extradite these big narcotic traffickers to the United States?

The President. Well, you know, we had no extraditions between Mexico and the United States for a long time, and we've actually had some now. So we've moving in the right direction. And President Zedillo and I have been pretty successful in continuing to move our relationship in the right direction, so we'll work on that.

On Colombia, I'm not prepared to make any kind of dollar commitment today. But let me say, I have stayed in close touch with President Pastrana, and I admire the fact that he has really thrown himself into trying to end the civil

conflicts in Colombia, to stop the insurgency. The people in the United States have a real interest in that because I think that until the civil discord in Colombia is brought to an end, it is going to be much, much harder for us to restrain the activities of the narcotraffickers there, and their reach.

So, in addition to wanting a neighbor and a democracy in Latin America to be free of the kind of violence and heartbreak that the Colombian people have undergone because of this, it is also very much in our national security interest to do what we can, if we can be helpful in ending the civil conflict, so that Colombia can be about the business of freeing itself of the influence of the narcotraffickers in ways that would be good for Colombians and good for us as well.

2000 Election

Q. Another question about the Presidential race. Aside from asking George W. Bush to come forward and give specifics on the issues that you mentioned, could you tell us what you find objectionable about this trying to present a new moderate face for his party, just like you did for the Democrats? And could you tell us whether you're worried whether he will figure out how the Republicans can occupy the center of American politics?

The President. No.

Q. You don't think he can?

The President. No, no. I don't think I'll answer those questions. [Laughter] I will say—no, look, let me say again, I wouldn't even agree with the characterization you gave of my first answer.

When I ran for President in 1991, the first thing I did was tell the American people what I thought was going on in our country and what I would do. And if you remember, the late Senator Paul Tsongas and I were actually almost ridiculed at the time because we both put out these very detailed plans of what we would do. If you go back and get one of those plans now, you'll see that virtually everything we said we'd do, we did do, except for the things we tried to do and were defeated on.

And my view is that there are a lot of things that count in a Presidential election toward a successful Presidency, but it is—that go beyond specific issues, and judgment plays a role in it, and crises will always come up, and things can be learned and all that. But it really matters

where you stand on the big issues that everybody knows about that are going on right now, and it matters where we're going in the future.

So that's the only point I want to make. And I think any—I would say that applies to every candidate. I don't want to answer the questions you ask me, because that's not my job. My job is not to handicap this horse race, not to comment on it, not to comment on the candidates. My job is to work for the American people. But I'm going to answer these questions from the point of view of Joe Citizen. That's it. Every political question you ask me from now on, I'm going to pretend that I'm living back in Little Rock already and I'm working on my Presidential library and I'm sitting here as a voter saying, where do they stand, what will they do, all of them? And I do believe the Vice President has done the best job of telling the American people what he would do and—to go back to Susan's formulation—how he would change the country in a positive way.

George [George Condon, Copley News Service].

Space Program

Q. Mr. President, as the Nation has celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Moon landing, a lot of the former astronauts have lamented that no President after Kennedy set a kind of national goal like President Kennedy did of landing on the Moon. Do you think that, in your view, is the country not receptive today to that kind of goal-setting by a President, or is it something a President should do, set a goal of landing on Mars?

The President. Well, we are planning to land on Mars. But I think that for one thing, when I became President, the space program was actually in peril. And we—the space station was certainly at risk. And I have fought for it, and I believe in it. And one of the things I talked to—Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were in to see me yesterday, and we talked about where we could go with this. And Dan Goldin was there, the NASA Administrator, and Dr. Neal Lane, my science adviser, and we talked about how we could use the coming of the millennium as—you know, the First Lady sponsored all these other lectures here. And I told him about Stephen Hawking's lecture and what he said. And we talked yesterday about how we could set some goals for the space program, capture the imagination of

the American people, and broaden the support for it.

And one of the things that I suggested, that I think would be quite helpful, that we're going to work on now, is what we can do to dramatize for the American people—you mentioned Mars, but I think what is more likely to capture the imagination of the American people are the benefits to us here on Earth of continued advances in space. And some of them, particularly in the health field, are likely to be breathtaking. They're principally in the area of the environment and health.

So I asked our people to start working on that, and they said they would be willing to help us. I have to tell you that it was a great day for me yesterday to have them come by the White House. They also gave me a Moon rock, by the way, but only on loan. [Laughter] And the Moon rock is 3.6 billion years old. So when I feel very tired, I'll look at it and feel young again. [Laughter]

Yes, go ahead. We had an Irish question first, I promised. Go ahead, what's the Irish question?

Q. Thank you, sir. Given the—

The President. You want to ask one, too?

Northern Ireland Peace Process/Africa

Q. We both have a—given the various meetings underway with Mo Mowlam here, and George Mitchell there, has any progress been made on the Irish situation? And is one side more to blame than the other on it?

The President. Okay. Why don't we take both Irish questions at once. What's your Irish question?

Q. Last week you seemed to kind of get fired up when you were talking to the teenagers from Colorado. You said that the politicians in Northern Ireland were behaving akin to school children. Do you feel, after all the work that you've done on this project, that perhaps it was misplaced, and you should have perhaps pushed in a place more like Africa, where they have thousands of people dying from ethnic strife, instead of 3,500 over 30 years?

Q. And if I can have a third Irish question, what role, if any, do you expect to play, Mr. President, in breaking the deadlock?

The President. Okay, let me answer the Irish questions; then I'll come back to the "Should we have done something else?"

I've talked to Senator Mitchell, and he is willing to spend some time—he can't go back full-

time for another year or 2, but I'd like to put this in some—at least I'd like to tell you how I look at it.

Obviously, I am very disappointed at the breakdown of the process here. But I do think it's important to note that neither side wants to abandon the Good Friday agreement. And that's very important. It's also important to note that everybody agrees on what their responsibilities are and what the other side's responsibilities are, and everybody agrees that it all has to be done by a date certain.

So they have agreed to break out the two areas causing problems, the decommissioning and the standing up to the executive, and try to figure out how they can unlock that. And Mo Mowlam, as you pointed out, is working hard on it, and they've asked Senator Mitchell to come back and do some work on it, and my instinct is that it will be resolved.

Now, let me say in terms of your characterization, here's the problem. To the outsiders—I told the parties that to the outsiders—no one, none of us outside, even somebody like me that's been so involved in this, no one will understand if this thing breaks down over who goes first; that that did sound like the kind of argument that young people have, you know. Who goes first?

Underneath that, there's something deeper. The Protestants are afraid that the IRA will never disarm if they let the Sinn Féin go into the executive branch, and the IRA do not believe, since the agreement did not require decommissioning as a condition of getting into the executive branch, they don't want to have to spend the rest of their lives being told that it wasn't the vote of the people, it wasn't the Good Friday accord, it was what the Unionists and Great Britain did to force them to give up their arms that got them to disarm. They believe that would, in effect, require them to disavow what they've done for 30 years.

And what they're saying is, "When we surrender our arms, we're surrendering to our people. Our people voted for this. We are surrendering to the will of the people that we represent." So when you put it in that textured way on both sides, it makes it clear why it becomes a difficult issue. And I can't think of anybody better to try to work through it than George Mitchell, because he's got it all in his head, and he's put 3 years into it. But my instinct is that we will get this worked out.

Now, you asked about did I think we had misplaced our energies. I don't think so. We have—for one thing, we don't have a stronger partner in the world than Great Britain, and for another, we don't have a bigger ethnic group in America than the Irish, and we're tied by blood and emotion to the Irish struggle. I also think that it has enormous symbolism, beyond the size of the country and the number who have died. And if it can be resolved, I think it will give great impetus to the forces of peace throughout the world. So I don't believe for a moment we made a mistake.

But let me also say I think we should be more involved in Africa, and I've tried to involve us more in Africa. I did everything I could to head off that civil war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It's not a civil war; they are two separate countries, but they once were together and they're basically now arguing over the divorce settlement. And I don't mean to trivialize it in that characterization. And we are still actively involved in trying to stop that.

Reverend Jackson played a significant role in trying to end the awful carnage in Sierra Leone, and I'm very grateful for that. We're now working, and we're able to work with Nigeria to try to stabilize the region. We are training African militaries and the Africa Crisis Response Corps, so that we can, hopefully, prevent further carnage. So I believe the United States should be more involved in Africa.

And of course, the announcement that the Vice President made on our behalf the other day of our new AIDS initiative in some ways may be the most important thing we can do to save lives there.

So I agree that we should be more involved. But I don't agree that we misplaced our energies in Ireland. I'm proud of every late night phone call and every frustrating hour I've spent on it.

Yes, go ahead.

Q. Can I ask about you?

The President. Well, I don't want to talk about me.

Q. Oh, come on.

The President. I'm not a candidate for anything.

Go ahead, what? Go ahead. All right, one more.

White House Bicentennial

Q. Listen Mr. President, with due respect, in another development, I know that you are for Africa, and you know that I support the initiative of Africa, now, of my friend the President of the Dominican Republic because we are Afro-Latino. But I am not concerned at this moment about Mars. I am concerned about a place where I have been for 20 years, the White House, that is going to celebrate 200 years next year. I wonder if you would tell the people of the United States what you are going to plan for that big celebration?

And another thing, Mr. President, I am disgusted with you. You have been hiding something extraordinary, the performance of the trade promotional coordinating committee, that has been carrying out in the last year a national exporting strategy, are the participants in the prospective of this economy. Why don't you speak about the success of that initiative? It's a sin that you—[inaudible]—you talk about a lot of things that is nothing, another thing that is good for America and the prosperity of the world.

The President. Well, a lot of things that are good for America don't make good news for them, you see.

Q. And I have a followup. [Laughter]

The President. No, let me just say—[laughter]—a followup? [Laughter] Now, that's really good. That is really—oh, God, is that good.

Let me just say that we will have a lot of celebrations of the 200th birthday of the White House next year, and it's neat that it coincides with the first year of the new century and the millennium. So we'll have—I'm not prepared to announce them yet, because I want others who deserve more credit than I do to be able to do that. But it will be a signal honor for us to be living here in that year, and we'll be able to do a lot. And I hope we'll have even more American citizens coming to the White House next year to be a part of it.

Go ahead. Just that followup—that showed a lot of guts. [Laughter] If this is a followup, I'll give you another question. [Laughter]

Support for Vice President Gore and First Lady

Q. Sir, you've stressed that you have plenty to do, and yet for some time, your political career has enjoyed the benefits of support from two people in particular—the Vice President and

the First Lady—two people who are now in a position to expect some support from you. I'm wondering what you feel you owe those two people in terms of political support, and as you plan your schedule in the weeks and months ahead, how you'll balance that assistance against your job as President, and finally, how you personally are adjusting to what people might think is an interesting shift in role.

Q. I have a followup to his question. [Laughter]

The President. Now, I believe that. [Laughter]

Well, I will do whatever I'm asked to do, basically. I'll try to be helpful. And if I can be helpful, I will be. But I think the best thing I can do for anyone who generally shares our ideas, is part of our party, trying to move the country forward, is to continue to be a good President and take care of our country.

But I don't mind hard work, and I don't mind long hours, and I find myself, apparently unlike some of my predecessors—but I just read what you all say about it—but I don't feel myself winding down; I feel myself keying up. I want to do more. I want to try to make sure that I give the American people as much as I can every day. So I've got plenty of energy, and I'll do whatever I'm asked to do.

I owe them a great deal. I think Al Gore—everybody in this room knows that he's had far more responsibility and gotten more done than any Vice President in history. Nobody's ever had a role that even approximates that. I don't think the American people know that yet, but I know that. And he deserves a lot of credit for what he's done, and he has my friendship and my support. But I also think that it's a mixed blessing, as you say, because people want to see any Vice President out there on his own. If you go back and look at where Richard Nixon was in 1959, you will see the same sort of thing. So I think I see this as a rhythmic process. I think he'll do fine.

But the reason I think that has nothing to do with the questions you ask me. The reasons I think that are, A, he's a good man with a good record, but most importantly, he's out there telling the American people how he would change the country for the better. And I think that's important.

I did an interview, and I talked about Hillary and this; if she decides to do this, I will do whatever I can do. And if she's successful, I will happily go to the Senate spouses meeting

if that's part of the job. I have never known anybody who didn't run for office who was a more effective, more consistently committed, completely passionate public citizen than her. So if she decides to do it, and if the people of New York decide that they want her to do it, that's a decision for them to make, and they have to deal with that. And she's trying to deal with that, you know, the whole question of moving there.

It is true that shortly after we came here I said, "You get to decide where we live from now on for the rest of our lives." And she said, "I want to go to New York"—in, like '93. This is just something that happened later. So I'll be dividing my time between home—I'm going to be home and build my library and build my center—I'll divide my time between there and New York, whatever she does about this Senate race.

But if I can help her in any way, I will, because I think it would be a great thing for the country, not only because of what I owe her—she just—what she knows and how she's lived and what she's done. I mean, it's very unusual to find somebody like that who has that much knowledge and background and passion all packed into one place. I mean, I know that you think I'm a biased observer, but I think I could support it with evidence.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Go ahead, Bill [Bill Plante, CBS News].

President's Future Plans

Q. In that same vein, sir—[laughter]—as the spotlight shifts from you to your Vice President and to your wife, are you likely to be content drifting slowly offstage, or do you think that someday you will want to run for office, some office again? Or are you willing to tell us this afternoon, sir, that you will never again run for elective office?

The President. I don't have any idea. [Laughter] Really, I don't know. Let me just say this. I love this job. I love it. Even on the bad days you can do something good for the country; you can do something good for the future. I have loved doing this. And I have given it every ounce of my energy and ability and judgment. And I feel very fortunate. But we have a system that I, frankly, agree with, even though I'm in pretty good shape. We have a system that says

a President gets two terms, and then the President has to go find something else to do with his life. And there are lots of other worthy things to do.

And I was a very happy person before I became President. I've never had any trouble finding something interesting to do that I believed in. And I will do my best to use the opportunity and the gift the American people gave me to serve in this position to be a useful citizen of my country and the world for the rest of my life, and I have no doubt that there will be some way I can do that. And I'm, frankly, kind of excited about it. I mean, it's a new challenge. I'll have to think in a different way and do a different way.

Will I miss a lot of the things about this job? Yes. I'll even miss all of you, believe it or not. *[Laughter]* But I'm just grateful that I've had the chance to serve and that the results have been good for our people and for our country and, I think, for the world.

And you know, that's part of life. Life has its rhythms. And the people that are most satisfied and most happy in life take the rhythms of life and make the most of them, instead of sitting around moping and wishing the rhythms were something other than they are. That's just not the way the life works. And listen, I'm way ahead, and I'm very grateful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 179th news conference began at 2:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Lee Teng-hui of Taiwan; First Coast Guard District Commander Rear Adm. Richard M. Larrabee, USCG, who headed the search and recovery efforts off the coast of Martha's Vineyard, MA, to locate the missing aircraft that carried John F. Kennedy, Jr., his wife, Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, and her sister Lauren Bessette. The President also referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Gov. Ned Ray McWherter of Tennessee; actor Tom Hanks; former U.S. Trade Representative Michael (Mickey) Kantor; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin (Buzz) Aldrin, and Michael Collins; physicist Stephen W. Hawking; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who led the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; United Kingdom Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlam; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A portion of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on Senate Inaction on the Nomination for Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division *July 21, 1999*

I strongly support the efforts of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans to call attention to the failure of the Senate to confirm Bill Lann Lee as Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights.

I resubmitted Mr. Lee's nomination to the Senate more than 4 months ago, yet the Senate Judiciary Committee has not considered his nomination. Bill Lee has an excellent record as Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division. Under his leadership, the Justice Department has enforced our civil rights laws justly and fairly. The Department is combating hate crimes, ensuring fair housing, fighting illegal discrimination against persons with

disabilities, protecting workers from exploitation, and taking other strong actions to protect people's rights.

Some of Mr. Lee's opponents have decided to use his nomination as a means of expressing their disagreement with the civil rights laws themselves. This is wrong. He deserves to be considered based on his record and abilities, not blocked because some Senators disagree with the law of the land. To refuse to allow the Senate to vote on his nomination does a disservice to the confirmation process, to this outstanding nominee, and to the American people.

Remarks in a Conversation on Medicare in Lansing, Michigan July 22, 1999

The President. Thank you, and good morning. I would like to begin by saying I am honored to be here. I thank all of you for coming. Somebody fell out of the chair—are you all right? [Laughter] I wish I had a nickel for every time I've done that. [Laughter] You okay now? Good.

Well, this is appropriate. I want to thank your attorney general, Jennifer Granholm, for joining us; and Mayor Hollister, the State legislators, county commissioners, and city council members who are here. And I thank President Anderson of the Lansing Community College for making me feel so welcome here.

I love community colleges, and I'm going to go visit with some of the students after I finish here, and I'm going to tell them they should also be for this. The younger they are, the more strongly they should feel about this, what we're trying to do here.

I would like to thank our sponsors today, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare—the president Martha McSteen; the executive vice president, Max Richtman, are here. I thank the National Council of Senior Citizens and their executive director, Steve Protulis, who is here; the Older Women's League National Board president, Betty Lee Ongley; Judith Lee of the Older Women's League; John D'Agostino of the Michigan State Council of Senior Citizens.

I'd also like to thank in her absence your Congresswoman, Debbie Stabenow, who was going to come with me today, but they're voting on an issue which is very critical to whether we can do what I hope to do with Medicare. But she has been a wonderful supporter of our efforts to preserve Medicare and to add the prescription drug benefit. And I know she did a study here in this district on seniors' prescription drug options and cost, and some of you may have been responsible for the position she is now taking in Washington. But I am very, very grateful for it. And I know Debbie's mother, Ann Greer, is here. So I thank her for coming.

And let me say to all of you—and I want to thank Jane for doing this. You know, I met her about 3 minutes ago, and I—she's got to come out here with me and do this program.

And I think the odds are she'll do better than I will. [Laughter] So I'm not worried.

Let me say, today I want to have this opportunity to talk with all of you—we have people of all ages here—about the great national debate going on not only in Washington but in our country, a debate that we never thought we'd be having. You know, I came to Lansing first when I was running for President in 1992, and the people of Michigan have been very good to me and to Hillary and to Vice President and Mrs. Gore. I'm very grateful for that.

But it occurred to me if I had come here in '92, and I'd say, "I want you to support me because if you do we've got a \$290 billion deficit today, but I'll be back here in 6 years, and we'll talk about what to do with the surplus." Now, I think it's fair to say that if I had said that people would have said, "He seems like a nice young man, but he's terribly out of touch"—[laughter]—"he doesn't have any idea what he's talking about. This guy is too far gone to have this job." But that's what we're doing here.

Six and a half years ago, Michigan's unemployment rate was 7.4 percent. Today it's 3.8 percent. We've gone from a \$209 billion deficit to a \$99 billion surplus. And we have done it with a strategy that focused on cutting the deficit, balancing the budget, eliminating unnecessary spending, but continuing to invest in education and training. For example, we've almost doubled our investment in education and training in the last 6 years while we have cut hundreds of programs and reduced the size of the Federal Government to its smallest point since 1962, when President Kennedy was in office. So I think that's very important. And the tax relief which has been given in the last 6 years is focused on families and education.

I asked the president of this college when I came in, I asked him what the tuition was, because now our HOPE scholarship tax credit gives a \$1,500-a-year tax credit to virtually all the students in our country. And that makes community college free, or nearly free, to virtually all the students in community colleges in our country. It's an important thing.

But we've worked hard, and the American people have worked hard. Now we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, with 19 million new jobs. We have the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded. And we have to ask ourselves, we've worked very hard as a country for this; what are we going to do with it? And I have argued that, at a minimum, we ought to meet our biggest challenges: the aging of America, the obligation to keep the economy going, and the obligation to educate and prepare our children for the 21st century.

Today we're going to talk primarily about the aging of America and Medicare. But I want to emphasize what a challenge that is. The number of people over 65 will double between now and the year 2030—will double. The fastest-growing group of people in the United States in percentage terms are people over 80. Any American today who lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of about 82.

Children being born today, when you take into account all of the things that can happen—illness, accident, crime, everything—have a life expectancy of 77 from birth now. We expect to unlock the genetic code with the human genome project in the next 3 to 4 years, and it then will become normal for a young mother taking a baby home from the hospital to have a genetic map of that baby's body, which will be a predictor of that baby's future health. It will be troubling in some ways. It will say, well, this young baby girl has a strong predisposition to breast cancer. But it will enable you to get treatment, to follow a diet, to do other things which will minimize those risks; will say, this young boy is highly likely to have heart disease at an earlier-than-normal time, but it will enable us to prepare our children from birth to avert those problems. So this is a very important thing.

The first thing I want to say to all of you—and those of you who are in the senior citizens' groups will identify with this—is this is a high-class problem we have. This is a problem, the aging of America, that is a high-class problem. It means we're living longer and better. I wish all of our problems were like this. It has such—a sort of a happy aspect to them.

But it does mean that there will be new challenges for our country, and it means, among other things, that we'll have, percentage-wise,

relatively fewer people working and more people drawing Social Security and Medicare.

When you look at the Social Security system, it's slated to run out of money in about 34, 35 years. It ought to have a much longer life expectancy than that. Everybody—it's fine for the next 35 years, but I've offered a plan to increase the life of the Social Security Trust Fund for at least 54 years and to go further if the Congress will go with me.

I have offered a plan to increase—when I became President, the Medicare Trust Fund was slated to go broke this year. And we took some very tough actions in 1993 and again in 1997 to lengthen the life of the Trust Fund—actions which, I might add, most hospitals with significant Medicare caseloads and teaching hospitals which deal with a lot of poor folks believe went far too far. And we're going to have to give some money back to those hospitals in Michigan and throughout the country. But we now have 15 years on the life of the Medicare Trust Fund. Under my proposal, we would take it out to 2027, and that will give plenty of time for future Congresses and Presidents to deal with whatever challenges develop in the Medicare program after that.

Now, to do that and to do it without cutting our commitment to education, to biomedical research, to national defense, we have to devote most of the surplus to Social Security and Medicare. We will still have funds for a substantial tax cut but not as big as the one being offered in Washington today, which spends all the non-Social Security tax surplus funds on a tax cut.

I believe the wise thing to do is to take care of the 21st century challenge of the aging of America, to do it in a way that does not require us to walk away from the education of our children; and under my plan, because we would save most of the surplus, the side benefit we'd get is that in 15 years we could actually take the United States of America out of debt for the first time since 1835.

Now, why is that important—and it's more important, I would argue, than at any time in my lifetime. I was raised to believe that a certain amount of debt for a country was healthy; that just like businesses are always borrowing money to invest in new business, a certain amount of debt was healthy. The structural deficit has been terrible. The idea that we quadrupled the debt in 12 years was an awful idea, because we were borrowing money just to pay the bills.

But I'd like to ask you all to think about this, because I don't think most Americans have focused on this part of the plan, the idea of being debt-free. We live in a global economy. Money can travel across national borders literally at the speed of light. We just move it around in accounts. Interest rates are set, therefore, in a global context. If we become debt-free and we, therefore, don't borrow any money in America just to fund the Government, that means everybody else's interest rates will be lower. That means for businesses, lower business borrowing rates; it means more businesses, more jobs, easier to raise wages. For families it means lower home mortgage rates, lower credit card payment rates, lower car payment rates, lower college loan rates.

It means that we will secure the economic strength of America in ways that are unimaginable to us now. It means that if other parts of the world get in trouble, the way Asia did a couple of years ago, we'll be less vulnerable. And the people that are in trouble and need to borrow money will be able to get it at lower interest rates, and they'll get up and go on again and be able to do business with us again.

This is a very good thing to do. But it can only be done if we set aside the vast majority of the surplus to fix Social Security and Medicare. You can still have a tax cut, focused on helping families save for their retirement or any number of the other things that have been discussed within the range we can afford; focused on helping people pay for long-term care; focused on helping working families pay for child care; and, I would hope, focused on helping us modernize our schools for the 21st century and giving business people big incentives to invest in the small towns, rural areas, urban neighborhoods, and Indian reservations that still haven't gotten any new business investment in this recovery of ours.

But the fundamental decision is, are we going to do these things? Now, there does seem to be agreement in Washington—let's start with the good news—there does seem to be an agreement in Washington that we should set aside the portion of the surplus produced by your Social Security tax payments for Social Security. And if that, in fact, happens, under the way that the Republicans and the Democrats have agreed on so far, we will pay down the debt—we will continue to pay down the debt, but we won't pay it off. And we won't extend the

life of the Social Security Trust Fund, as I would under my plan. But still, that's something.

There is yet no agreement in Washington over setting aside a significant portion of the surplus to save and modernize Medicare. So today we're here to talk about that. But I wanted you to have a feeling for how the Medicare proposal fits into the proposal to save Social Security, to keep investing in education, to have a modest tax cut, and to make the country debt free. I want you to think about it, because the big debate is, what are we going to do with the surplus?

And I don't even agree with the timing of what's going on in Washington. I don't think we should even be talking about the tax cut until we figure out what it costs to save Social Security, what it costs to save and modernize Medicare, what we have to do to keep the Government going.

How would you feel—now, one of my staff members, who happens to be from Michigan, said to me the other day, this is kind of like a family sitting around the kitchen table and said, "Let's plan the fancy vacation of our dreams and then talk about how we're going to make the mortgage payment." [Laughter] "Hope we've got enough left over." So that's where we are.

To evaluate whether you agree or not, we need to talk about what needs to be done about Medicare. So I'd like to tell you what I think, the first thing my plan would do is to devote a little over a third of the non-Social Security portion of the surplus, \$374 billion over the next 10 years, to strengthen Medicare by extending the life of the Trust Fund to 2027. Now, I think that is very, very important, because, keep in mind, all the baby boomers will start turning 65 in the year 2011. That's not that far away. To young people, that may seem like a long way away. The older you get, that seems like the day after tomorrow. [Laughter]

And we've waited a long time. The last time we had a surplus was 1969. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity we have here to deal with this. So if we run it out to 2027 and then further complications arise, or difficulties or challenges present themselves, there will be time for future Congresses and Presidents to deal with them without having to take drastic action. So that's the first thing—run the Trust Fund out to 2027.

No serious expert on Medicare believes that we can stabilize Medicare without an infusion of new revenues. The second thing we do is to employ some of the best practices in health care today: competition and other practices now in the private sector to keep costs down that don't sacrifice quality and don't require people to be forced out of the fee-for-service Medicare plan if they don't want to be into a managed care plan. We leave free choice open. No requirement.

The third thing about this plan that's gotten the least publicity but is potentially very important for our country is that we allow people between the ages of 55 and 65 who aren't working anymore or don't have health insurance on the job and don't have retiree health insurance to buy into Medicare in a way that doesn't compromise the stability of the program. I think that is terribly important. That's a huge problem in our country today and a growing one, people who are out of the work force or working for very small businesses without employer-sponsored care, who can't get any health insurance because of their age or their previous health condition.

The fourth thing the plan does is to modernize the benefits of Medicare to match the advances of modern medicine. That means first encouraging seniors and disabled Medicare beneficiaries to take greater advantage of the available prevention mechanisms in our country, preventive tests for cancer, for osteoporosis, for other conditions, by eliminating the deductible and the copay from those tests and paying for it by charging a modest copay for lab tests that are often overused.

Now, why is this important? Well, if somebody develops osteoporosis, a severe case, and goes to the hospital and has a prolonged medical regime under Medicare, the taxpayers pay for all of it. But very often, the prevention is not done because of the costs involved. It'll be far less expensive over the long run to spend a little more on prevention now and keep people out of the hospital and the expensive payments we're going to pay if we don't do that. Very important issue.

And then we provide, for the first time, for a voluntary and affordable prescription drug benefit. Basically, we propose to start with a \$24 a month premium to pay half the drug cost, up to \$2,000, phasing up over the next 5 or 6 years to a \$5,000 ceiling, with the pre-

mium going up that way, in a graduated way. For seniors at 135 percent of poverty or less, we would waive the premium and the copay, and then the premium would be phased in, up to 150 percent of poverty. So there would be subsidies there.

Now, there are those who say, "Well, this is good, but I've got a good retiree health plan with prescription drugs, and if you offer this, my employer will drop it, and it's better than this deal." Well, I want you to know that one of the things we've done in here is put substantial subsidies in here to employers who offer drug benefits to their retirees. So I think it is less likely that they will drop the benefits, not more, because they're going to get a real incentive to keep the employer-based retiree programs. The second thing I want to say, again, is this is an entirely voluntary program.

Now, the other big criticism of this program has been that, well, they say, two-thirds of the people have prescription drugs already who are retired. That is misleading. That is only accurate by a stretch, and let me explain what I mean by that. We have a report we are releasing today that shows that 75 percent of older Americans lack decent and dependable private sector coverage for prescription drugs. And the problem is getting worse.

Fewer than one in four retirees, 24 percent, have drug coverage from their former employers. Now, the number of corporations offering prescription drug benefits to retired employees has dropped by a quarter, 25 percent, just since 1994. Eight percent of the seniors have Medigap drug policies. But as all of you know, Medigap premiums explode as people get older, when they most need the benefits and can least afford the higher prices.

Here in Michigan, for example, seniors over 85 must pay over \$1,100 a year in Medigap premiums for drug coverage, not counting the \$250 deductible. Those high costs are especially hard on women, who tend to have lower incomes than men because they didn't have as many years paying into Social Security or retirement primarily. Seventy-two percent of the Americans over 85 are women. Seventeen percent of seniors have drug benefits through Medicare managed care plans. But three-fifths of these plans cap the benefits at less than \$1,000 a year.

And listen to this, in just the last 2 years, the percentage that capped drug benefits at only

\$500 per year has grown by 50 percent. Anybody that's got any kind of medical condition at all will tell you it doesn't take very long to run through \$500.

So what does this mean? It means that the vast majority of our seniors either have no drug coverage at all or coverage that is unstable, unaffordable, and rapidly disappearing. It means, therefore, that we need a drug plan for our seniors that is simple, that is voluntary, that is available to all, and that is completely dependable.

Securing and modernizing Medicare I believe is the right thing to do for our seniors, but I also think it's the right thing to do for all the young people here. And for the next generation, the young parents in their thirties and forties. Why? First, because it guarantees we can get out of debt by 2015. I explained why that's a good idea. Second, because if we do this and we stabilize Social Security and Medicare, we will ease the burden on the children of the baby boom generation who will be raising our grandchildren. It is a way of guaranteeing the stability of the incomes of the children of the seniors on Medicare. And I think that is profoundly important.

Now, I've already explained that that's what our budget does. Today the Congress is voting, the House of Representatives is voting on the Republican tax plan, which basically would spend virtually the entire non-Social Security surplus on a tax cut. And it costs a huge amount of money, not just in this 10 years but it triples in cost in the next 10 years. It explodes.

And you say, "I don't want to think about that. I want to think about today." You have to think about that. The baby boomers will be retiring in the second decade—in the second decade of the century we're about to begin. And we have to think about that. This plan would give us no money to stabilize or modernize Medicare, and it would require substantial cuts in education, in national defense, in biomedical research, in the environment. And I predict to you that the environment will be a bigger and bigger issue for us all to come to grips with in the years ahead.

So we have to figure out what we're going to do. I believe that this plan that's being voted on in Washington will not enable us to pay off our debt; it will not do anything to add to the life of Social Security and Medicare; it will require huge cuts in our other investments

and taking care of our kids. And I will veto it if it passes.

But the question is what are we going to do? You all know that we fight all the time in Washington, because that's what you hear about. But I would like to reiterate that we joined together to pass welfare reform—and I did, I vetoed two bills first because they took away the guarantee of food and medicine for the poor kids. But I passed the welfare reform bill that required able-bodied people to go to work and provided extra help for child care, for transportation, for training and education for people on welfare. We now have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years—the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years.

And big majorities of both parties in both Houses of Congress voted for it. We fought over the budget for 2 years, but in '97 we passed a bipartisan balanced budget amendment, with big majorities in both parties of both Houses voting for it. And the results have been quite good.

So don't be discouraged. You just have to send a clear message. We are capable of working together to do big things. Yesterday 50 economists, including 6 Nobel Prize winners, released a letter supporting my approach. Maybe it's easier for me because I'm not running for election, but I don't think that's right. I trust the American people to support those people in public life who think of the long run, who tell them the truth, who say, I realize it would be popular to spend this surplus, but we've waited 30 years for it, and we now have 30 years' worth of challenges out there facing us, and we cannot afford to squander that.

So what I hope to do today is to answer your questions and hear your stories, and let's explore whether or not we really need to do these things for Medicare and whether or not they really will help not only the seniors but the non-seniors in the country. And if you disagree, you ought to say that, too. But my concern now is for what America will be like in 10 years, or 20 years, or 30 years.

We've got the country fixed now; it's working fine; everybody is going to be all right now in the near term. The economy is working; things are stable; we're moving in the right direction. But we now have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to take care of our long-term challenges, and I believe we ought to do it.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the conversation proceeded. Participant Janice Southwell asked the President how much time his Medicare plan required before it went into effect.]

The President. Well, it will take us—it takes a couple of years—first of all, we can stabilize the plan immediately. If Congress passed the law and I sign it, we'll have the funds dedicated, and we can set the framework in motion today that would do all the big things.

To put the prescription drug benefit in effect, it's a complicated thing, as you might imagine, millions and millions of people involved—it will take probably a year, maybe a little longer, 2 years, to actually start it.

But where we propose to start would be with a premium of \$22 a month and a copay of 50 percent up to \$2,000, but it would go up to \$5,000. And I think it's very important to get up to a higher level. But we have to learn to administer it and make sure we've got the cost estimates right and all of that. So it would be fully in effect at \$5,000 about 5 years after we start.

[Moderator Jane Aldrich asked Ms. Southwell her concerns about her own senior years. Ms. Southwell replied she had thought about it and related a conversation with her daughter-in-law on the future of Social Security.]

The President. The answer to that is, there certainly should be. There's no reason for us to let the Trust Fund run out in 2034. What I have proposed to do, just so you'll know, is—what I propose to do is to allow the Social Security taxes that you pay, which presently have been covering our deficit since 1983—as big as these deficits have been, they'd have been even bigger if it hadn't been for Social Security taxes. You need to know that, because when we put the last Social Security reform in, in 1983, we did it knowing that we would be collecting more. I wasn't around then, but they did it knowing they would be collecting more than they needed, and the idea was to have the money there when the baby boomers retired, as well as to relieve the immediate financial crisis.

Now, if you do that, you can pay down the debt some. But in order to lengthen the life of the Trust Fund, what I have proposed to do is, as the debt goes down, the interest we pay on the debt goes down. Obviously, you

know, if you've got smaller debt, you have smaller interest payments. Well, you should know that for most of the last 10 years, about 15 cents on every dollar you pay in taxes comes right off the top to pay interest on the debt.

So what I want to do, as the debt goes down, I want to take the difference in what we used to pay and what we've been paying and put that into the Social Security Trust Fund to run the life of the Trust Fund out to 2053. And I've made some other proposals and will make some more, because I'd like to see us take it all the way out to 2075. That would be, in the ideal world, we'd have 75 years in the Social Security Trust Fund. That's what I'd like to see, and I'm working on it. But if you get over 50 years, we'll be in pretty good shape, and I'm hoping we'll do that.

[The conversation continued.]

The President. You might be interested to know that the drug companies, a lot of them are worried about it, and they've come out opposed to my plan, even though there's no price control in my plan. But if we represent you and millions of other people like you, we'll have a lot of market power, we'll be able to bargain for better prices. And I think that's a good thing, not a bad thing.

The other thing you should know is—maybe most of you do know this—I didn't know this until a few years ago and my former Senator, David Pryor, who is very interested in seniors and drug prices told me this, and then when I became President and began to manage the budget, I confirmed it—Americans sometimes pay many times higher prices for drugs than Europeans, for example, pay for the same drugs. So our companies are only too happy to sell in the European market at cost because—much lower cost—and they make money doing it because they recover all the cost of developing new drugs from Americans. And then the Europeans put actual price controls on them, and they sell anyway.

Now, I honor the research and development of new drugs by our pharmaceutical companies. The Government spends billions of dollars every year supporting such research, and we should. If America is on the cutting edge, maybe it's worth a premium for it. But I also believe that elderly people on fixed incomes should not be bankrupt for doing it.

That's what this—so what I'm trying to do is to strike the right balance here. I want to hold down future increases as much as we can, not by price controls, but by using the market power of the Government. And we'll have to be reasonable, because we're not going to put those companies out of business, and we're not going to stop them from doing research because we'd be cutting off our nose to spite our face. We wouldn't do that. But we would be able to give people like you some protection, as well as the guarantee of coverage. And I think it will be a good thing.

[Participant Jack Witt mentioned that his sister-in-law bought prescription drugs in Mexico because they cost less than in the United States. He suggested that the U.S. Government purchase the drugs and provide them to seniors at a fraction of the cost.]

The President. You are subsidizing the pharmaceuticals made in America, sold in virtually every other country in the world, because they're made here, and you're paying higher prices for them than people in other places.

As I said, I understand their argument. They say, "Well, why shouldn't we go in there and sell if we can make some money, but we have to recover our drug development costs." I'm sympathetic to a point, but not to the point that people like you can't have a decent living. So I think this will be a good compromise, and I hope the pharmaceutical companies will reconsider their opposition. It would be a good thing, not a bad thing, if we had the market power of large-bulk purchasers to hold these prices down to you.

[The conversation continued.]

The President. You can actually figure out pretty much what this plan would do for you. If you have, let's say, \$2,000 a year in drug costs—let's take the first year the plan goes in—let's say you've got \$2,000 a year in drug costs and let's say your income is over 150 percent of the Federal poverty level—150 percent of the Federal poverty level is \$17,000 a couple for seniors—then, you would pay \$1,000 for the drugs and \$24 a month for the premium, which is \$288 a year, which is \$1,288, so you'd save \$712 a year.

Now, if your income is under 135 percent of the Federal poverty level, which is \$15,000 a couple, you would save \$2,000 a year because

you wouldn't have to pay the copay or the monthly premium. We've tried to take care of the really—the kind of people you're talking about at your complex who don't have enough to live on. I wish I knew the numbers for seniors living alone. I just don't have it in my head; I should, but maybe somebody will slip it to me before I end.

If somebody, one of the people here with me, if you'll slip me the numbers for what the 135 and the 150 percent of the poverty level is for single seniors, I'll tell you what that is, but you can figure it that way.

[Heather Fretell, a pharmacist, noted that meaningful pharmacy services to ensure proper use of medication should be provided for seniors, because prevention of illness would bring down the cost of treatment. Ms. Aldrich asked if the President was hearing that around the country.]

The President. A lot. And let me just say to all of you, this fine young woman is representative of where the pharmacists of our country are. I want to—I said that I regretted the fact that the drug manufacturers were opposing our program because they're afraid it will hold costs down too much. The pharmacists who see the real live evidence of this problem have been, I think, the most vociferous supporters of this whole initiative of any group not directly involved in getting the benefits, and I can't thank you enough. Thank you.

But wait, let me say one other thing. She made another point that I didn't make in my remarks that I would like to make to you. She said, you know, say it was your grandmother or something, if she doesn't take this medication she'll have to go to the hospital.

Now, suppose there were no Medicare program. Suppose President Johnson hadn't created Medicare 34 years ago and we were starting out today. Does anybody here even question that if we were creating Medicare today, prescription drugs would be a part of it? If we were starting all over again? Thirty-four years ago we didn't have anything like the range of medicines we have today that could do anything like the amount of good and do anything like the amount of prolonging our lives, our quality of life, keeping us out of the hospital.

And here's the bizarre thing about this, if we manage this program right over the long run, it's going to be a cost saver because we'll be—if you've got \$2,000 in drug costs, that's

a lot—that's what her costs are—that \$2,000; how long does it take you to run up \$2,000 in hospital bills? A lot less than a year. A lot less than a week.

So I think that's another point that ought to be made when this debate is unfolding, that, yes, this will be—it's a new program, so it will cost money. But eventually, particularly if Heather is right and we can make sure a higher percentage of our people use these drugs properly, you will save billions of dollars in avoided hospital stays, which we pay for. That's the irony of this whole thing. That's the other reason I'm for all these preventive tests being provided for free, because we don't pay for the preventive tests, but when you don't get them and you go to the hospital, we do pay for that.

So I think any thing we can do to make people healthier and keep them out of the hospital and keep them out of more extensive and expensive care is a plus. So thank you very much.

[Ms. Aldrich noted that substantial advances in preventive medicine since 1965 had altered application of treatment.]

The President. It's amazing. The average life expectancy in this country is almost 77 years now. I mean, that shows you how far we've come in just 34 years.

[The conversation continued.]

The President. First, let me say that we have made a dramatic increase in medical research one of the priorities for the last 2 years for the millennium. We're trying to double funding for the National Cancer Institute and eventually double funding for all the National Institutes of Health.

And Vice President Gore gave a speech in Philadelphia about 10 days or so ago now, where all the major associations involved in the fight against cancer came to talk about long-term plans that would really give us a chance of finding cures for many, many types of cancer. I think it will be a big national priority in the years ahead. And he gave, I thought, a very good speech about what should be done to take advantage of what we already know is out there on the horizon, just by accelerating our investments and making sure we're doing the proper testing in the proper range of our population.

I'm quite encouraged about it. I think a lot of the big breakthroughs will come after I leave

office. But I hope that the groundwork we've laid now will bring them sooner. And I think one of the things that I hope will be a big part of the debate for all of you for all the elective offices when we come up in the year 2000—I say this not in a partisan way, because, actually, we've had very good Republican as well as Democrat support for the National Institutes of Health funding—but I think this should be a major issue and a subject of debate that all of us should talk about as Americans: What is our commitment over the long run to doing this kind of research and getting the answers as quickly as we can?

Thank you.

[The conversation continued.]

The President. Let me say—you heard what Mrs. Silk said about Medicare—I think we're mostly talking about this prescription drug issue today. But don't forget, as important as it is, the most important thing that we're doing is securing Medicare for 27 years. We've got to get—the basic program has to be secure, because that would literally, as many people as are terrifically burdened by this prescription drug benefit, if anything happens to the solvency of Medicare, or we have to adopt some draconian changes that raise the cost of the program so much that it's as out of reach as the drugs are now for people, the consequences would be disastrous. So let's not forget we have two things to do. We've got to stabilize and modernize and secure the Medicare program itself for the next 27 years as well as add this drug benefit.

And you made that point very eloquently, and I thank you.

[Participant Dorothy Silk asked the President what citizens could do to help him persuade the Congress to accept his plan.]

The President. I think tell the Congress that the country's doing well now and that, yes, you would like to have a tax cut, but you will settle for a smaller one rather than a bigger one if the money goes to save Medicare and Social Security and keep up our investment in the education of our children and pay the debt off. I think that's a simple message.

Let me just say this. You know, Americans are a country—we are famously skeptical about the Government, you know. All those jokes, "I'm from the Government; I'm here to help you,"

and you slam the door and the guy says—and I heard the debate last night in the House of Representatives, and the people that are for giving the surplus back to you in the tax cut will—they say, “It’s your money; don’t let them”—i.e., us—“don’t let them spend it on their friends.” Well, we’re spending it on Medicare, Social Security, and education and defense. That’s us, that’s all of us, that’s not our friends.

I mean, I hope you’re my friends, but that’s—and I think what you have to say is that the country has become prosperous by looking to the future, by getting the deficit down, by getting our house in order, by getting this budget balanced, by investing in our people. And now, we have these big challenges.

If this debate in Washington is about, you know, “my tax cut’s bigger than your tax cut,” well, that’s a pretty hard debate to win, you know? But if the debate is, “Yes, our tax cut is more modest, although it’s quite substantial, but the reason is we think since we’ve got this big aging crisis looming and since we’ve never dealt with the prescription drug issue, that we ought to stabilize Social Security and Medicare, save enough money to do our work in education and medical research and the environment and defense, and still have a modest tax cut,” I think we can win that argument, and I think—you know, you really just need to let people know. I don’t think this should be a hostile debate at all. I think you need to genuinely, in a very open and straightforward way, tell all your Representatives and Senators of all parties that you believe now is the time to look to the long run.

If America were in economic trouble now, if people were unemployed, if they were having terrible trouble, maybe we should have a big tax cut to help people get out of the tights they’re in. But now that the country is generally doing well, we ought to take the money and make sure we don’t get in a tight in the future. If you can just say that in a nice way, I think—I’m trying to keep the temperature down on this debate and get people to think. I want to shed more light than heat. Usually, our political debates in Washington shed more heat than light. And you can help a lot. Just be straightforward, and tell people that’s what you think.

[Ms. Aldrich suggested people write letters and send E-mail to their representatives in Congress.]

The President. Write them a letter; send them an E-mail; send them a fax. Do something to—and say, “I’m just a citizen, but I want you to know that I will support you if you save most of the surplus to fix Social Security and Medicare and make America debt-free. I will take the smaller tax cut, and I don’t want you to have to cut education or national defense or medical research or any of those other things. Let’s do this in a disciplined way, in a common-sense way.” I think you just tell them that that’s what you want them to do, and don’t make it a partisan issue, don’t make it a—I don’t want Americans to get angry over this.

Like I said, this is a high-class problem. You would have laughed me out of this room if I had come here 7 years ago and said, “Vote for me. I’ll come back, and we’ll have a debate on what to do with the surplus.” So let’s be grown up about this and deal with it as good citizens.

[*The conversation continued.*]

The President. Yes, I thank you for that. I agree with that. Let me say, if you think about it, every time we do a big change in this country, the people that are doing pretty well under the status quo normally oppose it. And in the 15th century, the great Italian statesman Machiavelli said there is nothing so difficult in all of human affairs than to change the established order of things, because the people who will benefit are uncertain of their gain, and the people who will lose are afraid of their loss.

Well, I don’t think they will necessarily lose. Once they go back to what this gentleman said over here about it, and let’s put what he said and what you said together, the profit margins may go down some on heavily-used drugs where we have the power to bargain per drug, but the volume will surely go up. That’s the point you’re trying to make.

Look, none of us have an interest in putting the American pharmaceutical companies out of business. They’re the best in the world, and they’re discovering all these new drugs that keep us alive longer. And I wouldn’t—we’ll never be in a position where we’re going to try to do that. But I’ve seen this time after time after time, not just in health care, in lots of other areas. It will be fine if we just have to get the point where they can’t kill it. I think the pharmacists will help us, and I think if we keep

working, we'll wind up getting some pharmaceutical executives who will eventually come out for it, too, once they understand that nobody has a vested interest in driving them out of business. We all want them to do well and keep putting money into research and the increased volume. If the past is any experience of every other change, the increased volume of medicine going to seniors who need it will more than offset the slightly reduced profit margins from having more reasonable prices.

Thank you very much.

[Participant Loren Graham said his 44-year-old daughter, who suffered from rheumatoid arthritis, should be able to buy into Medicare because she was refused insurance.]

The President. But she's not designated disabled?

Mr. Graham. I beg your pardon?

The President. Medicare covers certain—the disability population—she's not disabled enough to cover, to qualify?

Mr. Graham. Correct.

The President. I don't know if I can solve that or not. I'll have to think about it. *[Laughter]*

Ms. Aldrich. But you obviously have other people that you know that are dealing with the same type of issue that you are right now, is that correct?

[Mr. Graham said he knew a lot of people in the same situation, with supplemental insurance but no guarantee they would keep it.]

The President. Let me say one thing. You said you wanted Medicare to be around another 32 years. Another point I should have made that I didn't about taking the Trust Fund out 27 years, you think how much health care has changed in the last 27 years. The likelihood is it will change even more in the next 27 than it has changed in the last 27. And we may be caring for ourselves at home for things that we now think of as terminal hospital stays. They may become normal things where you give yourself medication; you give yourself your own shots; you do all the stuff that we now think of that would be unimaginable.

I think if we can get it out that far, the whole way health care is delivered will change so dramatically that the people who come along after me and the Congress and in the White House will have opportunities to structure this in a different way that will be even more satis-

fying to the people as well as being better for their health.

But that's why, to go back to what you said, I want us to do this prescription drug thing. I think it is critically important. But we also have to remember that we've got to stabilize the Trust Fund. We've got to take it out. It ought to be more than 25 years. When you look ahead, you know it's going to be there.

Thank you.

[The conversation continued.]

The President. Well, if it was up to me, I would remove the age limits, the earnings limits on Social Security recipients, because I think that's another good thing they ought to do. But it ought to be voluntary; you shouldn't have to do it just to pay for your medicine.

I promised the lady over there who said most of the people who lived in your place were single. Now, keep in mind, we start out with the premium of \$24 a month, and that premium covers half the prescription drug costs, up to \$2,000 a year. It will go eventually to a premium of about \$44 a month that will cover half prescription drug costs up to \$5,000 a year. And I think it's important to get up above \$2,000, because a lot of people really do have big-time drug costs.

Now, the people who wouldn't have to pay the premium or the copay are people below 135 percent of poverty. That's \$14,000 for a couple, but \$11,000 for individuals. That's a lot of folks. And then, if you're up to \$12,750 for an individual or \$17,000 for a couple, your costs would be phased in, so there would be some benefit there.

But nearly everybody would be better off unless they have a good—the only plans that are better than this, by and large, are those that you got from your employer if your employer still covers prescription drugs. This is totally voluntary. Nobody has to do this. And we also have funds in here to give significant subsidies to the employers who do this to encourage them to keep on doing it and to encourage other employers to do it. So I think it's a well-balanced program and a good way to start.

[Dr. Kirshna Sawhney, a cardiologist, supported the President's prescription medicine proposal and pointed out the need for reform of the Medicare payment system to hospitals. He noted that premier health care facilities in Michigan were

losing \$80 to 100 million each year under the current system.]

The President. I'd like to make two points after your very fine statement. First, on the second point you raised, I had a chance to discuss that yesterday at my press conference. When we passed the Balanced Budget Bill in 1997, the—we had to say, how much are we going to spend on Medicare over the next 5 years. And we estimated what it would take to meet our budget target. Then, the Congressional Budget Office said, no, it will take deeper cuts than that, and we said, if you do that it will cost a lot more money. But we had to do it the way they wanted.

Now, this is not a partisan attack; nobody did this on purpose. There was an honest disagreement here. But it turned out that our people were right, and so actually more money was taken out of the hospital system in America than was intended to take out. And to that extent by a few billion dollars, not an enormous amount, but the surplus in that sense is bigger than it was intended to be. And we have got to correct that. I have offered a plan that will at least partially take care of it, and we're now in intense meetings with people who are concerned about it. We are going to have to do that.

Now, let me make the point about the person you said, the gentleman who died. I was aghast—last week we had another health care debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights, and one of the people who was against our position said, these people keep using stories—you know, anybody can tell a story, that's not necessarily representative.

Well, first of all, I don't know about you, but I think people's stories are—I mean, that's what life is all about. What is life but your story? [Applause] And, secondly, I—but the point I want to make is this doctor—the most important point this doctor has made is that the man who died is not an unusual case. That is the point I want to make. And that's—the pharmacist, Heather, was making the same point—there are lots of people like this.

And let me just use the example you mentioned. Diabetes is one of the most important examples of this. Complications from diabetes can be, as you know, dire and can be fatal. And you have a very large number of older people with adult-onset diabetes that have to

be managed. It is expensive, but people can have normal lives.

The patients have to do a lot of the management of diabetes. They have to do it. And if they don't do their medication, the odds that something really terrible will happen before very long are very, very high. Almost 100 percent.

But if you look at the sheer numbers of people with diabetes alone, just take diabetes, then the story is about statistics, too, big numbers of people.

I thank you very much, sir.

She says we've got to quit. You've been great. Are you going to be the heavy? I should be the heavy.

Ms. Aldrich. No, they told me I had to tell you to be quiet. I said, really? [Laughter] I bet there are some Republicans that might like that job.

The President. Republicans—Hillary would like it. A lot of people would like it. [Laughter]

Ms. Aldrich. We are, indeed, out of time. So sorry, but they're telling me, and I have to take my cues. But Mr. President, we want to thank you so much for being here. And did you have some closing remarks that you'd like to make to us?

The President. I just wanted to say again, this is a wonderful moment. We told some sad, heartwrenching stories today, and I wish I could hear from all of you. But keep in mind, this is a great thing. Our country is so blessed now. We've got the lowest peacetime unemployment in 40 years, the longest peacetime economic expansion in history. We've got this big surplus, the biggest one we've ever had. We think it will last for a decade or more. More really, as long as we don't mess up the budget.

We have to decide. I already said what to me the choice is—it is your money. If you want it back now, you can tell your elected representatives. Nobody can say you didn't pay it in; you want it back. I don't quarrel with that. But I think it is much better for you to stabilize Social Security and Medicare, add the prescription drug benefit at a price we can afford, let people 55 to 65 pay into it who don't have health insurance, have a modest tax cut that doesn't undermine our ability to do that or our ability to invest in education and medical research and defense, and get the country debt-free.

You'd be amazed how many really wealthy businessmen come up to me and say, "You

raised my taxes to balance the budget back in '93—we did the top 1 percent, 1.5 percent got an income tax increase—and I was mad at the time, but I made so much more money in the stock market than I paid in taxes, it's not funny."

Low interest rates make people money. The flipside of that is if interest rates went up 1 percent in this country, it would cost you more money than I can give you in a tax cut if you borrow any money for anything.

So what I think we have to say—I just want you to think about this and then communicate your feelings. And again, do it in a friendly way. Do it in the tone we've been talking about today. Tell them the stories you know, Doctor. Every doctor, every nurse, every pharmacist, every family should sit down and take the time—I know you think that Members of Congress and the White House, the President—I have a thousand volunteers at the White House, most of them just read mail. And then I get

a representative sample of that mail every 2 or 3 weeks. And we all calibrate that. And the Members of Congress, you'd be amazed how many Members of Congress actually read letters that they get. They do have an impact.

So these faxes and E-mails and letters and telephone calls, they register on people, especially if they're not done in a kind of harsh, political way, but just saying, this is what I think is right for our country. And I hope you'll do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the gymnasium at Lansing Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor David C. Hollister of Lansing; James F. Anderton IV, president, Lansing Community College; Judith Lee, assistant executive director, Older Women's League; and John D'Agostino, president, Michigan State Council of Senior Citizens.

Remarks to the Overflow Crowd at Lansing Community College July 22, 1999

Thank you for coming today. I wish we'd had room for everybody at the other place, but you are much cooler than we were. [*Laughter*] And I hope you enjoyed the event, even long distance.

I was very impressed with the people who spoke, and I think it will be very effective in trying to make the point we're trying to make. And I'm not going to make another speech, but I'm curious—how many students are here? [*Applause*] One of the things that I'm proudest of that we've accomplished in this Congress is, after the Balanced Budget Act, we've passed this HOPE scholarship which gives a \$1,500 tax credit for—and I hope you're all using it.

The only other point I want to hammer home that I made today is, it is very important when we debate how much should go to a tax cut—should we save Social Security and Medicare; should we pay off the debt; that we not adopt a budget—as some are up there saying. They're saying, "Okay, well, we'll do it your way on Social Security and Medicare, but give us a bigger tax cut," which would mean we'd actually

have to cut Federal support for education, which I think would be a terrible mistake, because if, for no other reason, the financing of higher education—it's absolutely critical.

But there are a lot of important things we're doing in our elementary and secondary schools, too, to try to lower class sizes and put more teachers out there and do things like that. So I hope all of you will also respond to what I asked the audience over there, which is, if you agree with the position we're taking—save Social Security and Medicare, invest in education and defense and the environment, have a modest tax cut, and pay the debt off—if you agree with that, I hope you will communicate that to the Members of the Senate and Congress from Michigan. Write them a letter; send them an E-mail; send them a fax; do something. It will make a difference.

I really hope that we can conduct this discussion and bring it to a successful conclusion. I don't think that we need to have a 2-year-long protracted political battle over this. I think this

is a relatively easy decision to make if the Congress can be convinced that that's where the American people are. And I believe people of all ages think that now we have this moment which is once in a lifetime, maybe once in a generation opportunity, and we ought to take it and go with it.

So I thank you for coming, and I'm going to start down here and go over here and shake

hands with anybody who wants to come by and say hello.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. in the Dart Auditorium. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House Action on a Proposed Republican Tax Cut

July 22, 1999

Last night the Republicans went behind closed doors, not to strengthen Medicare and Social Security, but to provide political cover for their exploding tax cut. Today the Republicans charged ahead and passed a plan that threatens our ability to pay off the debt and strengthen Social Security and Medicare. The plain fact is that their tax plan is designed to explode to a \$3 trillion cost at the very time

that Medicare and Social Security come under strain. It would also force deep and devastating cuts in a broad range of domestic programs, including education, the environment, and law enforcement. If the Republicans send me a plan that undermines our ability to reform Social Security and Medicare and abandons the fiscal discipline that has helped to fuel our economic growth, I will send it straight back with a veto.

Statement on Senate Action on Proposed Hate Crimes Legislation

July 22, 1999

I am gratified that the Senate has unanimously passed the strong legislation I proposed to combat hate crimes.

All Americans deserve protection from hate crimes, and that requires us to stand together against intolerance, prejudice, and bigotry. The hate crimes prevention act gives power to those values and will help make our country more safe and secure.

Senate approval of this legislation gives it real momentum, and I call on the House of Representatives to meet its responsibility in combating violence that is fueled by hate. We have some distance to go before the hate crimes prevention act is the law of the land, but tonight's action by the Senate is a big step forward in the journey toward greater protection for all Americans.

Statement on Signing the National Missile Defense Act of 1999

July 22, 1999

I have signed into law H.R. 4, the "National Missile Defense Act of 1999." My Administration is committed to addressing the growing danger that rogue nations may develop and field long-range missiles capable of delivering weap-

ons of mass destruction against the United States and our allies.

Section 2 of this Act states that it is the policy of the United States to deploy as soon as technologically possible an effective National Missile

Defense (NMD) system with funding subject to the annual authorization of appropriations and the annual appropriation of funds for NMD. By specifying that any NMD deployment must be subject to the authorization and appropriations process, the legislation makes clear that no decision on deployment has been made. This interpretation, which is confirmed by the legislative record taken as a whole, is also required to avoid any possible impairment of my constitutional authorities.

Section 3 of the Act states that it is the policy of the United States to seek continued negotiated reductions in Russian nuclear forces. Thus, section 3 puts the Congress on record as continuing to support negotiated reductions in strategic nuclear arms, reaffirming my Administration's position that our missile defense policy must take into account our arms control and nuclear nonproliferation objectives.

Next year, we will, for the first time, determine whether to deploy a limited National Missile Defense, when we review the results of flight tests and other developmental efforts, consider cost estimates, and evaluate the threat. Any NMD system we deploy must be operationally effective, cost-effective, and enhance our security. In making our determination, we will also review progress in achieving our arms control objectives, including negotiating any amendments to the ABM Treaty that may be required to accommodate a possible NMD deployment.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 22, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 4, approved July 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106-38. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 23.

Statement on the Death of King Hassan II of Morocco *July 23, 1999*

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn that His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco has passed away. The prayers of all Americans go out to the royal family and the people of Morocco.

Over his 38-year reign, King Hassan II demonstrated time and again his leadership, his courage, and his willingness to embrace change. He worked tirelessly to promote the welfare of his people, and in recent years he took important steps to deepen freedom in his country.

He offered wise counsel to every U.S. President since John F. Kennedy. He worked to break down barriers among the peoples of the Middle East, bravely opening a dialog with Israel, helping to arrange President Sadat's his-

toric journey to Jerusalem, seeking greater tolerance and stability across the region.

Hillary had the honor of being his guest just a few months ago. We will never forget his extraordinary hospitality nor the many times he stood shoulder to shoulder with the United States.

King Sidi Mohammed and the Moroccan people can continue to count on the support of the United States. To King Sidi Mohammed, to the rest of the royal family, and to the people of Morocco, Hillary and I send our heartfelt condolences.

The Middle East has lost one of its greatest peacemakers. In his honor, we must rededicate ourselves to fulfilling his vision: a just and lasting peace for all the Middle East's children.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Cincinnati, Ohio July 23, 1999

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, first, let me say that I think in the spirit of candor, I should tell you that the real reason that the air-conditioning is not on tonight is that it's part of my continuing effort to convince the American people that Al Gore is right about global warming. *[Laughter]* And I hope you will join us now in this crusade.

When Stan gave me this purple shirt, I thought instead of saying, "no one more regal," I thought he was going to say, "I'm going to give him this purple shirt, because no one is more wounded than him." *[Laughter]*

Joe Andrew, every time he says that line about we're going to win everything from President to dog catcher, as if that's a wide gulf, I said, plenty of times in the last few years, I thought that was a very short distance, those two positions. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to begin, if I might, by saying a few thank-you's. I want to thank Stan and his whole family, and I want to thank Dick and his wonderful family. And to Jim, I want to thank you and all the people that are associated with you and have been there for me and for my party for all these years. I'm grateful to the people of Ohio who have voted for me and for Al Gore twice, under what would normally seem to be adverse political conditions, when the Republicans were doing pretty well here statewide, and conventional wisdom would have it that we wouldn't do so well.

I want to thank Joe Andrew for agreeing to leave the security of his home in Indiana and take on the challenge of the Democratic Party. And David Leland, who in '96, had what I thought was the cleverest idea. He had a \$96 fundraiser for the Democrats, and as I remember, he had 4,000 people there, which was a pretty impressive turnout, and I knew we were going to carry Ohio again.

I want to thank Jody Richards, my longtime friend, who was the Speaker of the House in Kentucky. We were working on education together back when I was a young Governor with no gray hair and no reasonable prospects of this happy occasion. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Tony Hall, who is not only one of the finest Congressmen but one of the

finest human beings I have ever known in my life, and Ohio can be very, very proud of him. And I thank you, sir, for all you've done and all you have been and the way you have been there for me as a friend as well as an ally.

And I want to thank my friend Bill Daley for serving in the Cabinet, being a brilliant Secretary of Commerce, a great political leader, and I think that even though I have to retire in a year and a half, you haven't heard the last of him.

As you know, this has been a highly emotional week for me and for Hillary and for Chelsea. We are friends of Senator Kennedy and his family. We knew and had the greatest respect for John Kennedy. I had a wonderful, long evening with John and Carolyn. We thought the world of Jackie Kennedy. And we're Americans, so we went through this last week experiencing it both in a personal way and experiencing it just in the same way every other citizen did. So I'm not going to give you a whoop-dee-doo tonight; I'm going to ask you to think about why you're here and what you will say tomorrow if someone asks you why you came.

When Senator Kennedy—and I was just told at the table tonight that the eulogy for his nephew is now available on the Internet. It may be printed in full in your paper tomorrow. Somehow, you ought to get the whole thing and read it.

The last sentence in the eulogy was this: "Like his father, he had every gift but length of life." I say that not to be morbid or even sad, because it was actually quite a wonderful service, but to remind us all that life is fleeting and fragile; things we don't deserve happen to us, both good things and bad things, and our only obligation can be to get up every day and try to be children of God and do the best we can with the life we have.

I believe that the work that we have been engaged in, the political work of the country, is good work. I believe most people who do it in both parties are good people and personally compassionate, by the way. I believe that. I despair that so much of the politics of the last few years has been about, you know, personal attacks, because it diverts the attention of the

public from the life we share in common and the obligations we have to each other and to our children and to our country.

And today I left that church, that beautiful old church, thinking that all of us, including me, ought to do more every day to remember that life is fleeting and fragile, but a great gift; with all of its troubles and tears, it's a great gift.

And so when I think about what I'd like to say to you, it is this, that in 1992 when I ran for President—and early on in the race I saw John Kennedy, Jr., and his mother at events for me when I didn't know them, really, and I was running fifth in the New Hampshire primary—I did it because I felt the country needed to change direction. And I offered some ideas to the American people based on the premise that we ought to be trying to create a country in the new century where every responsible citizen has the opportunity to live out his or her dreams, and where we're coming closer together as an American community even as we grow more diverse in our racial and ethnic and religious characteristics, and where we do more to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity. Now, I am very grateful that those ideas, when put into action, turned out to have pretty good results.

You know what has happened in the economy. We also have a 30-year low in welfare and a 26-year low in the crime rate. A lot of our social problems, our evading teen pregnancy and drug use, are down. Our test scores are beginning to rise after years and years and years in our schools; last year in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade they were all up in both reading and math for the first time in a long time. Ninety percent of our children immunized against childhood diseases for the first time in the history of our country. The air and the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We've set aside more land from the Florida Everglades to the California redwoods than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. And I am very, very grateful to have had the chance to serve.

I would like to say, because now that we're in a political season, many of those who spent the last 6½ years telling the American people I had no business being President now say, "Oh, well, Clinton's like Michael Jordan; he just jumps higher than the other Democrats now.

The natural order of things will reassert itself, and we Republicans will rule America again."

I want you to understand that I'm glad I had the chance to serve. But I could give the best speech in the world, and if the ideas were wrong or if there were no implementation, we would not have been able to turn the country around. And I want you to understand that very little of what I did could have been done if I hadn't had the Vice President I did, who knew a lot more than I did when we started about a lot of the things we had to work on; if I hadn't had people like Bill Daley and his great predecessor, Ron Brown, and a lot of other people helping us; if I hadn't had allies like Tony Hall in the Congress. And I say that to make this point: Tomorrow when they ask you why you were here, I hope you will say, "Because I like the ideas they had, and they worked for America. And I'm not just supporting Bill Clinton; I'm supporting what we all believe." And we have the proof now. We no longer have to debate these things; we now have evidence.

The second thing that I'd like you to think about is, we now are in a great hazardous period. We human beings are all inherently weak in some way or another, and sometimes the worst thing in the world for us is the illusion that everything is perfect and can't go bad. And so we have all this prosperity now, and I would argue that's a hazardous time, because prosperity and security can lead people to arrogance and shortsightedness if they're not careful. I used to carry around with me when I was a Governor 10 little written rules of politics, and one of them was, "You're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable."

And so I say to you, we have this huge surplus. We had a \$290 billion deficit when I took office. We've got almost a \$100 billion surplus this year. We have projected surpluses for a long time to come. The big question now is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? We've got the country working again; now what are we going to do? And there's this big debate going on in Washington. The Republicans basically say, "Okay, we'll agree with the President. We'll save the Social Security tax surplus for Social Security, and we'll use that to pay the debt down." And I want to give them that, and I appreciate the fact that they've agreed with me today; they've agreed to pay it down some. "But we want to give the whole rest of the surplus to a tax cut."

We say, even though we're in an election season already, that's a mistake, because if you look at the real, long-term challenges of America, you can't honestly say we can afford a tax cut that big. What are those challenges? Let me just mention a few. One is the aging of America. The number of people over 65 in this country will double in 30 years; I hope to be one of them.

Anybody in America who lives to be 65 today has a life expectancy of 82. A child born in America today has a life expectancy of nearly 77 years. Within 3 years, we will finish the decoding of the human gene, and young mothers who take their babies home from the hospital will have a roadmap that will tell them—you have a fine, healthy young boy, but his genetic makeup makes him highly likely to develop heart disease in his thirties or forties. Therefore, you should do these things. Your daughter is beautiful, but she has a gene which predisposes her to breast cancer at an early age. Therefore, you should do these things.

It is not inconceivable that within a decade, the average life expectancy of newborns will be over 80—and keep in mind, that takes accounts of all the accidents and the diseases and everything that can happen to people. It is at our peril, therefore, that we pass up the chance to stabilize Social Security and Medicare and to reform Medicare so that it fits the needs of modern medicine with a prescription drug benefit and getting much more of our seniors to take preventive tests for everything from osteoporosis to cancer, because we can avoid a lot of the expensive medical bills if we prevent things from happening in the first place.

So I think we ought to not only set aside a substantial amount of the surplus for Social Security but also for Medicare, and that we should take the interest reduction when we pay down the debt—that means less interest, right? I think we ought to take all the interest savings and put it into Social Security so we can run the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out for more than 50 years. Right now, Medicare is projected to go broke in 2015, Social Security in 2034. Under my plan, we could take Medicare out for more than 25 years; we could take Social Security out for more than 50 years.

The second thing we have to think about is how to keep the economy going. You know, I'm sure you've all noticed, particularly those of you in business, the last 2 months, there's

been this real debate about whether the Federal Reserve should raise interest rates to try to head off inflation that is not at all in evidence now, because nobody can imagine that we've had this economy growing this long in peacetime at this high rate.

Bill Daley and I kind of like it. It's our job. But people say, "Well, you know, you haven't"—they say, "You know, Clinton may have a good team, but they didn't repeal the laws of economics, so I mean, don't we have to raise interest rates, slow the economy down to stop inflation, because if we have inflation, then we'll have a huge increase in interest rates and the thing will crater." And you've been seeing all this debate.

So I ask myself all the time: What can we do to keep the economy going, to minimize the effect of the next slowdown, to ensure that the next pickup will be quicker? And I have two things that I think are quite important that are inconsistent with the Republican plan.

One is, I don't want to just pay down the debt. I want to pay it off. And under my plan, we'll be out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835. Now, why does that matter, and why would the more liberal of the two parties be for it? How does that help ordinary people? How does it help wealthy people? Why is it worth more to you than a tax cut? Why? Because in a global economy where money moves around in the flash of an eye all over the world, if we're out of debt, what does that mean?

It means interest rates will be lower for business; it means there will be more business investment; it means there will be more people hired for jobs; it means there will be more money available for wage increases and for ordinary middle class people or people struggling to work their way into the middle class; it means the interest rates they pay on homes, cars, credit cards, and college loans will be lower. It means the next time there are a lot of problems around the world like this financial crisis in Asia a couple of years ago, that our friends around the world will be able to get the money they need to get back on their feet at lower interest rates. It means—God forbid—if we have another terrible economic crisis in America sometime in the future and we have to go into debt, we'll be able to get lower interest rates, and then we'll be able to get out of debt again in a hurry because we won't be borrowing money

just to pay the bills every week, as we have been since 1835—and especially for the 12 years before I took office.

So this is a huge deal. The other big thing we can do to keep the economy growing without inflation is to bring economic opportunity to the people in the neighborhoods, the inner-city neighborhoods, the small towns, the rural areas, and the Indian reservations that haven't felt a lick of prosperity in spite of all we've enjoyed. And that's why I took that trip across America to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the Indian reservation, and to the inner cities to highlight the fact that as well as we are doing, there are still places that haven't felt the sunlight of our prosperity.

And I have asked the Congress to pass a tax cut that is affordable, that includes giving people in this room who have money the same financial incentives through tax credits and Government loan guarantees to invest in an Indian reservation or in Appalachia or the Mississippi Delta or the inner city that we give you today to invest in the Caribbean, in Africa, in Latin America, or in Asia. I don't want to take away those incentives. I want to help those people, too. But I think we ought to have the same incentive to give poor people in America a chance to be part of the economic mainstream. And that's what I think we ought to do.

And let me just mention two other things. We have made great improvements in education. With tax cuts already provided, we've given tax credits to everybody, practically, for the first 2 years of college and, indeed, for the next 2, and for graduate school. But we still don't have the best school system in the world for everybody, and until we have world-class education for everybody, this country is going to be held back. And as we've grown more diverse and more and more of our kids have a first language not even English, we're going to have to work harder to have a good school system.

If the Republican plan passes, we will literally have to cut back on our present level of support for excellence in education at a time when we're trying to hook up all of the classrooms to the Internet, build modernized schools, raise standards, end social promotion, but give the schools money for summer school and after-school programs. We will have to have a huge cut in national support for education if this tax plan passes.

The last thing I'd just like to mention is the crime rate going down. I don't know if you remember this, but I had a huge fight with the Members of the other party in '94. When Tony and others joined together, we passed this crime bill. They said if we put 100,000 police on the streets, it wouldn't have any impact on the crime rate. Well, they were wrong.

Now, I've got a plan that would put 50,000 more police on the street and target them in the areas that have still real high crime. We actually have a chance to make this the safest big country in the world in the next 10 years. But if this tax cut passes, we'll have to make big cuts in what we're doing now in law enforcement and the support we have in State and local law enforcement and the work Federal law enforcement does.

So it seems to me—and I could give you lots of other examples—now, does that mean we can't have any tax cut? No, I actually presented quite a sizeable tax cut to the Congress. I said, but let's do first things first. Let's save Social Security and Medicare. Let's pay the debt off. Let's make sure we can do what we have to do in education, law enforcement, medical research, national defense, the environment. What we have to do—not big increases, but what we have to do—and then give the rest of it back to the taxpayers. That's the way I did it.

And there's a substantial tax—[inaudible]—worth hundreds of dollars a year to a lot of people for child care, for long-term care, to save for retirement. Now, one of my staff members said, "But you see what we're doing, don't you? We haven't saved Social Security. We haven't saved Medicare. We haven't secured these other things. What are we debating first? Their tax credit."

One of the guys that works for me says this is kind of like a family sitting down saying, you know, "Let's take the vacation of our dreams to Hawaii, and when we get back, we'll figure out whether we can pay the home mortgage and send our kids to college." [Laughter] I mean, that's what we're doing here. And so I say to you, I think we're right. But why are you here? I'm telling you, everybody in this room—just about everybody in this room—would be better off—you ought to be at their deal, because for the first year, you'd be better off with their deal, because I think two-thirds of the benefits of their plan go to the top 2

percent or something of the economy. You'd be a lot better off in the short run with their deal. Why are you here?

Most of us believe—I think all of us believe—that those of us who are fortunate do better in the long run when everybody else does better, that we not only have a moral obligation to make sure everybody has a chance, but we actually do better. And guess what, we now have evidence.

I've got a friend in New York who runs one of the biggest companies in this country. He's going around to Wall Street, now that all these Republican and Democratic Presidential candidates are raising money, and all these Wall Street guys are saying, "You know, you've got to go for the Republicans this time." And he says, "I'll tell you what you do: If you paid more in taxes after 1993 because of Bill Clinton's deficit reduction package than you've made in the stock market, be for the Republicans." [Laughter] "But if you haven't, you'd better think about it."

But this is not a selfish—it is actually true that we all do better when we help each other. And so if you think about it—I think the one thing that defines the difference between the two parties today is how we think of our national community. I think they honestly believe—I don't mean this in a critical way—I think they honestly believe that they see the national community as people who say they believe the same things. We say the national community is everybody who is a responsible citizen, working together, trying to help each other reach our full potential. And we believe the Government has a role to play when there is no other way to do it. They call us the party of Government; I've given you the smallest Federal Government since John Kennedy was President. I've privatized more programs and eliminated more than Presidents Reagan and Bush did.

The percentage of jobs created in the private sector in the Clinton administration is significantly higher than the percentage created in the two previous Republican administrations. We don't believe the Government can solve all the problems, but we believe in things like family leave. We believe that. We believe that's a good thing for America. We believe in the Patients' Bill of Rights.

We think if people are going to go into managed care, they ought to know they can see a specialist if the doctor says so. And if they

get hit in an accident coming out of the concert in Cincinnati tonight, they ought not to have to go past two hospitals to get to the emergency room just because the first two aren't covered. We believe that. That's what we really believe. And I'm willing to pay what the Republicans say it would cost, 2 bucks a month on my health insurance, so somebody else can see a specialist and go to the nearest emergency room, and I think most of you are. And I think we're all better off when people are healthier. They're more secure; they feel better at work; they feel better about their country. That's the difference.

I believe we'd all be better off if we could end 100 years of oppression of the Native Americans, and they could actually make a living on those Indian reservations instead of haggling over a deal made over 100 years ago that was a disgrace to the United States. We believe that we are bound up together. And I hope that if somebody asks you tomorrow why you came here, you'll be able to tell them that.

I'll close with just these thoughts. I'll tell you three stories real quick.

I was in Iowa a few days ago, and I remembered the first time I went to Iowa after I became President—I believe it's the first time—was when they had that 500-year flood in the Mississippi River. Do you remember that? And the Mississippi just flooded its banks in '93—500-year flood.

So I go to Des Moines and I'm going out there, stacking those sandbags, feeling good—you know, I'm being a good citizen, doing it and trying to set a good example. And I look up and there is this child standing there who was then 13 years old, who was about this tall, even though she's 13 years old. And the bones in her head were bulging through her skin, and her elbows and knees were knobby and her knuckles were bony, because she was born with brittle bone disease. She's had dozens of bone breaks, all kinds of operations. Every bone in her body could have been shattered. And she's there with the people and the sandbags.

And I asked this child, I said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Do you live in Des Moines?" She said, "No, sir, I'm from Wisconsin." She said, "But these people need help." And I don't know if you've known any children with brittle bone disease; some of them never get out of bed. This girl's really relatively strong, but still, she could—was in great danger, always.

And I said, "Aren't you afraid to be here?" She said, "I've got to go on living. These people need help. I asked my parents if I could come down here, and we came." That young woman went to the National Institutes of Health, twice a year, every year after that, so I kept in touch with her. Her name is Brianne Schwantes.

Last year I went out to American University in Washington to make a speech and I looked up, and there she was, an 18-year-old freshman, introducing me to all of her roommates. Now, I feel better that a child like that could get some of our tax money at the National Institutes of Health, and I think this country is better because of it.

I'll tell you another story. When I was in Iowa, I looked out, and on the second row of this speech I gave at this school—there were hundreds of people there—there is this radiant young African-American girl, about 8 years old now, tall, beautiful. Her name is Jimiya Poisel. The first time I met her, she was a little baby in her mother's arms in 1992 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. There was this huge rally there. And so I went to the crowd and I was shaking hands the way I always do, and there was this very tall white lady holding this African-American baby.

So I said, "Whose baby is that?" She said, "This is my baby." And I said, "Well, where did you get that baby?" She said, "From Miami." I said, "Well, why, how?" She said, "Well, you see, this baby was born with AIDS; so nobody wanted it, and I thought somebody ought to give this baby a home."

I later found out this woman—that her husband had left her; she had two children of her own; she was living in an apartment, barely able to make ends meet, but she had enough heart to take this little baby. And a couple of times a year, every year between now and then, they came to the NIH—this child with AIDS. She is a beautiful child. And once every year or so, they'd come by to see me and I'd keep up with her, and when I'd go to Iowa she'd always be there. She was there in the audience, faithfully, like she always is.

The lady had a better turn in her life; good things have happened to her and her family. I think we're better off that that little girl found a home, that she had a woman who had more problems than most of us have ever had in her life, but she still had enough room for her, and that her Government helped her raise this

child. And she got a \$500 tax credit because of the Balanced Budget Act. That the child will be able to go to college, and that, thank goodness, because of medical research, she'll probably live to go to college.

Last thing. When I went to the Indian reservation, I was introduced by the chief of the Oglala Sioux; they now call him the President. His name is Harold Salway. Before I went to Pine Ridge, Mr. Salway and 18 other tribal leaders from Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, the high plains, came to see me at the White House. And we were sitting there, and they all went through all their concerns—you know, about education and the economy and everything. And then at the end, Salway stands up. And he's not a very tall man, but he's very dignified and he stood there like this, and he said, "I have something I would like to say." He said, "We are supporting your position in Kosovo." The poorest Americans. He said, "You see, we know something about ethnic cleansing." [Laughter] But he said—let me finish—he said, "But this is America." He said, "My great-grandfather was massacred at Wounded Knee. I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the military in the United States. And here am I, their nephew, with the President of the United States." He said, "I have only one son, and he means more to me than anything. But I would be honored to have him wear the uniform of my country to fight against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo." Community. Humanity.

Thirty-one years ago Senator Kennedy gave another eulogy for his brother, Robert. Those of us who were grown then, many of us have a clear memory of it. And I want to close with this. I've thought about it a lot today. That man has borne a lot of burden. But after Robert Kennedy's campaign for President in 1968, where he'd gone into the coal mining areas of Appalachia, where he went to the Indian reservation, where he went to places and people that had been forgotten, Ted Kennedy said that he and his family hoped that what their brother was to them and what he wished for others would someday come to pass for all the world. I heard it 31 years ago; I have never forgotten it. That's why I'm here tonight, and why I hope you are.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Stanley M. Chesley and Richard D. Lawrence; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; James Evans,

director, senior vice president, and general counsel, American Financial Group; David J. Leland, chair, Ohio State Democratic Party; and Jimiya Poisel's mother, Laura.

The President's Radio Address

July 24, 1999

Good morning. At this time of great progress and hope for our Nation, we have the chance of a lifetime to build an even stronger America in the 21st century by facing our great long-term challenges like saving Social Security and Medicare, paying off our national debt and bringing economic opportunity to people and places left behind in our recovery, giving all our children a world-class education—and the challenge I want to speak with you about today: fighting crime and making America the world's safest big nation.

For too many years it looked as if the crime rate would rise forever. In too many places, families barricaded themselves behind barred doors and windows; children were afraid to walk to school; and once thriving communities became proving grounds for lawless gangs.

I took office determined to change this. More than 6½ years ago, Vice President Gore and I put in place a tough, smart anticrime strategy of more police, better prevention, and tougher punishments; a strategy that took assault weapons off our streets and kept illegal guns out of the hands of criminals and away from our children; above all, an anticrime strategy that funded local solutions to local problems, spearheaded by Attorney General Janet Reno, herself a former prosecutor.

This strategy, pioneered in our communities, has been taken nationwide by our 1994 crime bill. It has worked beyond all expectations. The murder rate is down to its lowest level in 30 years; overall crime, its lowest level in 26 years; violent crime has dropped by 27 percent in the last 6 years alone. And in many smaller ways, reducing crimes like vandalism that undermine our quality of life, we're beginning to restore civility to our everyday lives. Community policing has been central to our success. This May I was proud to announce that since I signed

the crime bill in 1994, we've funded 100,000 community police officers to work with local citizens, identify problems, track criminals, and help bring people and life back to our streets.

Today I'm pleased to announce 65 new grants to help communities around the country hire more than 800 new police officers, including 200 community police officers right here in the District of Columbia. We'll also help the District hire 40 new community prosecutors to work closely with police and with residents on our streets, in our neighborhoods, to fight and prevent crime.

Every major law enforcement organization supports our community policing program. I propose to put 50,000 more officers in our neighborhoods, those that still have too much crime. But our ability to continue to do this—indeed, our ability to meet many of our vital national needs—will be put at risk by the tax and budget plan now being pressed by Republican leaders in Congress. This week the Republicans in the House of Representatives passed a reckless plan that would cost \$800 billion in the next 10 years and a staggering \$3 trillion over the next two decades. It is so large, and it balloons in size so dramatically in future years that it would make it impossible to invest our surplus to save Social Security, to save and strengthen Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, to pay off our national debt.

Beyond that, the GOP tax cut is so large it would require dramatic cuts in vital areas, such as education, the environment, biomedical research, defense, and crime fighting. The Republican budget already cuts our successful community policing proposal in half. Their reckless tax plan would threaten law enforcement across the board, forcing reductions in the number of Federal agents and cutting deeply into support for State and local law enforcement.

To make matters worse, of course, the House Republicans are refusing to take steps to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, like closing the gun show loophole. Indeed, they want to weaken the existing laws with a pawnshop loophole. To keep the crime rate falling, we need more police on the street and fewer guns in the hands of criminals, not the reverse.

We have a rare and fleeting chance to use the fruits of our prosperity today to build America for tomorrow. We can invest now to save Social Security and modernize Medicare for the 21st century with more prevention for cancer, osteoporosis, and other conditions and with that prescription drug benefit; to lift our children by improving their education; to pay off the national debt for the first time since 1835 and give a generation lower interest rates for businesses, for home mortgages, for car, credit card, and college loan payments—that means more jobs and higher incomes; to bring economic opportunity through investment to our poorest areas that are left behind; to have an affordable tax cut for child care, long-term care, retirement savings, and other things Americans need; and to give our families the securities they deserve by keeping the crime rate coming down.

We can do all these things and have an affordable tax cut, or we can squander our hard-won progress on short-term thinking.

Just remember a few years ago—many people never thought we could balance the budget, but we did, and now we actually have a chance to pay off the national debt. Many never thought we could bring down crime rates, but we did, dramatically. Now we have a chance to achieve something that not too long ago would have seemed pure fantasy. In the early years of the new century, we can make America the safest big nation on Earth. We can do this, but only if we act now in the long-term interest of our Nation.

So, again, I call on the Congress and all Americans to make this a season of progress. Let's keep thinking about tomorrow.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:32 p.m. on July 23 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 24. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Picnic in Aspen, Colorado July 24, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. First of all, let me say that the setting is too gorgeous and the day is too beautiful really to have a political speech. [*Applause*] I was hoping no one would clap when I said that, but anyway—[*laughter*]. And so I will be brief. But I want to thank you for being here. I want to thank all the people involved with the Democratic Party and all of those who were hosting events or doing things for us who had to go through this mad scramble of change in our schedule because of the death of King Hassan and the absolute conviction that Hillary and I have that we should go to Morocco to the funeral service.

He was a great friend of the peace process. And after—Hillary went over there and went to see him. He stood with us in human rights battles; he's done a lot of things that were very, very good for the United States and for the

world. And so—and he was our friend. So we're going to go.

But I thank all of you for changing your schedules, and I thank you for your support. I want to thank our good friends, Dianne and Dick, for having us at their humble little place here. [*Laughter*] This is a gorgeous, serene, wonderful setting, and I thank them. I want to thank Congresswoman Diana DeGette. And I know that Maggie Fox is here, Congressman Udall's wife. I thank her for being here. I thank all the officials of the Colorado Democratic Party and the people from here in Aspen who met me last night. When did I get in, 12:30, quarter to one, some ridiculous hour? And 12 people came out, we had a little 30-minute discussion last night about the state of the world. It was quite wonderful.

I wanted to make a few points as briefly as I can. Governor Romer made many of them, and Hillary referenced the work that he and Bea and she and I did for many years when we were Governors together. First of all, this is a very different country than it was in January of 1993. A lot of people have forgotten that. This is a different country than it was in January of '93.

And it changed because we had a different set of ideas and we implemented them and they worked. And I won't bore you with all the details, but I think it's very important. And it's very important as we let the next year and a half unfold, what happens in our country, what happens in our politics system.

You know, I hear some of the people who oppose us now basically, after telling everybody for 6½ years what a bad guy I was; they're now basically saying, "Oh well, Bill Clinton is like Michael Jordan; he just jumps higher than the other guys; now the Democrats—he's gone, so we'll put them in the cellar again." There's a sort of cynical political theme.

Let me tell you something. I could not have done anything—anything in the last 6 years if our ideas hadn't been right, and if I hadn't had the help of Al Gore and Hillary and Dianne Feinstein and every Member of Congress and all the people in our administration and team who did that—and all of you who helped us throughout all these long years in the good and the bad times.

Politics is about values and ideas and actions and whether they change people's lives or not. So the first thing I just want to say to all of you who have been with us all the time, you ought to feel pretty good out here—not just because this is a beautiful day and a beautiful place, but this is a different country than it was.

The second thing I want to say is we have to decide two things in the next year and a half. We have to decide what are we going to do right now with our prosperity, with our surplus, and what decisions will we make in the next election cycle about where we go.

I had a very interesting question in the press conference earlier this week. Susan Page said, "Well, Mr. President, your approval ratings are back up after Kosovo and you won the war, and it's very strong approval ratings, but this question was asked our voters: 'Do you want to vote for someone who will just continue the

President's policies, or someone who will change policies?' And someone who will change policies won 50 to 38."

And I said, "Well Susan, if they polled me, I'd have been in the 50 percent, too, because our country is about continuous renewal." And I had to spend the last 6 years trying to make sure this country could work again. Now that things are working well, the question is what kind of change are we going to have—not whether we'll change—are we going to build on what we've done and go beyond it, or are we going to go back to things that didn't work before in the blind hope that they will?

And I'll just give you a couple of examples. First of all, in the moment. The big debate in Washington is, what do we do with the surplus. Well, let me say this. We produced a balanced budget in 1997 by cutting spending rigorously and saying we would keep these caps in place by 5 years, and by continuing to grow the economy by getting interest rates down and investment up. Now, so we now have this projected surplus. But you should also know that we have an enormous number of teaching hospitals in cities throughout America, for example, saying we need to put more money in the Medicare program to take care of the health care systems in the country.

I believe that we should be investing more, not less, in education, the environment, and biomedical research. I don't think we should cut back. And perhaps most important, I think this gives us a chance to meet the challenge of the aging of America and the challenge of giving this country a long-term pattern for growth. And let me just address those briefly.

The number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years. There are going to be fewer people working and more people retired. Social Security is going to run out of money in 2034; Medicare is going to run out of money in 2015. I think we ought to set aside most of the surplus to save Social Security; to save and modernize Medicare; to add more preventive tests for osteoporosis and cancer and other things to try to keep people out of the hospital in the first place; to add a prescription drug benefit that is modest but will be very helpful to 75 percent of the people who are over 65 who don't have adequate drug coverage; and to do it in a way that would allow us to become, for the first time since—listen to this—1835, debt-free.

Now, why should the liberal party, the more liberal party, be for making America debt-free? Because in 1999 and in 2000 and from now on, in a global economy, when money travels across national borders at the speed of light, interest rates are set in a global environment. And if a wealthy country is out of debt, it means that the people who live in that wealthy country can borrow money at lower cost, which means there will be more investment, more jobs, higher wages, lower car payments, lower credit card payments, lower home mortgage payments, lower college loan payments, and higher economic growth over a longer period of time.

It also means that when a global economy gets in trouble, as Asia got in trouble, Russia got in trouble, and our friends and trading partners and people we hope will remain democracies need money, they can get the money they need at lower cost because we won't be out there taking it away from them. And I think it is an unbelievable opportunity, and we can do it.

The point I want to make to you is, the Republicans are trying to cast the debate in Washington today as "our tax cut is bigger than your tax cut." It's almost like the arguments we used to have when I was in school—[laughter]—"our tax cut is bigger than your tax cut." Well, if that's the choice, you know, that's a pretty hard deal to argue with. The question is, if you take our tax cut, which is smaller than theirs, you get to save Social Security and Medicare; you get to take the country out of debt; you get to continue to invest in education, environment, medical research.

If they get their budget through, we will do nothing to extend the life of Medicare, nothing to extend the life of Social Security. We will imperil the future stability of the country, therefore. We will pay down the debt, but we won't pay off. And we will actually have to have drastic cuts in the investments in education, in the environment, in medical research, and believe it or not, even in defense.

Now, that's what's going on here. And what I want to ask you is, after all—this debate couldn't even occur if we all had a clear memory of what this country was like in 1991 and 1992. The Democrats are being punished for our success.

Can you imagine—why is the first issue the size of the tax cut, before we really assess how much we have to give these hospitals to make

them whole? Did we cut them too much, and if we did, shouldn't we fix it? What does it take to fix Social Security and Medicare? What does it take to get us out of debt? What does it take to fulfill our basic responsibilities? Then why don't we talk about the tax cut?

In Washington, it's all backwards again. And one of the young men who works for me said, "Mr. President, this is like a family sitting down around a table and saying, 'Let's plan the vacation of our dreams to Hawaii, and when we get back we'll see if we can make the mortgage payments and send the kids to college.'" I mean, this is—it doesn't make sense.

So the Democratic Party again is telling the American people, remember what got us to where we are. Do we need change? Absolutely. And we have a plan—and I talked about it in my radio address today—to save Social Security and Medicare, to make the country debt-free, to continue to invest in education and the environment, to literally make this the safest big country in the world early in the next century. And none of it can be done if their idea prevails.

So I think we ought to have a big debate about it. And if we look to the future—I just want to echo one thing Roy said—I'm convinced the more I think about it and the longer I live, and I'm not running for anything anymore, that the biggest difference between the two parties today is the way we think of community. It's not whether some of us are warmhearted and others are coldblooded. It's not whether some of us are nice people and others aren't nice. It's whether we believe down deep inside that those of us who are pretty fortunate would be better off if everybody else did better and that we'll be not only sort of morally satisfied but actually better off if we try to go forward together in a country where there's opportunity for every responsible citizen and in which everybody has a place in our community.

And I'll just give you a few examples of that where their party genuinely disagrees with us, from top to bottom, from all the candidates to all the Congressmen. The Patients' Bill of Rights—I supported—unlike some people, I supported managed care, but only if the people didn't have to give up quality of care. I think it is unconscionable that a person in a managed care plan could have a doctor pleading for the person to go to see a specialist and some non-physician could block it for long enough to make the damage irrevocable.

I think it is unconscionable that in cities every day somebody gets hit by a car and has to go to an emergency room and has to drive by the nearest one to one, two, or three down the way because that's the one covered by the plan. I think it is wrong for a person working for a small business who has cancer and is in the middle of chemotherapy, or who is pregnant and having a difficult pregnancy, to have to change their doctor in the middle of the treatment because the employer has changed his coverage.

Why? It doesn't affect me. I'm the President; I have great health care. It doesn't affect you. Most of you have got—you can pay for whatever you need. So why are you here? Because we feel that our country is better if more people are healthy and if people are treated fairer.

I'll give you another example—it may not be popular in all parts of Colorado. I grew up in a State where half the people had a hunting or fishing license or both. But I think that we did the right thing to pass the Brady bill. I think we did the right thing to pass the assault weapon ban. And I think Dianne Feinstein did the right thing to pass the assault weapons ban and then keep trying to close all the loopholes in it.

Why is that? Because I think—not because I don't think people ought to be able to hunt or go to sporting events, but because I think that all of us ought to be willing to make reasonable compromises for the safety of the society as a whole, just like we do when we walk through an airport metal detector. You know, it didn't take too many planes to be hijacked before nobody screamed anymore when they walked through an airport metal detector, "You are interfering with my constitutional right to travel."

Now, think about it. This is crazy. So look at the fight in Washington. All of them, from the candidates to the Congress, were against closing the gun show loophole. We don't do background checks at gun shows and urban flea markets where a lot of criminals buy guns, and we have the technology to do it with very minor inconvenience. We think we should do it. And I think it is unconscionable that we would run the risk that one person would lose his or her life next year because we don't do that.

We're for the employment nondiscrimination act, and we're for hate crimes legislation. And we believe that it ought to specifically mention no discrimination against people because of sexual orientation. And we're not afraid of that.

Now, why is that? Because we think all law-abiding citizens ought to be part of America's community. Now, so I ask you, when you think about what we're doing in Washington now and the politics of the next year and a half, and if people ask you why you're here—in Colorado a lot of people would say you're nuts; they'd say, "Don't you understand," if you'd go to a Republican fundraiser, "that you'd get a great tax cut right now? Why are you here?"

Tell them because the country is better off, because we changed the direction of the country, and you want America to go forward into the new century together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Dianne Feinstein's husband, Richard Blum, who cohosted the picnic; Representative Mark Udall's wife, Margaret L. Fox; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Bea; and USA Today journalist Susan Page.

Remarks on the Death of King Hassan II of Morocco and an Exchange With Reporters in Aspen

July 24, 1999

The President. Let me again offer my condolences to the family of His Majesty King Hassan of Morocco and to the people of Morocco. As all of you know, Hillary and I are going to the funeral. His Majesty was a friend of the

United States for a very long time and a friend of the Middle East peace process. He also worked very hard to reconcile the differences among the Moroccan people, within Morocco, and therefore, to set an example of the kind

of thing that all of us should be doing and certainly there should be more of in the Middle East.

He was particularly gracious to Hillary and other members of our family. And after she went to see him recently, Morocco once again manifested its friendship to the United States by standing with us on human rights issues in ways that had not been the case before.

So I feel very, very grateful that the United States had a partner and friend like King Hassan, and I considered him a personal friend. And I am grateful for the many kindnesses he extended to me and to our family. And so I'm looking forward to going to Morocco for the funeral and to seeing the new King. I talked with him on the phone; I wished him well. We had met before, and I have high hopes for our continuing successful endeavors for both his partners and for the peace process.

President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria

Q. Do you expect to meet with King Asad while you're there?

The President. With President Asad from Syria?

Q. President Asad, yes, I'm sorry.

The President. No, it's okay. I don't know yet whether he is coming; I don't know who all is coming. But I will be on the ground for a few hours, as all of you know. We'll have to stay, I think, 5 hours after the service is over, and so I'll have an opportunity to see a number of people, and I'll do what I can to make the best use of the time. And as soon as I know with whom I'll be meeting, I'll let you know. I just don't know yet.

Morocco and the Middle East Peace Process

Q. Is this part of a changing of the guard, sir, in the Middle East, between King Hussein and the elections?

The President. Well, there is some change. You know, some of it is the rhythm of politics, and some of it is the rhythm of life. King Hussein and King Hassan both had health problems and had had long and distinguished tenures. And that happens, you know. Everybody's time runs out. Mine does, too.

But I think the important thing is that Morocco has been a model of reconciliation within the country and a model of partnership and friendship for peace in the Middle East. And I think that direction will continue. That's the really important thing for me, that this change be a positive thing for the people of Morocco and for the people of the region. And I'm going to do everything I can to be a good friend to the new King and to the country.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

Michael Jordan

Q. Who told you you were Michael Jordan?

The President. One of my Republican friends was being crude. That's what I said to him. I said no one in their right mind could compare me to Michael Jordan. Well, he said, "I meant it only in the political context." [Laughter] I said, "I can't jump 4 inches. I have a vertical jump of about 4 inches."

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to King Mohammed VI, successor to King Hassan II; and former NBA Chicago Bull Michael Jordan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon in Aspen July 24, 1999

Thank you. Thank you very much. Well, first of all, I'm sorry that there's some people out there under umbrellas. I'm tempted to say, thank you very much; we're right; they're wrong; thanks for the money; go out and work hard;

goodbye. [Laughter] But what the heck. [Laughter]

I'd like to thank all the Members of Congress and the members of the administration who are here, and all the people from the DNC. I'd

like to thank the people who served our food, and I'd like to thank these young people who provided such wonderful music for us. Thank you very much.

But I would especially like to thank Mel and Bren for making the extraordinary effort, first of all, to have this event, and secondly, to change it around. And it's been perfectly beautiful. Thank you so much. I'm grateful to you.

I appreciate very much the support that so many of you have given us over the years, to me and to Hillary, to the Vice President and Tipper, to all of our administration, the chance you've given us to make this a better country. I will try to be as brief as I can here, but I want you to think about this question: What will you say tomorrow if someone asks you why you were here today? And will it be a good reason for them to join you politically? And is it something that will sustain your efforts as you talk to your friends and neighbors over the next year and a half? That's really important to me.

You know, yesterday, when Hillary and I had the privilege to go as friends and as representatives of the United States to the memorial service for John Kennedy, Jr., and Carolyn Bessette, I, like everyone, was profoundly moved by the eulogy that Senator Kennedy gave, the last sentence of which was, "Like his father, he had every gift but length of life." I say that not to be morbid, but to remind us all that life is fleeting and fragile.

When I was a boy growing up, I was obsessed with the fact that my own father had died at 29, before I was born. These things don't affect families evenly; there is no rhyme or reason to it. But they serve as a reminder to those of us who are privileged to get up for yet another day of life that there are responsibilities associated with good fortune, and the way we can honor our loved ones who aren't here and honor those who have given so much to our country whose time was cut short is to be good citizens and to be visionaries and to remember that even the oldest people on Earth last a very short time in the grand scheme of things. So it always pays to think about tomorrow.

When I ran for President, I did so because—not because I had any hostility of the kind we had become so used to in politics to the then administration. I actually like President Bush very much personally. I had a lot of friends in the administration. I often represented the

Democratic Governors in negotiations with them. I did it because I thought the ideas that were driving the policies were wrong and because there was no animating vision to get this country into the 21st century.

And I hope very much that all that we're seeing now is some indication that we are about to return to that sort of politics, that we can actually have an honest debate about whether—not whether somebody is a good or a bad person, but whether they have good or bad ideas and what the consequences will be.

But I would like to say, if someone asks you why you were here, the first thing you ought to say is that the Clinton-Gore administration came to power with certain ideas that were different from the ideas that had been put forward in the past: that Government was neither the enemy, nor the solution, but should be a partner in creating the conditions and giving people the tools empowering them to make the most of their own lives; that we had to reduce the deficit and we could do it and still increase our investment in critical areas like education; that we could grow the economy and improve the environment; that it was not necessary for people to choose between being successful as workers and being successful as parents. Those are just some of the things that we said we believed.

And what you can say is, "Hey, they came in; they put their ideas into action, and they worked. So the first reason I showed up is it worked, and it was different."

I said before, I will say again, I'm so gratified whenever someone comes up and says they think I've done a good job as President and they think I've been able to involve the American people in this; I'm grateful. But I want you to understand, I could be the greatest speaker since Cicero, and if our ideas were wrong, the country would still be in the wrong place. The most important thing is to have the right ideas, the right vision, and a good team implementing it.

I could not have done anything that I have achieved if I hadn't had Al Gore as Vice President, because he's plainly the best Vice President with the largest amount of responsibility in the history of the Republic. It is plainly not even close. And I couldn't have done it without the help of our friends in Congress. Even when we've been in the minority in Congress, as long as they stayed with me, I knew in the end we could prevail on all of the great issues. I

couldn't have done it without those of you who have helped us.

So, first say, "They had some ideas; they put them into effect; and they worked." It's not just that we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest minority unemployment in history, the highest homeownership in history. We also have a 30-year low on welfare rolls, a 26-year low in the crime rate. Teen pregnancy, teen smoking, teen drug use is down. Test scores are up in our schools for the first time in years in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades, in both reading and math, which is a big deal because every single year we have more and more of our kids whose first language is not English. So this country is moving in the right direction. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is purer than it was before. We set aside more land, protected it or preserved it, than any administration except those of the two Roosevelts. We've had a hundred—that's big in Colorado—we had over 100,000 young people serve this country through AmeriCorps, our national service program, in communities all over America, earning money to go to college. That happened in 4 years. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach 100,000. Ninety percent of our children immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time ever. We've had a more active Government, but we now have the smallest Government in terms of employment we've had since 1962, when John Kennedy was President. So we had these ideas; we put them into effect; and they worked. So I hope you will say that to people.

The second thing is I hope you will say you were here because you agree with what we should do now, because we can't just sit on our lead. The question now is, we've spent 6 years trying to get this country to work again, just trying to have it work, knowing that we could work together; that the economy could sustain growth; that we could bring the crime rate down, something a lot of people didn't believe we could do anymore; that we could get rid of the deficit. So what are we going to do now? What are we going to do?

And there are these two competing visions. I'll give you the Republican vision in the argument most favorable to them. If one of them were here, they'd say something like this: "Look, we agree with the President; we'll take the surplus that's attributable to Social Security taxes, and we won't spend it anymore. And so that

can be used to pay down the debt some. But we think we ought to give you the rest of the money because it's your money; it's your tax money; and if we leave it in Washington"—I heard this, I heard them on the floor the other day. I watched them on C-SPAN, and one of their young leaders said, "If we give them the money, they will spend it on their friends." "Their friends."

Now, that's their argument. Our argument is, we have a once-in-a-lifetime chance to deal with the long-term challenges of the country. And if we have a tax cut as big as they want, we'll never do it. We've got to deal with the aging of America, the doubling of the number of people over 65 in 30 years. And therefore, we ought to use a lot of this surplus not only to set it aside, but to pay down—to extend the life of Social Security, extend the life of Medicare, provide more preventive screenings for older people so they don't get sick in the first place, and provide for a modest prescription drug benefit, because three-quarters of the seniors in this country don't have it. And if you set aside the surplus and you do it in the right way for both Social Security and Medicare, you can then deal with another big challenge which is the long-term health of the economy, because we could make America debt-free for the first time since 1835 in just 15 years, guaranteeing long-term stability, lower interest rates, higher investment, a stronger economy—debt-free.

If I had told you in 1992, when I was running for President, "Elect me, and 6½ years later I'll come back, and we'll talk about what to do with the surplus and how to make America debt-free," you would have said, "He's a nice young man, but that's hopeless. The kid, he is clueless. He doesn't have any idea what's going on." But it is before us now, and we have to decide what we're going to do.

We also have to realize that if their tax cut passes, it will require huge cuts in education, in the environment, in biomedical research, even in national defense, which they say they support—massive cuts.

And we have a tax cut that's smaller, that helps families to save, to deal with long-term care and child care, primarily. Also helps us to build modern schools and gives people like you incentive to invest in the poorest areas of America by giving you the same tax incentives through tax credits and other mechanisms to invest in Indian reservations, the Mississippi

Delta, Appalachia, and the inner city that you have right now if you want to invest in the Caribbean, in Africa, and Latin America or Asia, which I think is very important.

So they'll say, "Well, our tax is bigger than your tax cut." You ever heard those arguments when you were a kid, you know, the sixth grade? [Laughter] "My daddy drives a bigger car than your daddy does." And if that's the argument, we don't do very well. If that's the argument, why are you here? Most of you should be over there with them.

But you know life is fleeting. This is the opportunity of a lifetime. We have never had an opportunity like this, none of us in our political lifetime. And we have these big, looming challenges: how to keep the economy going, how to deal with the aging of America, how to deal with the needs of all of our children for a world-class education. And we've got a way to deal with them now. And we have proved that if we deal with them, the economy will be stronger, and we'll all do better.

So I hope you'll say, "The second reason I'm there is they're having a big debate in Washington about what to do with this prosperity, and I agree with the Democrats. I think we ought to deal with the long-term challenges of this country."

And the final thing is, I think the real difference between us is how we define community in America. Some Republicans obviously are very harsh and negative; some are very soothing and nice, and they like to get everybody together. There are all kinds of reasons. I don't like this personal attack business, but the question is, do you believe that each and every person in this country is important to our common success, and do you believe that each and every person in this country should have a right to be treated with dignity? And how do you define that?

Is the American community all those people who say they believe in the same things, or is it all of us who are responsible citizens who are entitled to be treated in a certain way and have a certain set of opportunities? I'll just give you two or three examples where there is almost a complete difference of opinion in the modern parties today, from the left to the right in the Democratic Party and from the left to the right in the Republican Party.

Almost all of us are for the Patients' Bill of Rights. Almost all of them supported killing it in the Congress. Why? The health insurance companies say it will raise your health insurance premiums if your doctor says you need to see a specialist, and they can't stop it; if you get to go to the nearest emergency room; if you get to keep your doctor during the course of treatment even if you change your HMO provider. I think we're right and they're wrong. Even they say it only raises your insurance premiums \$2 a month. I think it's worth \$2 a month to give people the security of a decent health care system.

But all of them, from top to bottom, were against it, just about. We got a handful of votes.

I believe we ought to control—close the gun show loophole. We did the Brady bill—I remember when we did pass the Brady bill, they said, oh, this was the end of the world. They beat a bunch of our House Members in '94 over the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, and they said, oh, the hunters were going to all lose their weapons. And I remember going back to New Hampshire in '96—now, by the way, 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds have not gotten a handgun because of the Brady bill. And I remember talking to all of these hunters in New Hampshire, saying, "You beat a Congressman in '94 here because he voted for the Brady bill. And he did that because I asked him to. So if there is a single hunter here that has been inconvenienced in your hunting, I want you to vote against me, too. But if you haven't, they didn't tell you the truth, and you need to get even." Our victory margin in New Hampshire went from one to 13.

People knew they were being sold a bill of goods, once they saw it. So now we come along and say, but there are still a lot of criminals buying guns at these gun shows and urban flea markets, and let's do a background check there. And well, you would think it was the most burdensome thing that we had ever come up with. So our crowd said, "Let's do it," and their crowd said, "Let's don't."

How do you define community? What does it really mean to say, "I think it's worth a lot to keep every kid we can keep alive, a lot." You don't see—I told somebody—you never hear anybody anymore complain about going through an airport metal detector, saying, "I

really resent this; my constitutional right to travel is being infringed.” [*Laughter*] You’re laughing, but you know, there was a lot of apprehension when we started this. All you had to do was think about your plane being hijacked.

But we ought to think—we ought to support this because we should think about not just ourselves being the victims; we should think about our neighbors being the victims.

We’re in Colorado. Our hearts were broken by Columbine. I was elated by those 90 kids from Colorado who came, Republicans, Democrats, Christians, Jews, Asians, Hispanics, African-Americans—all kinds of people—90 kids from Colorado descended on the Congress last week, asking them, what in the living heck had happened to them? Had they forgotten about Columbine? Where was their gun safety legislation? It was fabulous. It was fabulous.

But what I want to say to you is, what we forget is 13 kids get gunned down in this country every day. It’s worth to us—we should go to a little trouble to try to keep more of them alive. That’s what community means to me. We should go to a little trouble to try to keep more of them alive.

So I just give you those examples. There are a lot more. The hates crime legislation—from top to bottom on their side, there’s not a handful of them who want us to pass the hates crime bill that explicitly protects gays. Well, I think we should. I think about that Matthew Shepard out in Wyoming and his fine family; I think about the friends that we all have. Haven’t we learned that we have nothing to fear from law-abiding citizens who are different from ourselves, as long as we treat them with dignity and respect, whatever their differences are, whether they’re religious or whatever? I think this is a big deal. It’s part of the way we define community.

I never will forget the first conversation I ever had about this with one of Evan’s colleagues, Senator Chuck Robb from Virginia, represents a very conservative State, President Johnson’s son-in-law. I believe he saw more combat than any Vietnam veteran in the United States Congress. Distinguished Marine combat veteran in Vietnam. He looked at me without blinking an eye, and he said, “I am for this.” And he said, “I am for anything.” He said, “I served with people who risked their life for this country, who were gay, and we ought to give

them the protections every other citizen gets.” And to me, that’s part of community.

Let me just close with this story. Some of you have heard this before, but I was on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota recently, with the chairman of the Oglala Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse. And the new chairman’s name is Harold Salway. He was in the White House with 19 of the tribal chieftains from the high plains to talk about their terrible economic and social problems, which are a stain on this country, I might add, that we have to do something about.

And at the end of the meeting—Lynn Cutler is smiling; she was there, and she’s heard me tell the story—there was not a dry eye in the place and no one could breathe when Harold Salway stood up, and he said, “Before we go, I want to tell you that we are for your position in Kosovo.” Keep in mind, these people represent the poorest Indians in America; they come to see me; they tell me they want to say, we’re for your position in Kosovo. And he said, “You see, we know a little about ethnic cleansing.” He said, “My great-grandfather was killed at Wounded Knee.” But he said, “This is America. I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy; one was the first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the U.S. military. And here today their nephew is with the President of the United States.” He said, “I only have one son. He means more to me than anything. But I would be proud to have him wear the uniform of my country to fight against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.”

Community. Why do we fight for peace in the Middle East? Why do we work for it in Northern Ireland? Why do we ask people to stop* killing each other in Africa? Why do we try to get the American people to look at the interdependent nature of the world? Why do all of you who are quite comfortable believe that these young people who have served us today ought to all be able to go to college, so we ought to raise the minimum wage periodically to make sure people who work are not in poverty? We honestly believe that it is not only the right thing to do, but that we are better off when others are.

Senator Kennedy yesterday carried a great burden, as he has for more than 30 years now. I’d like to close with a reminder of something

*White House correction.

he said when his brother was killed in 1968, and once before he had to give a eulogy that the world listened to. And at the end of it he said that he and his family hoped that what his brother wished for others and what he was to them would someday come to pass for all the world.

That is the dream that animates us. Tomorrow, if they ask you why you were here, give them a good answer.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:13 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Melvin and Bren Simon; murder victim Matthew Shepard; and Senator Evan Bayh.

Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Rabat, Morocco

July 25, 1999

Thank you very much. First, thank you for your warm welcome. To those of you who brought the children here today, thank you, especially for bringing them. I would like to thank Congressman Gilman and Congressman Martin Frost, who is with him from Texas, for joining us. I thank Secretary Christopher and Secretary Baker for dropping everything at a moment's notice to make this trip, to manifest their respect for King Hassan and the friendship between the United States and Morocco.

I'd like to say a special word of thanks to President Bush, who came here, again, on a moment's notice and had to leave early because he now has to go down to Casablanca to take a plane to Belgium to meet another appointment. But I'm very grateful to him for making this trip.

I'd like to thank all the people from the State Department and the National Security Council, represented by Mr. Berger up here, for putting this trip together in a hurry. And Ambassador Gabriel, thank you and Kathleen and the other members of our Embassy community for making us so welcome.

I'd also like to say that the First Lady would very much like to be here to thank you for making her trips to Morocco so successful. And Chelsea is here, and Hillary's mother is here, who, as I'm sure you know, has been here at least twice, maybe more, since I've been here. I think she's thinking of moving to Morocco. [Laughter]

We are all profoundly grateful for the friendship between Morocco and the United States and for the personal kindness and friendship that His Majesty, King Hassan, displayed to me,

to my family, to many of us on this podium, and to President Bush and to so many others over the years. So this is an important day for us. And Hillary would be here, but she and Chelsea and my mother-in-law have gone to visit with the mother and the sisters of the new King, and that is why they are not here. But they asked me to give you their best and to thank you.

Now, let me say, especially to the Moroccans who work for the American Embassy here, I know this is a difficult day for many of you. King Hassan was the only King most Moroccans ever knew, and I hope it is some measure of comfort to the people of this nation that, among the throngs, the millions of his fellow citizens who came out to honor his passing today, were leaders from every part of the world, from every political and religious background, united in their support for Morocco and their respect for the life that he lived.

King Hassan knew every American President since John Kennedy. He, himself, endured great turbulence and personal risk. The thing that always impressed me about him is he was never embittered by the dangers that he faced and, over time, he grew in wisdom, stature, and standing in the world; and as he grew, so did Morocco. I'm told he was known as the great survivor and, of course, we all know those survivor stories. We had another laugh about them on the plane over and shook our head in amazement.

But I think that, in effect, to call King Hassan a survivor is not to do justice to him. Because when we think of a survivor, we think about someone who is very clever, all right, but just—

just enough to escape the slings and arrows that fortune places in our path, just enough to survive, and His Majesty King Hassan did more than that. I think of him instead as a pathfinder, a leader who survived, yes, but who survived to expand the possibilities of the Moroccan people and all the people of this region.

He showed it is possible to be commander of the faithful and a champion of tolerance and a bridge between faiths. He showed it is possible to represent continuity and stability and to build the society that is more and more democratic and open—open to competing ideas and other people. He showed it is possible to promote Islam's holy sites in Jerusalem and to reach out to Israel and the dream of peace, dignity, and security for all God's children in this region. He was a leader of the Arab world and a friend of America.

With our modern world still so bedeviled by ancient animosities of race and religion, King Hassan believed that there is no inevitable clash of civilizations but, instead, a clash between those brave enough to seek a future of peace, prosperity, and harmony and those who fear it. He was brave enough to seek that kind of world. He belonged to a generation of brave leaders—King Hussein of Jordan, Yitzhak Rabin of Israel, Sheik Isa of Bahrain—a generation that brought this region to the turning point we now face. The opportunity for lasting peace is now at hand.

I met with your new King this afternoon. I spoke with him also shortly after I learned that his father had passed away. I have confidence in him. We spoke about the challenges

ahead. We spoke about my family's gratitude for all the trips that they have taken to Morocco and the kindnesses that His Majesty extended to them. King Hassan made her feel not only at home but a part of his family, and I told King Mohammed that now we would be proud to have him feel a part of our family.

The people of Morocco should know they are in the thoughts and prayers of the American people today, and that our partnership can only grow stronger. You know, sometimes we come together to mourn the death of a friend and we are heavy with sorrow because we think about what might have been. Today we pay tribute to the long life of a wise King and a good man. And we think about what still might be because of the life he lived. We are grateful for that life, and we pray for the future that he worked for. We pray for the future partnership and peace of the peoples of this region; and we hope our prayers will be answered, for we remember the words of the prophet that rewards for prayers by people assembled are twice those said at home.

Thank you for assembling for our country every day. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. in the Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretaries of State Warren M. Christopher and James A. Baker III; former President George Bush; Ambassador Edward M. Gabriel and his wife, Kathleen; the First Lady's mother, Dorothy Rodham; and King Mohammed VI, successor to King Hassan II.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Actions Concerning Digital Computer Exports *July 23, 1999*

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105-85) (the "Act"), I hereby notify you of my decision to establish a new level for the notification procedure for digital computers set forth in section 1211(a) of the Act. The new level will be 6,500 millions of theoretical operations per second

(MTOPS). I have taken this action based on the recommendation of the Departments of Defense, Commerce, State, and Energy. The attached report provides the rationale supporting this decision and fulfills the requirements of section 1211(d) of the Act.

Section 1211(d) provides that any adjustment to the control level described in section 1211(a) cannot take effect until 180 days after receipt

of this report by the Congress. Section 1211(e) provides that any deletion of a country from the Tier 3 group cannot take effect until 120 days after the Congress is notified. Given the rapid pace of technological change in the information technology industry, these time periods are too lengthy. I hope that we can work together to reduce both notification periods to 30 days. Such changes will permit implementation of my current decision and future changes in a more timely fashion.

I have directed the Secretary of Commerce to adjust the level at which an individual license is required for computer exports to Tier 3 countries. For sales to military entities, the level will be raised from 2,000 MTOPS to 6,500 MTOPS. For sales to civilian end users, the new level will be raised from 7,000 MTOPS to 12,300 MTOPS. The Secretaries of Commerce and Defense will review these levels, as well as the level described in section 1211(a), in 6 months to determine whether further adjustments will be necessary at that time. They will conduct additional such reviews at regular 6-month periods thereafter.

Such action will complement other actions that I am taking with respect to the export and reexport of computers. I have directed the Secretary of Commerce to adjust the level at which an individual license is required for computer exports to Tier 2 countries from 10,000 MTOPS to 20,000 MTOPS. I have also asked the Secretaries of Commerce and Defense to assess whether further adjustments to 32,000–36,000 MTOPS will be required in 6 months. They will conduct additional reviews at 6-month intervals thereafter. Additionally, I have directed the Secretary of Commerce to move the Czech Re-

public, Hungary, Poland, and Brazil from Tier 2 to Tier 1. It is likely that additional countries will be moved from Tier 2 to Tier 1 in the coming months.

All these adjustments will take place immediately, with the exception of the change to the individual licensing level for military end users in Tier 3, which will coincide with the change for the notification provisions of section 1211(a) of the Act. Both these changes will become effective at the end of the 180-day notification period, unless the Congress provides for a shorter period.

I also want to inform you of my support for section 1407(c) of S. 1059, or similar legislative language that would permit me to adjust the level of computer exports above which the Department of Commerce is required to perform post-shipment verifications in Tier 3 countries. Failure to adjust this level will result in the expenditure of scarce enforcement resources for questionable benefits to our shared national security concerns.

I look forward to working cooperatively with the Congress on these issues.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John W. Warner, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Phil Gramm, chairman, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 26.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Efforts To Achieve a Sustainable Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina

July 23, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 7 of Public Law 105–174, the 1998 Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Act, I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on progress made toward achieving benchmarks for a sustainable peace process.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

July 23, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 26.

Statement on the Ninth Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act July 26, 1999

Today I join citizens across the country in celebrating the ninth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In the past, many Americans have presumed that disability meant a life of dependence. Now, we recognize that people with disabilities want to, and can lead independent lives and contribute to our Nation's prosperity. Throughout our administration, Vice President Gore and I have endeavored to empower individuals with the tools they need to bring their tremendous energy and talent to the American work force.

My Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities is building on the foundation of the ADA by developing a coordinated and active employment agenda for people with disabilities. We have taken strong action to promote the employment of individuals with disabilities, including implementing new regulations that increase the amount of income that over 250,000 Americans with disabilities can earn while still receiving critical cash and medical benefits, instituting new steps to remove Federal hiring barriers for people with mental illness, and directing the Office of Personnel Management to develop a plan for Federal hiring of people with disabilities. And under the leadership of Tipper Gore, we are beginning to ad-

dress the stigma and discrimination confronted by people with psychiatric disabilities.

I am proud of the actions that this administration has taken to fully integrate Americans with disabilities into the workplace. It is now time for Congress to act. In my State of the Union, I challenged the Congress to pass the bipartisan work incentives improvement act, sponsored by Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan, which would improve job opportunities for people with disabilities by increasing access to health care and employment services. It was my hope that I could have signed this legislation into law today, but the House has not yet acted on it. I remain committed to enacting this legislation in this Congress.

We should also work together across party lines to enact a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, provide new tax options to assist individuals with disabilities with their work-related expenses, and double the available funding for assistive technologies that will facilitate employment. We must make this a season of progress, not a season of partisanship. We can achieve this end by passing all three of these critically important initiatives. There would be no better way to celebrate the ninth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Statement on Vietnam-United States Relations July 26, 1999

I am pleased that the Office of the United States Trade Representative and the Vietnamese Trade Ministry reached an understanding in principle on the terms of a broad commercial agreement between the United States and Vietnam. This provisional arrangement is a major step forward for both countries, and I congratulate our American negotiators and those of Vietnam on their work. I will review the agreement carefully and consult further with the Congress and the Government of Vietnam in the hope that we will be able to move on to finalization, formal signature, and the establishment of normal trade relations very soon.

In addition to promoting American commercial interests, enhancing our economic relations with Vietnam will also help advance cooperation with Vietnam on other issues of importance to our Nation. These include obtaining the fullest possible accounting of our missing from the war, encouraging continued progress in the freedom of emigration, and seeking improvements in the human rights situation in Vietnam. Since the United States normalized relations with Vietnam in 1995, we have made steady progress in each of those areas. A bilateral trade agreement with Vietnam constitutes one more positive step in that process.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Transportation Department Reports July 26, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the 1996 calendar year reports as prepared by the Department of Transportation on activities under the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, the Highway Safety Act, and the Motor Vehicle

Information and Cost Savings Act of 1972, as amended.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 26, 1999.

Interview With Mike Cuthbert of “Prime Time Radio” in Lansing, Michigan July 22, 1999

Mr. Cuthbert. Hi. I’m Mike Cuthbert in Lansing, Michigan; welcome back to “Prime Time Radio.” As we promised you, we’ll present full and indepth discussion of the proposed changes in our health care system, with particular focus on Medicare, as the year 2000 campaign begins. But the discussion of Medicare has not waited for the campaign to start, as you know.

With us here in Lansing, Michigan, is President Clinton, who just finished having a discussion with folks from Michigan on Medicare. Mr. President, welcome to “Prime Time Radio.”

The President. Thank you. I’m glad to be here.

Health Care Reform and Medicare

Mr. Cuthbert. Back in 1992, in a long discussion about health care reform, you stopped the proceedings and you said, very firmly, “Without wholesale health care reform, we have no hope of a stabilized, long-term economic recovery.” The economic recovery has been long, but health care reform didn’t happen. How does that impact on the Medicare plans?

The President. Well, the one thing that I didn’t believe that has happened that was good is that we had—I didn’t believe that we could get health care inflation down to the general rate of inflation without moving to universal coverage. And I think what happened was we got all the benefits of managed care in the early years—and we were very fortunate to do so—but now we’re also living with the burdens, as you hear all the horror stories that prompted me to push the Patients’ Bill of Rights.

So I think where we are now is—where I am, at least, is I’m trying to extend health insurance coverage to discrete groups that don’t have it, to try to improve the way the system works and do more preventive care, and try to modernize and stabilize the Medicare program. For example, we, 2 years ago, provided for funds to cover 5 million children who don’t have health insurance. In this Medicare reform package, we have a proposal to allow people between the ages of 55 and 65 who don’t have insurance to buy into Medicare.

But the most important thing we can do now is to stabilize Medicare financially by putting some more cash into it over the next 10 years, by adopting the most modern practices, and by providing more preventive services free, like testing and screenings for osteoporosis and cancer and other things, and adding a prescription drug benefit that we can afford.

So I think that this will be a very good, balanced package. It’s completely voluntary. It gives seniors another choice on Medicare. But the most important thing is it stabilizes Medicare for 27 years, and that’s very, very important, because all the baby boomers start retiring in—well, they’ll start retiring sooner, but the baby boomers start turning 65 in 2011. The oldest baby boomers are already in the AARP. That seems impossible to me, but there it is. [*Laughter*]

So to me, it’s very, very important that we not spend too much of this surplus on a tax cut before we do the first things first, before we stabilize Social Security, stabilize Medicare

and reform it. And incidentally, my proposal, if it's adopted as I sent it to Congress, would also make America debt-free in 15 years, for the first time in 160 years. So that would be a good thing to do, as well.

Link Between Medicare, Social Security, and Education

Mr. Cuthbert. One thing I noticed you have done since this focus began—and you did it again here in Lansing—was you always mention Medicare and Social Security and you never fail to mention education. This program talks a lot about “sandwich generation” issues. What do you see, and what should the American people see, as the importance of that link between Medicare, Social Security, and education, which seem to me to be appealing to two different audiences?

The President. Well, I think that they tie families together, and they tie the future together. For example, younger people should care a lot about stabilizing Social Security and Medicare, not just for themselves but so that they will not be financially burdened by their parents' aging. The number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years—double. People over 80 are the fastest growing group of Americans.

So if you're going to be—in 10 years from now, if you're going to be 45 years old and have kids going to college, you ought to be interested in this because you ought to want our programs to be strong so that your parents can support themselves with their own retirement from the Social Security, and you'll be free to raise your parents' grandchildren. So it is an intergenerational thing.

If you look at the education issue, the ability of America to sustain our economic dominance long term will rest increasingly on the ability of America to educate all American kids to world-class standards so they can occupy tomorrow's with jobs. And so the older people have a big vested interest in education, apart from generally caring about how their grandchildren are going to do in the world, because it will stabilize and strengthen America. And we should look at America as a whole. We ought to—we've got to deal with the aging of America; we've got to deal with the challenges to the children of America; and we've got to make sure we can keep the economy going. If you do those three things, I think we'll solve a lot of the other problems just on our own.

Budget Surplus

Mr. Cuthbert. Critics of the surplus debate have said that nobody can guarantee the economic growth that is at the bottom of your plan. It seems to me—and I wish you to comment on this—that that may be the most important part of that education you're talking about, that without that education, that economic growth underlying this whole thing and the surplus isn't possible.

The President. Absolutely. Let me say though, to people who say that you can't be absolutely certain the surplus will be there as projected for 10 years or 20 years, to me that's an even stronger argument not to go out and give it away before it materializes with a big tax cut. At least if you adopt my plan, you know that we're going to be saving the lion's share of it for Social Security and Medicare and paying the debt down. So if it doesn't all materialize, at least you're going to be making headway.

But I should say a little something about economic forecasting, because it relates to what you said about education. When we say the surplus will be such and such over 10 years, based on the economists' forecasts, it doesn't mean that we think every year will always be better than the next and there will never be a recession or never be an economic slowdown. What these economists do is they factor the patterns of economic performance over a long period of time and they say, “If you assume the average number of downturns and the average number of upturns and the economy performs as it has been performing for the last 10 to 20 years, then this is what the surplus will be.”

In other words, we have eliminated the so-called structural deficit. We never really had a big permanent deficit in America until 1981, you know, in peacetime, just a permanent deficit. And we quadrupled the debt in 12 years. We have gotten rid of that. So now if we had—God forbid—a big downturn next year or the year after next, we might even run a little deficit because there would be fewer people working and more people getting tax money. But over the 10 year period, the surplus estimate is almost certainly right.

Nursing Homes

Mr. Cuthbert. Can we turn for a moment to nursing homes? They've been running ads recently in major papers across the country

about the effects of the Balanced Budget Act amendment cuts, some \$2.6 billion. My mother is in a nursing home, and I can see the effects on her—less exercise periods, more difficulty getting service, more turnover in staff. How would your Medicare reforms and stabilization affect that problem, which appears to be growing?

The President. Let me, first of all, describe what the problem was. When we passed the Balanced Budget Act, we agreed with the Republicans, we would try to achieve a certain level of savings in the Medicare program, which funds nursing homes and hospitals and home health and all that. We then produced, from our health care experts who deal with all the providers, the list of changes we thought were necessary to achieve that level of savings. The congressional budget people said they thought it would require more changes than that. So under the law, we had to do it. They didn't do this on purpose. What happened was they cut more than was necessary; they realized much bigger savings than they estimated. To that extent, our surplus is larger than it otherwise would be.

And we believe that it is mostly because we did too much that some of our nursing homes and hospitals and other programs are in trouble. And what I have done in extending, in taking the savings of the Balanced Budget Act for '97 out another 10 years, we have taken out of that some of the things we put in last time. And we have also set aside a fund of \$7.5 billion that can be allocated by Congress to the hospitals and the nursing homes that have been particularly disadvantaged by this, to try to alleviate this quite difficult financial situation a lot of them found themselves in.

Prescription Drug Coverage

Mr. Cuthbert. Much of the discussion here in Lansing concerned the prescription program that so featured part of your Medicare stabilization program. I have not, in all my reading and listening, been able to discern too much opposition to that. Have you?

The President. Well, I think there's opposition. The only opposition I'm aware of now is there are some in the Congress who are opposed to it, who say that—mostly the Republicans who want to use the money for the tax cut—they basically say, "Well, two-thirds of our seniors already have drug coverage." But as I

pointed out today—we produced our report today—only about 24 percent have really good private sector drug coverage related to their former employment. The other coverage—either they don't have coverage at all, a third of them don't have any coverage; and the rest of them have coverage that's too expensive and too unreliable and is shrinking every year. Some of them have coverage that has \$1,000 ceiling. And the most rapidly growing drug coverage has a \$500 ceiling. Well, for people with drug problems, you know, if they have \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000 worth of bills every year, that's not much coverage.

So we think that—this is a purely voluntary program, but we think that people ought to have another choice. They ought to have the option to have more adequate drug coverage at a considerably lower price than you get in the Medigap policy. Medigap is just too expensive. And it also goes up as people get older. And the older you get, the less able you are to pay, normally, and the higher the premium is. So I feel that this is quite a good thing to do.

Mr. Cuthbert. Speak to the fears of the people who say, "If this prescription drug program comes in, my company will cut drug prescription benefits."

The President. Well, we were concerned about that, because the 24 percent that have this drug coverage already, some of them actually have programs that are more generous than the one we're offering, and we don't want to mess that up. So we have offered, as a part of this program, quite generous subsidies to employers to continue such programs. And I think, actually, it might be that more employers will be willing to provide this coverage.

What's happening now is these employers are dropping this coverage like crazy right now; they're dropping it anyway. And so what we want to do is to give incentives for them to keep it, and then to add it back if they've dropped it. This will not aggravate this problem; this will make that problem better. However bad or good it is, it'll be better after this because it's totally voluntary. But the employers will have no financial incentives to drop it and put their people on the Medicare program because they're going to get direct subsidies from Medicare to keep what they've got.

President's Future

Mr. Cuthbert. As we'll hear in just a moment, we're going to hear from some of the folks who were at this meeting in Lansing, the people from the audience and their stories. As you said in the presentation, those who criticize stories as ineffective don't know America. We are a collection of stories.

It seemed to me that since this is your last year in the Presidency—and, as you say, you're not running for anything—President Carter had the Habitat for Humanity; what are the chances that President Bill Clinton, after he's President, will focus on health care reform and health care issues as your next job?

The President. Well, I think it's one of the things that I will do. I've tried to bring this country together politically, economically, socially, across racial and religious lines. And one of the things that I expect I will be doing is to use the center that I will establish at my library to try to find ways to close the gaps in the fabric of our American community, including the health care gaps. You know, I care a lot about it.

But I think it's very important that we recognize we can do a huge amount in the one year and 5 months I have left. It would be a big mistake for us to all check out here—or a year and 6 months we've got left.

Mr. Cuthbert. You don't seem to be checking out.

The President. No, I think we ought to bear down. I tell my friends in the Congress all the time, I say, you know, we still get a check every 2 weeks. People are paying us. We need to

show up for work. There will be an election, and time will take care of all the rest of this, and then we'll all go on about our business and do other things.

But it's funny, sometimes the pressure of an election—a lot of people have forgotten this, but in 1996 we passed welfare reform with overwhelming bipartisan majorities in both Houses; we passed an increase in the minimum wage; we did two or three other big things in '96. In '98, at the very end of the 11th hour, we passed a budget that provided for a downpayment on 100,000 teachers to take class size down to 18 in the first 3 grades. And we've already funded almost a third of them. I mean, this was a huge deal. So if we all just stay in harness here and focus and show up for work everyday, good things can happen.

Mr. Cuthbert. You said here in Lansing that you want the debate to be harmonious; you want it to be civil; you want it to be intelligent; and we hope it will remain this way on this program.

We thank you for contributing to that atmosphere and the information and inspiration you've given us today. Thank you very much for being on "Prime Time."

The President. Thank you very much. I'm delighted to be here. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 2:20 p.m. in Room 252 of the Dart Auditorium at Lansing Community College for later broadcast. "Prime Time Radio" is a production of the American Association of Retired Persons. The interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 27.

Remarks on Medicare Benefits for Women

July 27, 1999

Thank you. She was great, wasn't she? Let's give her a hand. *[Applause]* Well, I must say that Judith did such a good job, there's hardly anything left to say. *[Laughter]* Thank you very much for being here, and we welcome your daughter here.

I want to thank Secretary Shalala and acknowledge the presence in the audience of Deborah Briceland-Betts, the executive director of the Older Women's League; the people here

from the Henry Kaiser Family Foundation; and the other representatives of women's groups, senior women's groups, and Medicare advocates. Hillary and Secretary Shalala and I are delighted to welcome you to the White House today, and we thank you for your interest in this critical issue.

We are here to discuss what I have repeatedly called a high-class problem. The American people are living longer, especially women. And it

is a high-class problem because we have this surplus today, and a projected surplus for several years into the future, which will enable us to deal with the challenge of people living longer and spending more money on Medicare, and then the retirement of the baby boomers, which will put additional pressure on Medicare and on Social Security. It is a high-class problem, but we don't want it to turn into a nightmare because we walked away from it when we could have dealt with it, and we had the money to deal with it—when we had the time to deal with it, and we know good and well we ought to deal with it.

So, again I say I thank you for being here, and I hope today we can get out some information which will persuade the American people and Members of the Congress that the approach I have recommended for the future is the right one.

For 34 years now, Medicare has protected the health of our seniors; it has enriched the lives of the disabled; it has eased the financial burdens on families as they cared for their loved ones. For millions of American women, in particular, Medicare has been the lifeline to a dignified retirement.

As the report released today by the Older Women's League so clearly tell us, a strong and modern Medicare system is absolutely vital to the health and future of America's women. First, it is critical because the majority of beneficiaries, quite simply, are women. Listen to this: 20 of the 34 million Americans currently enrolled in Medicare are women. I think we've got a chart that says that. But look here, 41 million—41 percent of the people in this country on Medicare over 65 are men; 59 percent are women. And, of course, as time goes on, the percentages get better or worse, depending on your perspective. [Laughter] Twenty-nine percent of the people over 85 are men; 71 percent are women. Seventeen percent of people over 100 are men; 83 percent are women. You may think those numbers are insubstantial, but Americans over 80 are the fastest growing population group in the United States, and I'm sure that most of us hope to be among them some day. So this is very important.

Second, without Medicare the doors to hospitals and doctors' offices, to basic medical treatment and good health would actually be closed to millions of older women. Throughout their lives, women's incomes have always lagged be-

hind those of men, a gap underscored in retirement through smaller pensions and Social Security checks. So even as they must make ends meet on smaller incomes, women must meet greater health care needs. Nearly three-fourths of older women have two or more chronic illnesses, compared to just 65 percent of older men. For these women, Medicare has truly meant the difference between a healthy retirement and one clouded by uncertainty, untreated illness, and poverty.

Now, as you have just heard, the clock is ticking on Medicare's ability to meet the needs of our seniors in the next century—people living longer than ever, the retirement of the baby boom approaching, the Medicare Trust Fund will become insolvent by 2015. Now, you may think that's a good ways away, but let me tell you, when I took office, Medicare was supposed to become insolvent this year. And we took a lot of very strong steps to stop it from happening.

But we have taken all the easy steps, and some that, arguably, have gone too far. Everywhere I go, people say, you know, the therapy services have been cut back too much, or the inner-city hospitals with big teaching loads or the teaching hospitals generally—not just in the big urban centers—everywhere I go, people talk to me about this. So it should be obvious to everyone there are no longer any easy ways to lengthen the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, just as people are living longer and accessing it more. So that is problem one.

Problem two is that Medicare's benefits have not changed significantly since 1965, although the world of modern medicine has changed dramatically. There are some who really believe we can afford to put off this until later. I disagree. To them I say, listen to Judith Cato's story. Like millions of women in the same situation, affording prescription drugs for herself is right around the corner, and for her mother is today. The typical 65-year-old woman retiring this year can expect to live to be 84. That's 19 more years of retirement. But if we don't act soon, the Medicare Trust Fund will expire in 16 years.

Over the past 6½ years, we have managed to transform an economy burdened by an unconscionable deficit of \$290 billion to an economy that today is the picture of fiscal health, with a surplus of \$99 billion and a large projected surplus over the next decade. We've done

this by balancing the budget, cutting unnecessary spending, expanding our investments in education and training, expanding our trade abroad—all of it bringing interest rates down and getting investment up and giving us a remarkable period of economic growth, the longest peacetime expansion in our history, nearly 19 million new jobs and the lowest minority unemployment and the highest homeownership ever recorded.

The question is, what are we going to do with this? We know what one plan is. You have talked about it. The majority in Congress say, “Well, let’s approve a big tax cut now and worry about Medicare and extending the life of the Social Security Trust Fund scheduled to run out of money in a little more than 30 years, let’s worry about that later.” One of my bright staff members said, “It’s kind of like a family sitting around the kitchen table saying, ‘You know, we have always wanted to plan a really fancy vacation to Europe. Let’s just do it and blow the works, and when we get home, we’ll figure out whether we can pay the mortgage, the car payment, and send the kids to college.’” [Laughter] You’re laughing, but you know, it’s not just a question of the size of the tax cut.

Why are we even discussing it before we decide what it takes to save and strengthen Medicare, what it takes to save Social Security, and what we have to invest in the education of our children, the defense of our Nation, the protection of our environment? Why don’t we ask ourselves what it is we have to do before we ask ourselves what it is we would like to do?

So what do I think we have to do? Here’s what I think we should do. I think, first of all, my plan would secure Medicare by dedicating over \$320 billion of our budget surplus for 10 years, to extend the life of the Trust Fund from 2015 to 2027; that would be the longest projected life we’ve had on a Trust Fund in many years. But we have not been this financially healthy in many years, nor have we faced the challenge of so many people retiring and living so long ever before. So we need to know it’s going to be all right for a good while.

Secondly, we will introduce more modern mechanisms of competition to improve quality but to control costs as well as we can, as private sector innovations have done. We will give seniors the chance to choose between lower cost Medicare managed care plans and the traditional program, but we will not support changes that

would force them to move from one to the other.

I also believe it’s important to modernize benefits, and over the long run, the economical thing to do. Over the last 30 years, a medical revolution has transformed health care, and in many cases, prescription drugs now supplant what used to be routinely dealt with with surgeries. They have lengthened and improved the quality of life.

As the Older Women’s League study shows, women have borne the greatest cost of this pharmaceutical revolution. According to the next chart, women spend \$1,200 a year on prescription drugs, on average, about 20 percent more than men. Now, as you have already heard, our plan will help seniors to afford the prescription drugs that have become essential to modern medicine. The plan is completely voluntary but available to all Medicare beneficiaries. This is a challenge, I might add, not just for poor women. It is also a challenge for middle class women as well.

Look at the next chart. Half of all middle class women—that is, for seniors, those who make at least \$12,700 a year or, with couples, \$17,000 a year—have no prescription drug coverage at all. So among those who have no coverage, a quarter are below the poverty line, a quarter are between 100 and 150 percent of poverty, half are over 150 percent of the poverty line; although, if your drug bills are big enough, it doesn’t take long to get down below the poverty line again.

Women who have tried to buy extra coverage through private Medigap policies have to cope with escalating premiums as they get older. That’s one of the great ironies of these Medigap policies that I keep hearing about, you know, we don’t really need this because of Medigap. They get more and more and more expensive as you get older and older and older and less and less and less able to come up with the money to pay for them.

Now, I think anybody that says we don’t need to do this is out of touch with people’s real lives and out of date. I’d also like to point out that our plan would eliminate the last barrier between seniors and preventive screenings—tests for breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis—that can help save their lives. For too many seniors on fixed incomes, especially low income women, the cost of the modest copayment is prohibitive.

Last year for example—listen to this—just one in seven women took advantage of the mammograms covered by Medicare.

So what we want to do is to eliminate the deductible and the copayments for the preventive screenings, and we pay for it by introducing a modest copay on lab tests that are frequently overused, ones that have been identified, and by indexing to inflation the modest part B premium, which will be much less burdensome because it's more broadly spread in a smaller amount of money. But the people who need these preventive screenings, this will save lives.

Consider the irony of this. Every condition I just outlined, we pay for the doctor benefits, we pay for the hospital benefits, but we don't want to let people get the preventive screenings that will keep them from spending that money in the first place to keep them healthy and keep them alive. This is a good thing to do.

Now, this is a good plan. It is a responsible plan. And it is important that we deal with the Medicare challenge now, while we have the funds and the prosperity to do so. I have proposed to dedicate the Social Security portion of the surplus to Social Security, but also to lengthen the life of the Trust Fund by taking the interest savings we'll have, because this will allow us to pay the debt down, and putting it into the Social Security Trust Fund, so it will last longer. So we'll have at least over 50 years of life on the Social Security Trust Fund.

And as I said, I proposed to put over \$320 million in Medicare. There's not a single expert on this program who believes that we can stabilize the fund and lengthen the life of it and deal with the coming demographic challenges without more money. No one who has looked into this believes it. And I think this is very, very important, because if the tax cut being pushed by the congressional majority, which includes vast benefits for people in my income group and higher—who have done quite well in the stock market, thank you very much—[laughter]—and are not clamoring for it, and are worried that it will destabilize the economy—even today, there are stories in the paper that if we have a big tax cut, with the economy growing as fast as it is, it might stimulate inflation, which would cause increases in interest rates, which would take away all the economic benefits of the tax cuts in higher interest rates.

So I say to you, I do not believe that is the wise thing to do. I think first we should

say, let's save Social Security and Medicare; let's add this responsible prescription drug benefit; let's decide the commitments that we ought to make—to give our children good education, to keep our streets safe, to biomedical research, to national defense, to the environment—and then let's decide what we can afford in a tax cut. Let's do first things first.

In addition, another benefit of my plan, not present in any other one, is that if my proposal were to pass the Congress, in about 15 years we would actually be out of debt as a nation, for the first time since 1835.

Now, the significance of that for older Americans is quite important. Why? Because if we are out of debt, it means we will have long-term prosperity; lower interest rates, which means lower costs for business borrowing, more investment, more jobs, higher incomes; and for families, lower home mortgages, car payments, credit card payments, and college loan payments. That amounts to a very big tax cut over 10 or 15 years, getting this country out of debt, making us less vulnerable to the vagaries of the international financial system, securing the long-term economic stability for the young people here in the audience and throughout our country.

Believe it or not, we can do all that and still have a fairly sizable tax cut. I propose to let people use it for retirement savings, for long-term care, for child care. But the point I want to make today is not so much what we spend it on but how much it can be, and in what order we are doing this. We did not get to this moment of prosperity by figuring out how to eat our cake, and then looking around for the vegetables. [Laughter] That's not how we got here. We got here—and a lot of Members of Congress lost their jobs over it—because we took the tough decisions in 1993 to get the deficit down, to bring interest rates down, and to do it without having to give up on our obligations to education and to our other important national priorities.

So here we are with this opportunity of a lifetime to deal with this, and I think we ought to do it. Now, I regret that, as all of you know, the congressional majority appears to have a different philosophy. Look what happened. Last week, in the House of Representatives, they passed an irresponsible tax bill that would spend our surplus; it wouldn't devote a dime—not a dime—not one dime to extending the solvency

of Medicare. And interestingly enough, these tax cuts are worded so that they won't go into full effect until the year 2010, just when the baby boomers start to retire. And in the second 10 years, they'll cost way over twice as much as they did in the first 10 years. So the whole impact of them will hit us right between the eyes as the baby boomers retire, Medicare nears insolvency, Social Security starts to show strains.

This week the Senate is going to take up a similar bill. They also, I might say, as all the analysis done—I don't know if you've had—I don't want to take time today to do this, but if you haven't seen the analysis of the bills, you ought to, because they're standing up there saying, "If we don't give this money back to you, 'they'"—i.e., me and my allies in Congress—"will spend it on 'their' friends."

Well, Judith is my friend. [Laughter] It sounds so great: "We want to give it back to you; they're going to spend it on their friends." We want to spend it on saving Social Security and Medicare, educating our children, paying down the national debt, and getting us out of debt, to help our friends, the American people.

They tickle me, you know, these guys. They were fighting the Patients' Bill of Rights several days ago, and they said, "Oh, these Democrats, all they do is stand up and tell stories; we're talking about something besides stories." Well, I don't know about you, but the older I get, the more it seems to me like life is just a collection of stories. [Laughter] And people are pretty important, a lot more important than statistics.

And I'm telling you, I've been at this business a long time. This country may never have an opportunity like this. And they're spending it on their friends. [Laughter] And, ironically, their friends are better off under our plan because the stock market has more than tripled. Their friends have done very well under our plan. We have had an economic policy that has been nondiscriminatory, benefiting Republicans and Democrats alike. [Laughter]

Look, today I want you to read the papers today. They point out that the Congress, the majority, has begun resorting now to accounting gimmicks, because they've approved such a big tax cut, they can't meet the fundamental obligations of Government without beginning, right now, to spend the surplus. And they don't want to acknowledge that, so they've resorted to accounting gimmicks to disguise the fact that they're dipping into the surplus. They can't live

within the budget limits we set in 1997. I told you, we all know we cut Medicare too much in '97; we're going to have to fix it. A lot of you know it. A lot of you deal with these programs and these health care providers. But they want to give the illusion they're living within the budget limits, nothing has to be done, and they can have this tax cut. I'm telling you what's going to happen. If this tax cut were to become law, it would mean huge cuts in education, huge cuts in the environment, huge cuts in medical research, huge cuts in health care, and huge cuts in national defense. Or if they didn't do that, we would see balloon in the deficit again, just like we did in the 12 years before I took office, when the national debt quadrupled. We tried it that way; it didn't work very well.

Why are we going down the same road we tried before, when we have a road that we have tried for 6½ years that has brought us to this point? Why would we reverse course instead of building on what we've done and going beyond it? It is a big mistake, and it's wrong. It's not just wrong for the seniors; it's not just wrong for the women of this country; it's wrong for all Americans. It is not the right thing to do.

Now, it also—it will take away the single best opportunity any of us will ever have in our lifetimes to save Social Security for the baby boomers, to save and strengthen Medicare, and to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835, to give the young people in this room a chance at a generation of prosperity. And I don't believe any thinking person, once they understand what the real numbers are—let's get out of the rhetoric here, who's going to give it to whose friends and all that. What are the numbers? This is an arithmetic problem.

You know, I told people when I got elected President, I'd come from a State with fairly straightforward values and ways of doing things, and I thought we ought to have a radical new idea in Washington. We'd bring basic arithmetic back to the budget. [Laughter] And basic arithmetic has worked pretty well. This doesn't add up.

And so I ask you to help me send the word to the Congress that let's do first things first. Let's fix Medicare. The women of America especially need it.

You know, we have to work together. Every time we get in one of these fights, people throw their hands up. But there's normally a process

that goes on here. When we were doing welfare reform, I vetoed two bills because it took away the mandate of health care and nutrition for children. We finally got a welfare reform that I thought was right; it carried by big majorities in both parties, in both Houses; we have the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years. And we did it in an election year.

Then the next year we did the Balanced Budget Act, and it has worked superbly. The only problem with it is that the Medicare cuts were too burdensome on certain groups, and we're trying to fix that. But I can tell you that if this tax cut passes, there will be breathtaking cuts in every area of our national life that you would believe is important, over and above what it would do to totally rob us of any chance to stabilize and improve Medicare and save it for the baby boom generation.

We have big tests as a country. How are we going to deal with the aging of America? How are we going to give all of our kids a world-class education, especially since more and more of them come from families whose first language is not English? Those of us who expect to be alive in 20 years, or hope to be, better hope we do a good job of educating those kids. How are we going to deal with all these other challenges? How are we going to bring economic opportunity to people who still haven't felt it? How are we going to stabilize the economy so that we'll still be growing even better 10, 15, 20 years from now? These are big challenges. But they are high-class problems in the sense that nations rarely get these opportunities.

Once in a lifetime you get a chance to stand up with your country in good shape, bring people together, look down the road, and say, yes, these are big challenges, and we're going to check them off—one, two, three, four—because we have the money and the vision to deal with them.

So my appeal today is that we not get into a big fight; we just go back to basic arithmetic. These tax bills the majority is pushing could

not get the support of their own Members if we had a chart up on the wall that says, here is what we have to spend just to stay where we are today in education, defense, the environment, medical research; here's what every expert says it takes to stabilize Medicare; here is the interest savings you ought to be putting into the Social Security Trust Fund; here is what we have to do to fix health care. They agree we have to do some more for veterans care. They agree with these things.

The numbers don't add up. We cannot take the vacation without paying the home mortgage, the car payment, and the college loan bill. We can't do it. We can't eat the cake until the vegetables and the soup are out of the way. And we cannot defy the basic laws of arithmetic. And contrary to some of the debate, we cannot forget the stories.

This is about how millions upon millions upon millions of Americans will live. Will they live in dignity and health, or will they live in want and insecurity, imposing unconscionable burdens on their children, and limiting their children's ability to raise their grandchildren? Or will we use this moment to build a more prosperous, more just, more decent society? This is about way more than drugs and trips to the doctor. This is about what kind of people we are and whether we can look beyond today to the tomorrow we all want for all of us.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Judith G. Cato, member, Maryland Commission on Aging, who introduced the President, and her daughter, Harriet Pinkerton, service coordinator, Council House senior citizen apartments, Marlow Heights, MD. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on the 25th Anniversary of the Legal Services Corporation July 27, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me say, first of all, I apologize for being late. I've been over meeting with the Russian Prime Minister, and you would have given me a pass, I think. I was doing good work, I hope.

Lucy, thank you for your statement, and on behalf of all of us, for the award. Let me say, I could just sit here and sort of look at all the people that are here. I hesitate to even call people by name, but I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here, including Congressman Berman and Congressman Ramstad. I'd also—I see Mr. Conyers and Congressman Cardin, Congressman Allen, Congresswoman Waters, former Congressman Fox, and Father Drinan, we're glad to see you here, sir. Thank you. Sarge and Eunice Shriver; the ABA presidents, Jerry Shestack, Bill Ide, Roberta Cooper Ramo, William Paul. And I see former Secretary of Commerce and Trade Ambassador Mickey Kantor, who was on the Legal Services board with Hillary.

We all go back a long way, all of us who care about this, it seems like. Doug Eakeley and Tom Allen and I, we went abroad together as young men 30 years ago. We must have gotten infected with a Legal Services virus. [*Laughter*] Judge Broderick, it's good to see you here. And Jim Ramstad said, we were there 36 years ago—is that how long it was? [*Laughter*] They're coming tomorrow; you should come back. Make you feel old, or young, as the case may be.

I want to say that for our family, the Legal Services Corporation has been very important. My wife has done many things I've been proud of, but I have never been more proud of anything than her service on the Legal Services Corporation to which President Carter appointed her, and the work she did as the chair of that Corporation.

You know, here in Washington, everybody's got a lawyer. Whether you need one or not, everybody's got a lawyer, you know? [*Laughter*] We forget what it's like to have a lawyer be the difference between homelessness and having a stable home; between unemployment and the security of a job; between the disintegration of a household and holding a family together in difficult times. The Legal Services Corporation

has made equal justice not a political cause but an everyday occurrence. We have tried to advocate that—I see our former chief advocate, Mr. Dellinger, there—but this is a personal thing for those of us who have experienced it.

Hillary's brother, in the back, was a public defender for many years in Miami. And Janet Reno, as a prosecutor, supported efforts to make sure that everybody had a decent defense—something that I think is a sterling example.

Every one of you in this room has that sort of story. But those of us who are old enough to remember when it was different feel it perhaps the more strongly. And I want to thank Howard Berman and Jim Ramstad for giving voice to the struggles we're now engaged in in Congress. Sometimes I think that the Legal Services Corporation, even though it's very young—25 years old—is suffering from the infirmity of its success and, perhaps, from the success of our economy at this moment that we have people who may make this decision without the benefit of memory. So I ask you to remember.

It was in 1962, not that long ago, when the Supreme Court had not yet established a constitutional right to counsel in criminal cases. Then, the idea of legal assistance in civil cases was a distant dream. Disadvantaged Americans who had a hard enough time just getting through the day found that the legal system was stacked against them, and even if it wasn't, they couldn't possibly know it because they couldn't get a lawyer.

Our country's faith in the law was strained in the hearts of many because of injustice and the stain of racism. But the men and women who founded the Legal Services Corporation knew that educating people about the legal rights they did have was critical in the fight for equal rights; that if people did not know about their rights and could not exercise them, the fact that the Supreme Court had enshrined them was of little practical impact.

Today, thanks in large measure to the efforts of the Legal Services Corporation and the countless lawyers you have inspired, it is clear that a lot of progress has been made. Lucy's

story really tells the tale. The doors of opportunity are open wider, and we are fortunate now to be living in a period of unique prosperity, with the lowest minority unemployment in our history and the highest homeownership in our history. We have the lowest crime rates and welfare rolls in a generation. But you and I know there are still a lot of poor folks out there. There are still people in places that have been left behind, even by this great recovery.

I traveled across the country a couple of weeks ago, from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta, to East St. Louis, to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, south Phoenix, and East Los Angeles. And there are still people out there—most of them, by the way, are working; most of them are working, doing the same thing you and I do every day, for much lesser rewards—who are having enormous difficulties. So we have this.

It is also true that in spite of the progress that we've made in meeting the promise of equal justice, there are still a lot of people out there who don't trust the legal system or the law enforcement system. So there is a need, a crying need for the work of the Legal Services Corporation. And that's idealistic, hard-working lawyers—virtually 100 percent of whom could be making a lot more money doing something else—who believe that the law should be an instrument that benefits us all equally and that the rights that are enunciated in the law books and in the Supreme Court cases should be real in the lives of all Americans.

President Kennedy did call for equal justice here 36 years ago. Last week in this room, with another glittering array of legal talent, from lawyers to judges to scholars of all races and backgrounds in this country, we renewed our pledge to that ideal.

Today I think we have to say again, equal justice is the birthright of every American. It is the obligation of those of us in public life and politics to try to bring the benefits of this economic recovery into every corner of our country. But the Scripture says that the poor will be with us always. But American law says they will not be disadvantaged under the law. And until we close the gap between our principles and our reality, we will need the Legal Services Corporation.

For years now, some in Congress have tried to dismantle it. They have seen it as a political thing. I do not believe it is political to say a

poor person should have the same right as a rich person. I do not believe it is political to say we have to bring the law into the real lives of all Americans.

We have stood firm against the opposition to the Legal Services Corporation. I'm proud that every budget we have submitted has requested more funding for Legal Services. Like Congressman Ramstad and Congressman Berman—and by their presence here, all the other Members who are here—I was deeply disappointed that last week the Appropriations Subcommittee in the House voted to cut my request in half, leaving hundreds of thousands of American families without the critical legal protections they need.

But need is the wrong word. Under the law, they are entitled to them as citizens. For 25 years, the Legal Services Corporation has stood above the fray of partisanship, but in the fray of the grimy details of daily life that require legal protection and legal assistance. I ask Congress to put politics aside, to follow on this issue the model of the Legal Services Corporation, and give the full funding and support the Corporation needs. In a very large budget, it is a very small item. But it has an enormous impact.

Think how outraged Americans of both political parties in all political philosophies would have been if this fine woman and all of her fellow tenants had been thrown on the street for failure to pay electric bills that they paid. We could have passed the hat in America and collected the annual budget of the Legal Services Corporation to help them. You know that's true. How then can we walk away from the people who save them, and can save so many like them every day, in every way—in publicized and quiet ways that we will never know?

Thomas Jefferson once said that equal justice is a bright constellation of our political faith. With conscience and conviction, let us get the support for the Legal Services Corporation it needs. We cannot let the bright constellation dim. Twenty-five is too young, and there are still too many people out there who need you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Sergey Stepashin of Russia; Legal Services Corporation client Lucy Johnson, who introduced the President; former

Representative Jon D. Fox; R. Sargent Shriver, honorary cochairman, Consortium for the National Equal Justice Library, and his wife, Eunice Kennedy Shriver; Father Robert F. Drinan, professor of law, Georgetown University; Jerome J. Shestack, R. William Ide III, Roberta Cooper Ramo, former presidents, and William G. Paul, president-elect, American Bar Association; Douglas Eakeley, chair, Legal Services Corporation

board of directors; retired Marin County, CA, Superior Court Judge Henry J. Broderick; former Justice Department Solicitor General Walter E. Dellinger; and the First Lady's brother, Hugh Rodham. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. The proclamation of July 26 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on the Death of Dan Dutko

July 27, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the untimely death of our good friend Dan Dutko. Dan has been a friend, an ally, and an adviser for nearly three decades. He enriched our lives with his enthusiasm and served his country with distinction. He deeply believed in the cause of the Democratic Party and worked tirelessly to

ensure that it would have the ability to communicate effectively with the voters. He was a devoted supporter of Israel and a champion of national service.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Deborah, and their two young children, Matthew and Jonathan.

Statement on House Action on Proposed Legislation To Extend Normal Trade Relations With China

July 27, 1999

I welcome the strong bipartisan vote in the House today to extend normal trade relations (NTR) with China.

Extending NTR is the right way to advance America's interests. Our exports to China have nearly tripled over the past decade to \$14.2 billion. NTR boosts not only America's economy but also those of Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as China.

NTR promotes China's integration into the global economy, which in turn strengthens market-oriented reformers within China. Expanding trade can help bring greater social change to China by spreading the tools, contacts, and ideas that promote freedom. Maintaining NTR helps us to move China toward global norms on

human rights, weapons of mass destruction, crime and drugs, and the environment, as well as on trade. China clearly has far to go in all these areas, and we will continue to address our differences directly and protect our national interests.

I remain determined to pursue an agreement for China to join the WTO on viable commercial terms—not as a favor to China but as a means of opening and reforming China's markets and holding China to the rules of the global trading system. I remain ready to work closely with Congress to secure permanent NTR status for China in the context of a commercially strong WTO agreement.

Statement on the Organization of African Unity's Framework Agreement for Ethiopia and Eritrea

July 27, 1999

I welcome the announcement by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) that Ethiopia and Eritrea have accepted the OAU framework agreement and the modalities for its implementation, and agreed to steps proposed by the OAU to facilitate implementation of the agreement. This is a significant step toward peace.

We have worked intensively with the OAU in recent weeks to help bring an end to this

devastating conflict. My Special Envoy, Anthony Lake, has just returned from the region, where he met with the leaders of both governments and the OAU. The United States will continue to support the efforts of the OAU under the chairmanship of Algerian President Bouteflika to bring this tragic conflict to a speedy conclusion.

Remarks to the American Legion Boys and Girls Nations

July 28, 1999

Thank you very much. I always look forward to your coming every year because I know we'll have plenty of enthusiasm to light up the old house here. *[Laughter]*

Let me begin by thanking Secretary Riley, who is, I'm almost sure, the longest serving Secretary of Education in American history, and I am quite sure the finest Secretary of Education we have ever had. And I thank him for his service.

I would like to thank the officials of Boys and Girls Nation who are here: the American Legion National Commander, Butch Miller; Boys Nation Director Ron Engel; Director of Activities Jack Mercier, who was a counselor when I was at Boys Nation, in 1904 or whenever—*[laughter]*—a long time ago—1963—Girls Nation Director Dianne McClung, Youth Program Coordinator Kenya Ostermeier.

I'd also like to acknowledge the presence in the audience of some alumni of Boys and Girls Nation: Congressman Jim Ramstad of Minnesota, who was there with me in 1963. Stand up, Jim. *[Applause]* And I see one of my two White House staffers who is an alumnus, Fred DuVal of Arizona, who is here. And Janet Murguia from Kansas is—I don't know if she's here or not, but she went to Girls Nation—a long time after I did. *[Laughter]*

I also can't help noting that—I think the State of Nevada today is represented by Patrick Sergeant. His father, Colonel Steve Sergeant, is the

new Deputy Executive Secretary of the National Security Council here at the White House, and we're glad to have his service.

I want to thank your Boys Nation and Girls Nation officers who are here: Vice President Denise Battle and Vice President John Feeny. If Al Gore were here, he would tell you that's a very important job. *[Laughter]* And I might say it is a very important job.

The Vice President has this great joke. He says every time he votes, we win. *[Laughter]* And as all of you know, we only vote when there's a tie in the Senate. And actually, we've had some of the more important—perhaps one of the two or three most important votes taken in the Senate in my term as President was the vote on the economic plan of 1993, which led to big reduction in the deficit and gave us the biggest leg up on the balanced budget. It was a tie vote, and the Vice President broke the tie. So you might think about that as you contemplate your future. It's a good thing to break ties.

I want to thank President Teah Frederick and President Ryan Rippel for their comments and their example.

I look forward to this day every year, partly because of my own memories of being at Boys Nation and the debates we had. When you talked about the issues you were dealing with—we had this huge debate on civil rights in 1963, and I was one of the four representatives from

the South that voted for the civil rights plank. And in the light of history, it looks pretty good. I feel good about it. But I've never forgotten what it was like that week hearing from the Cabinet members, meeting Senators and Congressmen, and all the debates that occurred.

I've never forgotten that President Kennedy met with us and made us feel that public service is a noble endeavor and that we all could make a difference. And I hope all of you feel that way, because your country needs you. You have so much to give.

One of the young people here today may go on to be President. One might command the first human mission to Mars. One might develop a cure for cancer or AIDS. Perhaps you will teach the next generation of young people or help to alleviate poverty or violence in your own communities. As long as you keep setting goals and working hard and using your talent for the common good, there's no limit to what you can do. And America needs you.

This country has been around a long time because we have remained faithful to our ideals, but forever young and open to change. I don't want to conduct a tour of the White House today, but the old house was finished in 1800. So, on our millennial year, we will celebrate the 200th birthday of the White House. The painting of George Washington to my left, to your right, was painted by Gilbert Stuart in 1797 and purchased for the then enormous sum of \$500, for the White House. It is priceless today.

But it's worth remembering how important it is to keep democracy alive, that in 1814, when we were in the last throes of the War of 1812 and the British were coming up the Potomac, the President of the United States, James Madison—who was the last President to be the active Commander in Chief for the Armed Forces, and so was up in Maryland, where he mistakenly thought the British would be—at the head of an army, sent word back to his wife, Dolley, who was preparing this vast banquet—the White House was full of food; this room was full of food—that the British were on the way and she should get out, but no matter what, she had to take the picture of George Washington.

So Dolley Madison cut that picture out of its frame, rolled it up, and got out of the White House. The British arrived to find the empty frame, ate the food, and burned the house. [Laughter] But we rebuilt the house, and the

picture still lives. And every time I see that picture, I think about it.

It was in this room that Thomas Jefferson met with his secretary, Merriwether Lewis, to plan the Lewis and Clark expedition—right where you're all sitting. The place was covered with bearskins and ancient maps, and they were—President Jefferson was in love with the geography and science, and he saw this whole thing as not only a geographical expedition, but he thought that all kinds of scientific information would be gathered along the way. So a lot of very important things have happened where you are sitting today that remind us that America is a place with great opportunities and great responsibilities.

Today, our country is the greatest force for peace and security and human rights and prosperity in the world. We have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. We have almost 18, 19 million new jobs now. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the smallest welfare rolls in 30 years. Our social problems, in general, are getting better. Teen drug abuse, pregnancy, teen smoking are declining. And the country is learning to live with the most amazing array of diversity—racial diversity, ethnic diversity, religious diversity—and still find a way to be bound together as one community.

This is a very important time. And rather like you at this time in your life, your always-young Nation faces the question of what to do with our prosperity and our promise, just as you face the personal question of what to do with your promise. Will we seize this chance of a lifetime to meet the long-term challenges of America, to ensure that when you are our age, you will have a great country to live in and cherish and pass on to your children and grandchildren? I would argue that that is the real challenge we face today, just as you must decide whether you're willing to continue to forgo certain things today in order to achieve your goals tomorrow.

Will we invest in creating the best system of education in the world, with smaller classes, better-prepared teachers, modern and safe schools? Will we save Social Security and Medicare before the baby boomers retire and the number of people over 65 doubles, which will happen in 30 years? Will we make America debt-free for the first time since 1835, and so ensure your prosperity, and do those things

which will enable economic opportunity to come to the people and places who still have not felt this recovery?

These are some, but not all, of the great long-term questions before us as a nation, as you gather here. And so we're having this enormous debate in Washington. It is a good-faith debate, based on competing visions and values. It will help us to define what we see as our most fundamental responsibilities to our parents, to our children. It is a debate about the future of our Nation and, to be sure, about your future.

I want to talk just a minute about it today, because it is a debate that 6½ years ago, when I was taking office, no one thought we would ever have. Everywhere I go in America now I say, "You know, when I was here in 1992, if I had said to you, 'Now, I want you to vote for me, and in 6½ years from now, I'll come back and we'll talk about what to do with the surplus,' they would have laughed me out of the room. I never would have carried a single State. They would have said, 'That poor young man seems like a nice fellow, but he's terribly out of touch.'" [Laughter] Because we had a \$290 billion deficit, high interest rates; we had averaged 7 percent unemployment for a long time, and we quadrupled the national debt in 12 years.

All I could do was to tell the American people I was going to bring the debt down; I would do my best to balance the budget; and if we did it, we'd get interest rates down, and investment would come up. And I said, but we had to do it in a way that allowed us to continue to invest in education, in the environment, in health care and research, the things that were critical to our future.

So that's what I did. You probably won't remember this because you were all young, but in the year I ran for President in 1992, one of the best selling books—quite a well-written book, written by two journalists from Philadelphia—was entitled "America: What Went Wrong?" Thanks to the hard work of the American people, our country has made a seismic shift in the last 6 years. Now we're looking at \$99 billion in surplus this year, and we look forward to a new decade of budget surpluses and a new century full of confidence and pride.

I'm also proud that while we have eliminated the deficit and produced the surpluses, we nearly doubled our investments in education and training programs, because that is the most ef-

fective investment we can make in our long-term future. Without good teachers and high expectations, I wouldn't be here today. But education is even more important to your generation and will be even more important to those coming along behind you because of the nature of the way the information age works.

Secretary Riley has already talked about the historic investments we've made to open the doors of college to every American, to do more for underprivileged children, to try to make sure every classroom in the country is hooked up to the Internet by the year 2000, and that because of the so-called E-rate, even the poorest schools will be able to afford to log on in all those classrooms—and the other things that we're trying to do.

This year Congress is debating whether to work with us to finish the job that Congress made an initial commitment to last year of hiring 100,000 teachers so we can lower class size to an average of 18 in the first 3 grades all across the country. And I have asked Congress to pass a tax incentive to help us build or modernize 6,000 schools across America, because enormous numbers of young people are going to schools that are very, very old, a lot of them not even capable of being wired; and a lot of other young children are in housetrailer out beside the old schools because we now have, finally, a class of schoolchildren bigger than the baby boomers. And we have to do more in that regard.

I have also asked Congress to help us to strengthen performance—with higher standards for schools, for teachers, for students—to say that Federal aid should go only to those schools that end social promotion but also provide summer school programs, after-school programs, and extra help to turn schools around that aren't doing the job.

So far, the main thing that the Congress has heard in all this is the siren call of large tax cuts on the theory that we have a surplus, it's your money, and we ought to give it back to you. Now, it only takes 5 seconds to say that, and it sounds great. I heard one Member of Congress the other day, in all seriousness, said, "If you let them"—referring to the President and the members of my party—"if you let them keep your money, they'll spend it on their friends."

Well, what I have proposed to do is to take most of the surplus and set it aside for Social

Security and Medicare, and in the years when we don't use the money, use that to pay down the debt so we can be debt-free in 15 years, for the first time since 1835, which means lower interest rates for everybody, more investment, more jobs, higher incomes and, for your families, lower mortgage rates, college loan rates, credit card rates, and car payment costs. And it would guarantee the long-term stability of the country. I think that's the right thing to do.

And I have also proposed to spend adequate amounts of money to continue the Federal role's investment in education and medical research, national defense, and other things and then to take what's left and spend it on a tax cut. It is, admittedly, much smaller than the one that the majority approved.

Now, they believe—to be fair—it is your money. It's the taxpayers' money; and they believe that the best thing to do is to give it back. It would cost about \$800 billion over the next 10 years and \$3 trillion over the 10 years after that. Sounds like an unimaginable sum—that's real money there. And that's when the baby boomers will be retiring.

Now, the problem I have with it is that under their plan, to be fair, we could save the Social Security surplus to pay down the debt, partially, but we would not lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund or the Medicare Trust Fund, and we'd have to have big cuts in education and the other items that I've mentioned. But people would get the tax cut. But that would be the price tag; in other words, it's not free. So we're having this big debate.

My argument is that we quadrupled the debt of this country between 1981 and 1992. And I don't believe we should be even discussing the tax cut until we decide what our obligations are—to deal with the aging of America. And let me say, this is not just an issue for you—I mean, for us. I mean, I'm the oldest of the baby boomers. But it's not just an issue for us. It is an issue for you. Why? Because I can tell you that my generation is absolutely obsessed with the notion that if we retire, there will be so many of us that we will break the bank of Social Security and Medicare and we'll have to depend on our kids to support us and then our children won't have the money they need to raise our grandchildren.

So this—when you hear about the Social Security and Medicare debate, it's not just about senior citizens. It's about the compact between

the generations in America and whether we can continue to, in effect, let seniors take care of themselves by and large so that their children by and large will be free to take care of their grandchildren. That's really what is going on here.

So—and if I had my way, we would decide this issue in the following order: We would decide what are we going to do—what does it take to fix Social Security and Medicare; what do we have to have to take care of education, defense, research, and the things that we should do as a nation? And then let's take what's left over and give it back in a tax cut. The way we're having the discussion about the size of the tax cut first, it would be like if you go home this weekend, when you finish, you go home and you have dinner and your folks say to you, "You know, we have always wanted to take this month-long vacation to Hawaii, and we're going to take it. We're going to fly first-class; we're going to go to the most expensive hotels; we're going to have everything we've ever dreamed of. And when we get home, we'll figure out whether we can pay the home mortgage and send you to college." [Laughter] Now, you being—I'm sure you need the vacation. I'm sure it would be a good thing. [Laughter] But you wouldn't make the decision in that order.

So that's the debate we're having here, in part. I believe that a lot of people who voted for this tax cut, they know I'm going to veto it if it passes, so they don't think it will be law. And they want to be on record as, "I was for a bigger tax cut than President Clinton was." But what we should be doing, I think, is saying, "Hey, we have—once in a lifetime you get this kind of chance where there's no more deficit, projected surpluses, and you know what the big challenges of the country are. You know it's dealing with the aging of America, dealing with the education of our children, dealing with keeping the economy going and bringing economic opportunity to people who haven't felt it. There are other things, but let's just focus on those three." I think we ought to decide what we ought to do.

And let me give you an idea of what would happen if a tax cut of this size were to become law, so you can focus on it. Because there is no such thing as a free decision. It is your money, and if you tell the Congress you want it back, they could by enough—if they could override my veto, they could give it all back

to you. I mean, everything you give us is your money. We could abolish the Department of Defense tomorrow and everything else we do and give it all back to you and have no Federal Government. So it is your money.

But let me give you an example. If we pass the tax cut, and we stayed with a balanced budget, according to our Office of Management and Budget, here's what the consequences would be. Today, we're helping 12 million children in high-poverty areas get extra help. I have proposed reforms to raise standards for them and give them more help. This plan, if it passed, with this tax cut, would require us to say to 6 million of those children, "We can't help you."

Today, we provide funds to help a million children learn to read independently by the end of the third grade. If the tax plan passes, we'd have to say to 480,000 of them, "We're sorry; we can't do that."

Today, we're nearing our goal of enrolling a million people in Head Start. If the plan passes, we'd have to say to 430,000 preschoolers, "We can't do that."

Last year we reached across party lines to hire 30,000 of that 100,000 teachers I talked about. It was a wonderful moment—like when we passed the balanced budget in '97, overwhelming majorities of both parties in both Houses; when we passed welfare reform in '96, overwhelming majorities of both parties in both Houses. That's the way the country ought to work. And we did that last year. And it will allow us, as I said, if we finish the job, to reduce class size to an average of 18 in the first 3 grades. But if the tax cut passes, and we keep a balanced budget, we'd have to say to a million students, "No smaller classes."

So I think this is a big problem. Today, we're helping 400,000 students with after-school programs. This is a huge deal. Every inner-city, tough neighborhood that has after-school programs that are aggressive sees a big drop in the juvenile crime rate and a big increase in learning in the schools. We propose to triple the number of people who would be included in those programs next year. If this tax plan passes, we'd have to cut that in half.

The school construction tax cut I mentioned to you earlier, to help us build or modernize 6,000 schools, ironically, is not in the plan. In this plan, only 10 percent of that many schools would be fixed.

Now, these are not just numbers; these are children. And keep in mind, most of you are going to be fine regardless. I mean, you got to Girls Nation; you got to Boys Nation. Somebody will give you a scholarship if your family doesn't have the money to go to college. You have to ask yourself whether you will be better off if your country is better off. If we try to make sure that we all go forward together—you came here because you believed in the American system, a system that is designed not to just address the needs of the most talented and the most fortunate among us but a system premised on the fact that nearly everybody, nearly everybody in a free country can do what is necessary to be a good, productive, hard-working citizen if given the tools to do so. And I believe that.

The reverse is true, that those of us who are most fortunate will also have the quality of our lives diminished to the extent that we do not provide everyone the chance to live up to their God-given abilities. So that's what's going on now. And believe me, this is an honest, philosophical debate. If the people who disagree with me were here, they would say, "Well, we just think Government wastes too much money, and this is your money, and you paid the taxes, and we ought to give it back to you."

There's another element here I want to say to be fair. We might keep spending all this money, but if we did that and pass the tax cut, then we'd be right back in the same fix we were in before I took office—huge debts, higher interest rates dragging down the economy, higher unemployment. So I know it's easier for me to say, maybe, because I'm not running for anything. You know—under our system we have a two-term limit, and I can't run for anything unless I go home and run for the school board some day. *[Laughter]*

But I believe that the American people can be told the truth about our long-term challenges. And I believe the American people feel good about the decisions we made that were hard decisions at the time that have brought our country to this moment. And there are still such big things out there.

So what I say is, let's do first things first. Let's lift the burden of your parents' aging off your shoulders by securing Social Security and Medicare. Let's give you a chance to have an even more successful economy than we have today, by getting this country out of debt for

the first time since 1835 and taking extra steps to bring money into these inner-city neighborhoods, the rural neighborhoods, the Indian reservations, where there has been no economic recovery.

Let's continue to make sure that we are investing in the education of our young people. We'll still have money for a tax cut that could include long-term care, child care—for me, helping ordinary families save for retirement. But the main thing is not so much what the elements of it are but that it's not so big that it either throws us into debt or requires us to compromise our future.

Now, that is the way I see this. I wonder if 36 years from now you will remember what was going on in Washington with the same clarity that I remember. But I can tell you, it was by no means certain that Congress and the country would do the right thing on civil rights. Indeed, President Kennedy, when he addressed the Boys Nation delegates, thanked us for our resolution on civil rights and bemoaned the fact that the Governors, who had just met a week before we did, could not reach agreement; they could not reach across party lines and regional lines to stand up for the elemental principal of civil rights. And he thanked us for doing it.

Thirty years later, 36 years later, it looks like Boys Nation was right, and the Governors' Association was wrong. [Laughter] Just look around this crowd today. Look at all the differences represented by the young men and women here. Who could possibly say that America is not better off for the progress we have made? But you need to know a lot of people lost their jobs in election sticking up for civil rights in

places where it wasn't so popular. A lot of Congressmen lost their jobs in 1994 because they voted to bring the deficit down, or they voted for the Brady bill or the assault weapons ban, which helped to give up the lowest crime rate in 26 years.

But sometimes you have to look to the long run. And one of the things that the sad events of the last couple of weeks have reminded us all of is that the gifts of life and the burdens of life do not fall according to some rational plan—that all of our lives, even if we live to be 80—or in the case of Secretary Riley's father, over 90—life is still fleeting. And the great test is to try to enjoy and make the most of every day and still sow the seeds for your children to have a better tomorrow.

That is what we are trying to do here. Thomas Jefferson said every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. If we can remember that here, I think we can once again reach across the party lines and the regional lines and think about the long-term interest of America. It has been a long, long time since our country has had a chance to make provisions for the next generation with absolute confidence, unencumbered by the burdens of just getting through the day. That is where we are. And I am determined to do everything I can to see that we make the most of it to give you the chance to live your dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Teah Frederick, president, Girls Nation; Ryan Rippel, president, Boys Nation; and authors Donald L. Barlett and James B. Steele.

Statement on Senate Action on Juvenile Crime and Gun Legislation *July 28, 1999*

Today, after weeks of partisan delay, the Senate finally appointed conferees on juvenile crime and gun legislation. While I am heartened by this modest progress, more than 3 months have passed since the tragedy at Columbine, and Congress has yet to send me a bill to make

commonsense gun reforms the law of the land. I challenge the House to follow the Senate's lead and appoint conferees before the August recess, so that the full Congress can get back to work and pass a bill with strong gun provisions as our children go back to school.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Burdensharing in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

July 28, 1999

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Pursuant to section 3 of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic (the "resolution"), I hereby transmit a report concerning Burdensharing in the Alliance.

This report is comprised of two sections, which provide the information required by section 3(2)(B) of the resolution to the extent that such information is available. The unclassified section covers common NATO budgets, national defense budgets and their adequacy, costs incurred to date in connection with the membership of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, and the status of discussions concerning NATO membership for Partnership for Peace

countries. A classified addendum covers NATO members' capabilities to deploy and sustain combat forces.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John W. Warner, chairman, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Floyd Spence, chairman, House Committee on Armed Services; Ted Stevens, chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations; C.W. Bill Young, chairman, House Committee on Appropriations; Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at "In Performance at the White House"

July 28, 1999

The President. Thank you. The first thing I want you to do is relax, because I'm not going to play, and you'll have to—[laughter]—but I'll be wishing.

At the millennium event on jazz we had here last year, the great Wynton Marsalis said that just as we wouldn't have democracy without the foundation of our Constitution, so we wouldn't have jazz without the foundation of the blues. Like our Constitution, the blues is a great American tradition, whose power to move never seems to diminish and whose influence never seems to stop growing.

This compelling and wonderful music, once heard only on rural Southern porches and in South Side Chicago bars, now enjoys an audience as broad as America itself. In fact, now the whole world knows about the blues, and there are fans from Berlin to Bangkok who can tell you the life stories of blues icons like Bessie Smith and Robert Johnson. Today, there are more blues artists, more blues listeners, more blues clubs, and more blues recordings than

ever before. Even TV commercials now feature the blues, which dramatically reduces the number of people who hit the mute button. [Laughter]

Tonight we celebrate the music that has given birth to or influenced the whole large landscape of American music, from "Rhapsody in Blue" to rap. So it's fitting that our host is a master of the great range of American music and entertainment, Miss Della Reese. If talent and personality are truly gifts from above, then Della Reese really has been "Touched by an Angel." [Laughter] Please join me in welcoming Della Reese. [Applause]

[At this point, the program proceeded. Following the performances, the President made brief remarks, which are joined in progress.]

The President. —whether I want to be young like Jonny, or like B.B. when I'm a little older. [Laughter] They were all magnificent.

You know, we saw tonight in all these wonderful performers why blues is truly one of

America's great gifts to the world. Its appeal, we saw, literally spans the generations. Tonight we've been privileged to hear blues greats from every era.

I want to thank each and every one of them. Thank you, B.B. King. Thank you, John Cephas and Phil Wiggans. Thank you, Marcia Ball. Thank you, Jonny Lang. Thank you, bands. And thank you, Della Reese.

Thank you, and good night. Thank you.

[At this point, B.B. King presented the President with a guitar pick.]

The President. Now before you go, I've been saving my B.B. King picks for almost 20 years now. I've got another one tonight. [Laughter]

There is one more person that all of us have to thank this evening, Dick Notebaert with Ameritech. Let me tell you—Dick, I want you and Peggy to come up here, come on. He is about to leave his present position to start on a new adventure in life, and Hillary and I want to thank him for his long-standing support for these wonderful WETA's "In Performance at the White House." We have had so many in-

credible, incredible concerts here, thanks to the generosity of this gentleman and his fine company. And Dick and Peggy have accompanied us on so many nights, along with Sharon and Jay Rockefeller and many of you who've been here.

I want to thank all of you for coming tonight, especially the very large number of people from my native State and others who occupy that portion of the Mississippi Delta between Memphis and New Orleans, where all of this really got started. We are very glad to be here, but we offer a special thank you to you, my friend, and to you, Peggy. We've got a little expression of our thanks here. Bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks he referred to musician Wynton Marsalis; Richard C. Notebaert, chairman and chief executive officer, Ameritech Corp., and his wife, Peggy; and Senator John D. Rockefeller IV and his wife, Sharon. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on the National Economy and Appropriations Legislation July 29, 1999

Good morning. Before I leave for Sarajevo, I'd like to say just a word about our country's continuing prosperity and what we have to do to keep it going.

It was 6 years ago this summer that America made a visionary decision to set a new course for our economy; to abandon the large deficits and high unemployment of the previous 12 years; and to pursue an economic strategy of fiscal discipline, investing in our people, and expanding trade in American goods and services abroad. The strategy is working and has lifted our Nation to an unprecedented level of prosperity.

Now we have nearly 19 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the highest homeownership ever. From a \$290 billion deficit in 1993, we're moving toward a record high surplus of \$99 billion in 1999.

The Senate is about to make a pivotal choice—whether to move forward with a sound strategy that led us to this point, or to return

to the reckless policies that threw our Nation into stagnation and economic decline. Congress must decide whether to invest our surplus, to honor our obligations to the future—saving Social Security and Medicare, continuing to invest in education, and paying down the debt—or to squander the surplus on a shortsighted, irresponsible, overlarge tax plan.

The right choice for me is clear, putting first things first. First, we must maintain our strategy of fiscal discipline and seize this moment to address the large, long-term challenges of the Nation. We must dedicate the bulk of the surplus to saving Social Security and to strengthening Medicare and modernizing its benefits with a prescription drug package. I have proposed a balanced budget that honors these values. It upholds our commitments to educating our children, protecting our environment, promoting biomedical research, strengthening defense, and fighting crime.

The Republican majority, it appears, is determined, however, to pass this large and risky tax cut. It would exhaust our surplus without: one, devoting a penny to lengthening the life of the Social Security Trust Fund; two, devoting a penny to lengthening the life of the Medicare Trust Fund; three, it would force huge cuts in education, agriculture, the environment, defense, biomedical research, indeed, everything we are doing to strengthen our country if we are going to stay on a balanced budget.

If those cuts are not made, it would cause us to revert to the dark, old days of huge deficits, high interest rates, low economic growth, and stagnation. We tried it that way for 12 years, and it didn't work.

As the Federal Reserve Chairman, Alan Greenspan, told the Senate yesterday, this tax cut will cut into the surplus and, quote, "risk a great deal of good to the economy."

So I say to Congress, if you send me a tax cut that shortchanges America's priorities and our children's future, I will veto it. Let me be clear again: I do strongly support tax cuts, but not if they are so large they undermine our strength and they undermine our ability to save

Social Security, to strengthen and modernize Medicare, and to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835.

My balanced budget contains targeted tax cuts to help ordinary families with retirement savings, child care costs, long-term care costs. It is responsible in size. This debate is not about whether we should have tax cuts; it's about how big they should be and what else this country has to do and whether we want to go back to a failed economic strategy after being so richly rewarded for doing the right thing for our children and our future.

I hope, again that we can get a bipartisan agreement that will save Social Security, save and reform Medicare, continue to invest in education, and get this country out of debt. If we do those big things first, there's still money left for a good size tax cut. But what is being done now is wrong.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Statement on the United States Military Aircraft Tragedy in Colombia *July 29, 1999*

I am deeply saddened by the loss of five U.S. Army personnel in southern Colombia, who perished in the crash of a U.S. military aircraft providing reconnaissance support for combined U.S.-Colombian counterdrug operations against illicit traffickers. Also lost in this tragedy were two Colombian military personnel.

Our thoughts and prayers are with our service members' families and friends as they cope with

this tragic loss. These dedicated Americans and their Colombian comrades were engaged in the vital work of combating the drug trade, which threatens the welfare and security of both our nations.

We honor their commitment and remember their sacrifice as we intensify our efforts here in this country and around the world to counter the global drug problem.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

July 29, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process

that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 29, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 30.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Balkan Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

July 30, 1999

The President. Let me, first of all, say that I appreciate very much the leadership of President Jelavic, President Izetbegovic, President Radisic, and the other leaders here in putting together this stability conference. It's a real tribute to the progress made in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the last couple of years that they could host this conference. And I want to emphasize that with all the work we still have to do here, there has been a great deal of effort, thanks to the leaders, in increasing cooperation in political and economic ways. The economy is beginning to grow briskly again. And I am committed to doing what I can to see that the United States remains a good partner, with this nation and with the European Union, in continuing to work toward the future.

Secondly, I want to compliment the European Union in taking the lead in our efforts here to do a Stability Pact for the Balkans, beginning in Kosovo. Secretary Albright was in Kosovo yesterday, and we think things are moving in the right direction there. And I want to reaffirm our commitment to do our part there.

But I think the larger, important point to be made is, we want to promote the integration of all the democracies within the region and then the integration of the region with Europe.

And anything I can do to assist that, I am prepared to do.

So I think this is a very important day, and I would hope it is a very proud day for the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina because of their hosting this meeting and because of what it means for the future.

Multiple Shooting in Atlanta

Q. Mr. President, I wonder if you would share some thoughts about what happened in Atlanta, if you've been brought up to speed, and what could have been done or should have been done, and if there are any lessons to be learned from this?

The President. Well, I think it's too soon to draw conclusions about that. I watched the reports from home last night on CNN for an hour before I went to bed, and I've gotten, obviously, the final reports today. Our thoughts today primarily are with the families of the victims and with those that are still struggling for their lives in the hospitals.

I am pleased with the work that the Federal authorities have done. The Vice President has been back home coordinating that, and I think we have done a good job of working with the State and local officials. But in terms of what could have, should have been done and what this means for other issues, I think we have

to wait until all the facts are in. I don't believe I have enough to make a judgment on that.

Balkan Peace Process

Q. As far as the situation in the Balkans is concerned, there's been a lot of concern expressed about, here in Bosnia, that it's been done the wrong way, and that reconstruction in Kosovo, they should learn the lessons of what the mistakes were in Bosnia and try not to repeat those mistakes in Kosovo. What should have been done in Bosnia and what should be done in Kosovo now to make sure that those mistakes aren't repeated?

The President. If you ask these leaders, I'm sure they would say we should do more and do it faster. But I want to say, I believe that, if you remember where we were in Bosnia—keep in mind, here we had 250,000 people killed. You know, they've done a remarkable, astonishing job of rebuilding Sarajevo. It doesn't even look like the same place I visited 2 years ago. And I compliment you. But we had 250,000 people killed. We had 2.5 million refugees. The conflict went on for more than 4 years. And in the time since 1995, look at the level of cooperation here: You now have a common currency; we have other common institutions; we have opposition political parties; we have, last year, very brisk economic growth. We have a lot more to do. But I think the people who are overly critical should come here and look and see.

In Kosovo, we were able to act more quickly because the facts were different. And so I hope we'll be able to turn it around more quickly. But I think the work being done by these leaders in Bosnia shows us what can be done if we work together and if the international community is properly supportive. And I think the leadership, the initiative of the EU in setting up this Stability Pact, is a good sign and should be encouraging to people.

Supreme Allied Commander Europe

Q. Do you think General Wesley Clark was treated properly in the way he was told about his early retirement?

The President. I'm not sure what the facts are. I can tell you this: Any inference that it amounts to an early retirement or that some-

body was disappointed in his performance is just simply wrong, just flat out wrong. We actually extended his term of service as Supreme Allied Commander of NATO and asked him to serve another year.

And it's a very complicated challenge, as you implied in your former question, for us to do the right thing, so we have to get an equally strong person to come in behind him. And we wanted General Ralston to go, and under the military rules, he has to take up another post within 60 days of the termination of his present post, or he would have to retire. So that in order to have the right continuity, it has to be about a 2-month adjustment there. And that's all this is about.

I was, myself, a little distressed about the way it broke, and how it did, because of the inference that many people drew. But that is literally all there is to it. I think Wes Clark's done a terrific job. As you know, I've known him for 30 years. I have great confidence in him, and his strength and determination were very important to the outcome of what happened not only in Kosovo but, earlier, his pivotal role in the peace process coming in Bosnia. So I don't think anyone should have any doubt about that.

So I'm disturbed about the way it became public. I don't know that—because I think it opens the way to an inference that is absolutely false on my part. I have the highest regard for him, but I want to make sure that when he's gone we have the highest quality successor, and that's why I wanted Joe Ralston in there.

That's all there is to this. It's just a question of working out the transition within the rules of military retirements and reassignments. That's all there is. There is nothing else.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:42 a.m. in Room A 103 at Zetra Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Presidency Member (Croat) Ante Jelavic, Presidency Member (Muslim) Alija Izetbegovic, and Presidency Chairman (Serb) Zivko Radisic of Bosnia-Herzegovina; and Gen. Joseph W. Ralston, USAF, Vice Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement to the Stability Pact Summit in Sarajevo July 30, 1999

We are meeting in Sarajevo conscious that we have come to the end of the most turbulent decade in Europe since the 1940's. I am grateful to our Bosnian hosts and to President Ahtisaari for making this important summit possible.

Ten years ago, more than 300 million people who lived to the east of the old Iron Curtain won the right to shape their destiny, and together we set out to build a Europe that would be, for the first time in its history, undivided, democratic, and at peace. We knew the opportunity was there, and that from St. Petersburg to Sofia, millions of courageous people wanted to seize it. But we also knew that the collapse of the old order could just as easily give rise to bloodshed and chaos if a new community based on democracy, tolerance, and law did not rapidly take its place.

Ten years later, Germany is united. Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are in NATO. The Baltic nations are models of free market and democratic reform. Most of the nations of southeast Europe have chosen democracy and integration and supported, at great risk and cost, our effort to bring stability to the Balkans. Russia has faced perhaps the most difficult legacy of all with great resilience and a determination to keep building a normal, prosperous, and open society.

Across most of central and southeastern Europe, the progress of open societies and open markets has exceeded our most optimistic hopes. But what has happened here in the former Yugoslavia has confirmed our most terrible fears. A decade-long campaign by Mr. Milosevic to carve out a Greater Serbia has left more than a quarter of a million people dead, uprooted millions more, and undermined the stability of this entire region. It has shocked our conscience, tested our resolve, threatened the region's progress and the values on which we want a new Europe to be built.

That is why NATO and its partners acted, first in Bosnia, now in Kosovo. But stopping the destruction is not enough. We cannot say our job is finished when refugees are returning to shattered lives. We cannot pretend our work is done when Serbia is still ruled by leaders who maintain power by manipulating ethnic dif-

ferences, living off corruption, and threatening their neighbors. We cannot pretend our victory is complete when the people of a vast region of Europe are still suffering from the disruption brought about by a decade of violence.

At the NATO summit in Washington, when the outcome of the conflict was not yet clear, many of us came together to begin discussing these challenges. It is far more significant that we are meeting now when the immediate danger is over. The unity that helped us win the war has endured to help us win the peace.

We are here today with two basic principles in mind.

First, Sarajevo cannot be like the Balkan conferences of Europe's past, where great powers met to carve up the map and decide the fate of weaker nations. The nations of southeast Europe are taking the lead, telling us their needs and determining their destiny. And none of us have any interest in redrawing borders. On the contrary, our goal is the full integration of this region into a Europe where borders unite rather than divide. That is how we solved the problem of aggressive nationalism in western Europe after World War II. That is how we can solve it here. Our answer to calls for a Greater Serbia and a Greater Albania must be a greater Europe.

Second, the transformation and integration of this region cannot be achieved piecemeal, one province, one country, one crisis at a time. Nor is it a race, in which the most prosperous countries compete to "escape" from the Balkans at the expense of their neighbors. The pace will certainly vary, but we have to move forward together, and we all have responsibilities to meet.

The countries of southeast Europe have a responsibility to work and plan together for a future of shared security and prosperity, just as the nations of western Europe did after World War II and the nations of central Europe did after the cold war. I am gratified that the leaders of the region have taken the initiative, coming to Sarajevo with plans to improve regional cooperation, from the advancement of democracy and human rights to the development of their infrastructure to the cooperation in border

areas to the fight against narcotics, corruption, and crime. I am pleased that neighbors such as Ukraine and Moldova, who are still struggling with the challenges of transition themselves, are here with us as well, demonstrating their commitment to integration with a united, secure, and prosperous Europe. And it is gratifying to have representatives here from central Europe, whose experience in the transition from dictatorship to democracy can benefit their neighbors in southeast Europe.

The countries of the region also have a responsibility to accelerate their economic reforms and to improve their investment climate. The region's economies will not grow unless its markets are open, its laws are fairly enforced, and investors are willing to bank on its future. This is very hard work. But change must come from the inside out before it can come from the outside in.

In turn, the region's partners in Europe and North America must do our part to help the nations of this region to stand on their feet, to remove obstacles to trade, and to encourage investment.

On Wednesday in Brussels, we held a donors conference to meet the immediate humanitarian needs caused by the conflict in Kosovo. Today we are focused on the economic future of the region as a whole.

We are making a commitment to take generous, immediate, and unilateral steps to improve market access for products made in southeast Europe. I will work with the United States Congress to establish a trade preference program similar to our Andean initiative, which will offer duty-free treatment for most of the region's exports.

All of us will work to bring the nations of the region into the World Trade Organization on commercially acceptable terms and provide the technical assistance they need to meet those terms. We will encourage the participation of private companies in the region in the reconstruction of Kosovo and, eventually, Serbia as part of a fair procurement process.

We will also work to mobilize private investment in the region's economies and to support the development of its private sector. To that end, America's Overseas Private Investment Corporation will establish a \$150 million investment fund for the region and a \$200 million credit line. In addition, in consultation with Congress, we will work with the European Bank

for Reconstruction and Development on the creation of a trust fund that would be used to help businesses in the region become more competitive and viable and provide project finance. We would be willing to contribute \$15 million in the first year and to consider up to \$50 million overall, as long as the EBRD targets an additional \$80 million for the region. In addition, we will support the creation of a regional equity fund of up to \$300 million, with financing from the international financial institution, to make equity investments in private enterprises in the region. Our Commerce Secretary William Daley will also sponsor a mission to the region to showcase trade and investment opportunities and build new business partnerships.

I expect that our EU partners will take similar steps. This effort can only succeed if you do. While access to America's markets is important, integration with the EU market offers the greatest prospect of boosting the economy of southeast Europe.

And as the region's economies grow and its democracies grow stronger, we must work together to speed their integration into European and transatlantic institutions.

NATO's doors remain open to new members prepared to assume the responsibilities of membership. We will work with aspiring allies in southeast Europe to help them become stronger candidates, through the Partnership for Peace, through NATO's Membership Action Plan, and by encouraging deeper security cooperation within the region; and we will not forget the sacrifices they made to support NATO's continuing operations in Kosovo.

Although the United States is not a member of the European Union, we also have a strong interest in encouraging its expansion to move forward as rapidly as possible. We welcome any steps the EU can take to strengthen its relationship with countries in this region, including increased access to trade. Even if membership is not around the corner for those nations that are struggling economically, it must be a realistic prospect, or Europe will remain a continent of haves and have-nots, and our work here will be in vain.

The commitments we are making today will benefit every part of this region that is governed democratically. They will benefit Kosovo. They will benefit the Republic of Montenegro. They will benefit Bosnia. We look forward to the day when they will benefit Serbia as well. But that

day has not yet come. For Serbia is still ruled by a government that rejects the most basic principles of the Stability Pact, the very government that is responsible for the destruction, despair, and displacement that we are here to overcome.

I believe that the people of Serbia want to be part of the mainstream of Europe again, governed by leaders who share their desire to live in a normal, democratic, and prosperous nation. I do not believe they want to be manipulated into fighting more losing wars on behalf of indicted leaders who only wish to preserve their own power and stolen wealth. We must provide them humanitarian aid, so that they do not go hungry and cold. But we must also remember that Serbia is a country in which all meaningful economic activity is controlled by political leaders and their cronies, who have led Serbia to ruin. Assistance for reconstruction would only perpetuate the Milosevic regime, and that, in turn, would only perpetuate the suffering of the people of Serbia.

Serbia will only have a future when Mr. Milosevic and his policies are consigned to the past. Therefore, the best way to express our concern for the people of Serbia is to support their struggle for democratic change. I will work with our Congress to provide \$10 million this year and more over the next 2 years to strengthen nongovernmental organizations in Serbia, the independent media, independent trade unions, and the democratic opposition. I am pleased that the countries of the region intend to support this effort as well. Those who have experience leading to democratic transition can offer

invaluable assistance and advice to those who aspire to lead one in Serbia.

Finally, let me thank our partners in the European Union for their leadership and their willingness to be the principal contributors to the reconstruction of Kosovo and the development of southeast Europe. The International Donor Coordinators Process, chaired by the World Bank and the European Commission, will also play a key role in answering needs and mobilizing resources. We will do our part to work closely with the Stability Pact partners and the countries of the region.

At the same time, the United States will do its part, because it is in our interest to help complete the construction of an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe. We want to see an end to conflict in this region. We want to see freedom take firm root. We want to see human rights enshrined not only in formal documents but in daily lives. We want the nations of the region to be our partners in security and prosperity.

We strongly support the Stability Pact and pledge our support for it. The challenge now is to agree to a solid work plan and produce concrete results in the weeks and months ahead. We look forward to working with the Presidency of the EU, with the Stability Pact coordinator Bodo Hombach, and most important with our friends and partners in this region to turn promises into progress and to make this effort a success.

NOTE: The statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release.

Remarks to High School Students in Sarajevo *July 30, 1999*

I think we should give a round of applause again to Jana Jakic; she did a very good job, I think. *[Applause]* I would also like to thank your principal, Emina Avdagic. And I'd like to thank the Sarajevo Canton Prime Minister, Mr. Belkic. And especially all the students here on the platform with me, I thank them very much. I also would like to thank the bands that performed before me. I think they were of much

greater interest to the students than the President, but I'm glad to see them here. *[Laughter]*

I'm very glad to be back in Sarajevo, and especially to come to this school to see the rebuilding that is going on. Not long ago the Third Gymnasium was at the center of the cruel war. Today, as we can all see, the building still bears the scars of the past. But thanks to you, it holds the promise of Bosnia's future.

If all of you were to come and visit me in Washington, DC, at the White House, you would see that in the entrance to my office, the Oval Office, there is a picture of a woman in her very damaged apartment in Sarajevo. It was taken at the end of the war, and there is a quotation from the woman at the bottom of the picture expressing her thanks to me and to the United States for our help in bringing the Bosnian War to an end.

Every person from all over the world who comes to see me sees that picture, because I am proud of the role the United States had in bringing this war to an end.

But it is not enough to end a war; we must build a peace. It is not enough to reject a dark past; we must build a bright future. That is why the rebuilding of the Third Gymnasium can symbolize, not only for the students but for all the people of this nation, what we should be doing for tomorrow.

I know that students sent letters to the Sarajevo Canton asking that this school be repaired. One student wrote, "Please think of future generations." This school is a monument to Sarajevo's proud tradition of teaching young people from all backgrounds. Saving this school will save that tradition and will help all young people to have the future they deserve.

I want to thank all those involved in this effort, including the Sarajevo Canton and the city of Stockholm, Sweden; we have a representative from the Swedish Embassy here today; and USAID—and Hattie Babbitt from USAID is here. We are proud that the United States could be part of a genuine international partnership to restore this school to its rightful position.

You know, for so many people who have never been to this beautiful place, Sarajevo is a name associated only with violence. People know World War I started here, and they know how badly the city was shelled during the recent war. Often they do not know that for centuries, and for decades in the 20th century, a spirit of tolerance defined this beautiful place—a place where people lived and worked together, a place where Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Roman Catholics, and Jews were free to worship God as they chose.

That is the Sarajevo I want the world to know about. If you can draw on the best parts of your heritage to build a united future here, then it can be done elsewhere in Bosnia and throughout this region.

The Dayton agreement in 1995 did not rid Bosnia of all anger and fear or frustrating problems like high unemployment, corruption, and crime, but Dayton did offer all the people of Bosnia peaceful means to resolve their differences and move forward.

I want the world to know what you have achieved in the last 4 years: fair elections, a free press, reformed courts, a new single currency, the beginning of economic growth, better ties with your neighbors, war criminals out of power, nearly twice as many minority refugees returned in the first half of '99 as in any previous period. And though more needs to be done in many areas, especially in helping the economy to grow and in completing minority refugee returns, this is quite a record of accomplishment for the last 4 years, and you should be proud of it.

As all of you know, we had a summit here in Sarajevo today to talk about the future of southeastern Europe. Perhaps the most impressive thing to me was that the Bosnian Presidency spoke with one single, united voice. Two years ago, when I came here, I met with the Bosnian Presidency, and President Izetbegovic was there then. He had two different partners, a Croatian partner, a Serbian partner. And the wounds of war were still very fresh. So we sat around the table together, but they weren't really together. Today I saw three men who were really working together, who really believe that they could do things together. And I was very moved.

We have to bring these kinds of things throughout the Balkans and all of southeastern Europe. Think about what it was like here just a few years ago and realize today that there were 60 delegations—from Europe, North America, Asia, and international institutions—here to talk about how to build a better future for all of southeastern Europe.

We talked about how to lift the economy, how to bring the nations of this region together, and how to bring them closer to the rest of Europe and to North America. The contrast was stark. Remember, Mr. Milosevic tried to build a Greater Serbia based on dividing people and ethnic cleansing. Together we came to talk about building a greater Europe based on including people and healing.

I promised that the United States would do our part. Yesterday we pledged \$500 million for humanitarian aid to Kosovo. Today I pledged

to ask our Congress to reduce tariffs for most exports to the United States from Bosnia and other countries in the region. I pledged to provide an investment fund of \$150 million to encourage Americans to invest here and to help others to set up small businesses.

I pledged to work with our friends here to bring all nations who comply into the world trading system so that we can have more benefits flowing into Bosnia and the other countries in the region. We pledged to expand NATO's political and economic partnerships throughout southeastern Europe. And I asked the Europeans to join with me in helping you economically and politically. It is time to build the peace. The war is over, but we have to build a better peace for Bosnia and all the people of southeastern Europe.

Let me say I hope that before long, Serbia, too, will participate in this economic reconstruction. But I do not believe that we should give reconstruction aid to Serbia as long as it rejects democracy and as long as Mr. Milosevic is in power. We have had enough of ethnic cleansing.

But I want you to understand, I did not involve the United States in Bosnia or in Kosovo

to hurt Serbian people. We took a stand for the humanity of all people and against anyone who seeks to use racial, religious, or ethnic differences to promote hatred and crush people's hopes and deny children like those on this stage with me their God-given right to an education and a safe future.

I want this school—this school rebuilt—to be the symbol of all of our tomorrows. And I will do my best to see that the United States is your partner and your friend.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:52 p.m. in the courtyard at Treca Gimnazija (Third High School). In his remarks, he referred to student Jana Jakic, who introduced the President; Sarajevo Canton Prime Minister Beriz Belkic; former Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidency Members Kresimir Zubak (Croat) and Momcilo Krajisnik (Serb); current Presidency Members Alija Izetbegovic (Muslim), Ante Jelavic (Croat), and Zivko Radisic (Serb); and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Statement on the Murder of Neelan Thiruchelvam

July 30, 1999

Hillary and I were shocked and saddened by the tragic death of Neelan Thiruchelvam at the hands of terrorists in Sri Lanka today. We extend our deepest condolences to his wife and family.

Neelan Thiruchelvam was a constitutional lawyer and human rights advocate who was well-known and well-respected far beyond his country. He devoted himself to seeking a peaceful

and just solution to the tragic conflict that has caused so much bloodshed in Sri Lanka.

Hillary was deeply moved by her meeting with Mr. Thiruchelvam during her 1995 visit to Sri Lanka. With his death, a powerful voice for reconciliation in Sri Lanka has been silenced. I hope that this tragedy will spur efforts to find an end to the fighting and to build a lasting peace in Sri Lanka.

Statement on Senate Action on a Proposed Republican Tax Cut

July 30, 1999

The Senate made the wrong choice for America's future today. By pushing through a tax plan that is too big and too bloated, the majority

party has pushed aside our vital national priorities.

The Republican tax cut is so large it would undo our fiscal discipline and imperil our prosperity. It would crowd out our commitments to pay down the debt, to save Social Security, and to strengthen and modernize Medicare with a long-overdue prescription drug benefit. And it would demand drastic cuts in defense, education, law enforcement, agriculture, and the environment.

Let's be clear on what exactly this fight is about and what it isn't. It's not about whether to cut taxes. It's about whether to have tax cuts that save Social Security and Medicare, or tax

cuts that undermine them; tax cuts in the national interest, or tax cuts for special interests.

I will not sign a tax plan that shortchanges our seniors and our young people. I will not sign a plan that signs away our future. If Congress passes that kind of plan, I will veto it.

We should put first things first. We should pay down the debt, save Social Security, strengthen and modernize Medicare, and keep our crucial national commitments. We can do these things and still have the right kind of tax cuts. I urge the Congress to put aside plans that are plainly wrong for America and to work with me for what's right.

Remarks in a Discussion With Regional Independent Media in Sarajevo July 30, 1999

Postwar Bosnia

[The discussion began with a Sarajevo journalist thanking the President for his action in Bosnia and his support for democracy. He asked about the leadership of President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and U.S. efforts to help deliver indicted war criminals to the U.N. War Crimes Tribunal.]

The President. Let me answer the second question first because I think it leads us back to the first question. We were the principal supporter of creating this War Crimes Tribunal, and we have made very strong contributions to it, financial contributions. And we have worked hard to cooperate with it. So the answer to that is, we have cooperated strongly.

We also have been a part of an operation in Bosnia that has arrested, I think, about 29 of the 80 people who have been indicted. In the case of Mr. Mladic and Mr. Karadzic, they're not in the American sector. And when the United Nations accepted the mandate of going into Bosnia, the mandate was that they could and would arrest any people who had been indicated by the War Crimes Tribunal if they, in effect, came across them, but they wouldn't start another war to get them. That was basically the mandate. And I think we should continue to do everything we can to arrest people. But I think if—there's no question that the effectiveness, the impact, of both those

men has been, in effect, ended or dramatically reduced.

Now, to go back to your first question. You said, is Milosevic the only nationalist politician who's causing problems? I don't think you could go that far, but I believe that basically the misery of Bosnia, the war, the 4-year war, and what happened in Kosovo is because of his 12-year rule and because he had a policy to gain and enhance his power based on selling Greater Serbia to people, the idea that anybody who wasn't a Serb was an enemy, had no political legitimacy, that their religion was no good, their ethnic background was no good, it was okay to disregard them and uproot them, and maybe okay to kill them.

And here in Bosnia, 250,000 people died, and a quarter of a million people were made refugees. In Kosovo, because we acted more quickly, not so many people died. We know of 10,000, although there are a lot of mass graves that have been dug up, and people have been moved, so we don't know for sure. But 800,000 or more refugees—most of them have gone home in Kosovo, unlike Bosnia, where, because the thing went on longer here, they are taking longer to go back.

So I say, you know, each—the politicians, when they run for office, there are all kinds of shades, you know. There are people who may be nationalists but still prepared to work with

people of different ethnic groups, different religious backgrounds. And I think that the difference is that he was willing to have ethnic cleansing and even mass killing to achieve his objectives. And I think that's wrong.

Then you asked me if I thought Bosnia, the people could actually be reconciled. Yes, I believe so, but I think we have to keep giving people something to work for. It's not enough to go around and tell people, after this sort of killing and bitterness, that, "Now, be nice people," you know, "Just do the right thing." You have to give them something positive, some reason to work together.

And what I saw today, with the Bosnian Presidency, was that they were—you know, sure, there's still tensions. There are all these refugee-return issues, for example—big issues out there. But they were much more comfortable together and, obviously, had more in common than they did 2 years ago. And I think that's a plus.

Montenegro

[After describing current conditions in Montenegro and noting U.S. support for the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), a Montenegrin journalist asked the President if he would support Montenegrin independence or work against it.]

The President. Well, first of all, you have asked a very good set of questions because—but I think I need to back up and say, we very much appreciate the role that Montenegro has played in these last difficult months. It has been in a very hard position. It has been vulnerable to invasion, as you pointed out. And the government of President Djukanovic maintained a position of independence and the position that Montenegro should acquire more and more autonomy and should be a democratic and multi-ethnic society; that's what we believe.

Now, here's the problem. Obviously—and you've pointed out quite properly that we shouldn't punish Montenegro with withholding aid, reconstruction aid for example, just because it's part of Yugoslavia; and that's a good example of the dilemma.

Here's what I'm interested in. I want the people of Montenegro to have maximum freedom and maximum self-determination. But I don't think it's a good idea for the United States, or for Western Europe generally, to get in the business of redrawing national borders right

now. Who knows what is going to happen in the future? I think—we need to stand for a certain set of principles.

But what I want to say to all the ethnic groups of the Balkans, and all of southeastern Europe, is that we have to build a future in which your safety, your right to freedom of religion, freedom of speech, access to education, access to a job, does not depend upon your living in a nation where everybody inside the nation's borders has the same religion you do and the same ethnic group you do. And in the past, when outside powers have attempted to redraw the lines of the Balkans and impose that, the results have been very painful for the people here. It's led to a lot of suffering.

So I don't want to strip any people of their democratic aspirations, and I don't think it's right for the United States to do that. But I also don't think it's right for us or for any other outside power to come in and, in effect, say, "Well, because we don't like Mr. Milosevic, we're going to redraw all the national boundaries," because the real trick here is to preserve democracy, self-determination, freedom from religious or racial or ethnic persecution in all these countries, without regard to the national borders.

And what we need is—and let me just make one other point. If we had the right sort of economic and political integration in southeastern Europe and then the right ties between southeastern Europe and the rest of Europe—central and Western Europe—then it wouldn't matter so much one way or the other.

That is, if you knew human rights were going to be protected, and if you knew everyone in this region was going to be tied together economically and politically, across national borders, and that the region would be tied to Europe and would have a future with the emerging European institutions, then the actual status—whether you were independent or autonomous, for example—wouldn't be nearly so important.

And what I've been afraid of—the reason I've been reluctant to say anything about territorial borders is, there is a whole history in the 20th century of disaster happening in the Balkans because of outside powers redrawing the national borders. We have to change the nature of national life and the nature of international cooperation, and then I believe, over the next few years, whatever is right about the national

borders will settle down. The people will somehow determine that, not outsiders. That's what I think will happen.

Serbia

[The journalist pointed out that the Serbian infrastructure and economy had collapsed. He asked how stability could return while Serbia was denied financial aid and the how the President planned to deal with strong anti-American sentiments in Serbia. He also asked about past meetings between the President and Mr. Milosevic.]

The President. In Paris.

Q. *[Inaudible]*—in Paris, yes. So I——

The President. And he was, of course, in the United States, at Dayton.

Q. Yes, but you met him in Paris. And I think that you will never meet him again because he is now an indicted war criminal. But I want to ask your personal impression about Mr. Milosevic. How do you keep him in your mind—as a rival, stubborn rival? You hope, now, for almost——

The President. Let me answer you that. You asked, first of all, about aid to Serbia because the Serbs have been hurt very badly by this war. And then you ask about——

Q. The anti-American mood.

The President. —the anti-American feeling, and then my personal impressions of Mr. Milosevic.

The international community has taken the position that we would support humanitarian assistance to the Serbian people, because we realize that we have very badly damaged Serbia, economically, and stretched the social fabric in this conflict. We would like very much to—the United States, in particular, would like to participate in the rebuilding of Serbia, because we have many Americans of Serbian heritage and because we want to make it clear that we're not anti-Serb; we were against Mr. Milosevic's policies. But we do not believe at this moment we can or should go beyond the humanitarian aid, for the simple reason that if we do, it will strengthen Mr. Milosevic's hold on power. So it's a terrible dilemma. But the people of Serbia need to find some way to change their government.

He has been charged by the War Crimes Tribunal. The evidence is overwhelming. The reason we acted so quickly in the case of Kosovo

was because of the horrible experience we had in Bosnia, and I was President for 2 of those years. It was a nightmare, and we only got the international community galvanized to take action after Srebrenica. So I think that, if the people of Serbia want us to be involved beyond humanitarian aid, then there needs to be a change in the government.

Now, in terms of anti-American feeling, I can only say I understand it, even though we didn't act alone and all of our European allies agreed with us. We have the largest military, and we dropped the most bombs. And unfortunately, there were some innocent civilians killed in the bombs, and I feel terrible about it, and I understand it.

But I just would ask the people to consider the position I was in. When I first became President, I tried talking with Mr. Milosevic for 2½ years. And tens of thousands of people died in Bosnia. Here, we knew they had a plan. We knew that the Milosevic government had a plan to systematically uproot the Kosovars, to kill, to loot, to destroy the property records in a very systematic way. And we did not want to wait another year or 2 and let all these people die and all these refugees be created and then not come home.

If you look in Bosnia, here, we're sitting here in Sarajevo, and over a million people have still not come back. In Kosovo, because we moved immediately, 90 percent of the refugees have already gone home.

So if the Serbs are mad at me, I understand that, and I accept it as part of the inevitable consequences of a terrible conflict. But I want them to know they can continue to be mad at me, but the United States does not hate Serbia. We do not have anything against the Serbian people. Our country is a better country because we have so many Serbs in America. And I want to be involved in the reconstruction of Serbia, and I want Serbia to have a leading role in southeastern Europe in the future.

But we have got to put an end to ethnic cleansing. The politics that have driven Mr. Milosevic's government and power for the last 12 years have got to be put aside. The idea of racial or religious superiority has got to go into the dustbin of history.

And I'm very sympathetic with it. It had a big hold on America—you know, the idea that whites were superior to blacks had a big hold

on America. We didn't elect a Catholic President until 1960 in the United States. I understand these things. But you can't—we've reached a point now where we can no longer sanction this sort of slaughter. And I think it's a good thing for the world. So the people can be mad at me, but they need to know Americans have nothing against Serbs. We opposed what Mr. Milosevic did.

And the third question you asked me was about my impressions of Mr. Milosevic. I am reluctant to say much, you know, because at home people are always psychoanalyzing me. You know, they meet President Clinton, "Why was your President, President Clinton?"

I think he is a very intelligent man. I think that he can be charming. But I think there are two problems that he has, that have proved fatal. Number one, he has built his political power on the idea of the religious and ethnic superiority of Serbs and their inherent right not only to be a part of but to completely dominate whatever he decides is Greater Serbia. He thought it was what is generally the Republic Srpska, now, in Bosnia. He took the autonomy away from Kosovo, which it once had. Now you have Hungarians in Vojvodina, and you have the Montenegrins worried, because he basically has created this fear, this paranoia, in the Serbian population, and then he fed it, like a fire, with the bodies and lives of others.

Now, you know, there were other excesses in this region. The others are not pure. But he created this whole thing, and he drove it home in Bosnia, and then he drove it home in Kosovo. And I think he had—in other words, I think he had a dark and terrible idea.

The other thing I observed from watching him is, perhaps because of the tragedies of his own life—he had terrible tragedies, you know, as a child, with his parents and all—I feel very badly about it, but I don't think he feels the way normal people would feel when they make decisions that cost people their lives.

I know, you see, I know when I ordered those airplanes to fly over Serbia, I knew innocent people would die, and I hated it. And the only reason I did it was because I knew I was saving many, many tens of thousands of people's lives, more than would die.

I think to him it doesn't matter. That's the only thing I can conclude. After watching 250,000 people die in Bosnia and seeing these stories of these children raped and these chil-

dren—they were draft-age boys—killed en masse, and these people wrapped up in a circle and burned alive, and it happens over and over and over again—I can only conclude that he has no—for whatever reason, he doesn't have normal feelings.

So those are my two problems with Mr. Milosevic. I think this idea of ethnic and religious superiority is the biggest threat to civilization in the world today, not just in the Balkans—Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Africa, you just go right down the line, everywhere in the world. In the United States—we had a guy go crazy the other day and kill a bunch of people of different races in the United—did you see it? In two States?

Q. Yes.

The President. Killing these people. Why? Because he belonged to some crazy religious cult that convinced him he had the right to do that.

So that's what I feel. I think it's quite a tragedy because he's an intelligent man, and he can be an engaging man. And I talked to him in Paris, and I thought we had an understanding. I was quite surprised actually in the beginning—he knew after what I did in Bosnia that I would do this. So I don't know how he could have thought I was bluffing him after what we went through in Bosnia, when I said, "If you do what you intend to do in Kosovo, this is what I will do." He should have been under no illusion. I think he thought maybe the other Europeans wouldn't stay hitched.

But I made a decision—I agonized through 2 long years of what we went through in Bosnia, and I was not about to let all those people die again. I just was not. I couldn't do it. So, anyway, that's my impression. I think it's quite a tragedy really, because he has a lot of ability.

Q. Thank you.

Bosnia After the Dayton Accords

Q. Mr. President, we talk about—what is the basis for the optimism regarding peace Stability Pact for the Balkans if we know how little politicians from the former Yugoslavia work on the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement?

The President. I would make two points. First of all, I think both here and perhaps in Europe and the United States, we tend to underestimate how much progress has been made in Bosnia

since Dayton. That is, there are common governmental institutions; there's a common currency. After the economy was completely destroyed, it's been growing at about 40 percent a year since then. I realize it's got a long way to go because it was at nothing. The shared institutions have functioned in many ways. So I do not believe that we have made no progress. I think the biggest problem with the Dayton agreement is we still have 1.2 million refugees who haven't come back. And the return of refugees in areas where they are minorities is still very slow.

But if you look at the leadership of Mr. Dodik in the Republic of Srpska, for example, I think he's been quite a progressive, cooperative person. I met with both Prime Ministers today, as well as the three Presidents.

So what I draw from watching what has and what hasn't happened since Dayton is that we need more help to this whole in governance, that is, what kind of legal changes do you have to make to get people to put their money in your country and put your people to work? How do you fight, more effectively, crime?

But the crime problems in the Balkans—you know, that we have organized crime all over the world now—it's not just here. So it's just really a question of do you have the capacity to fight it. You shouldn't feel that there's something wrong, intrinsically wrong with your region because you have this organized crime problem. It's everywhere in the world. So the real issue is, do you have the capacity to fight it? We have to build that. So I think that's important.

Now, in addition to that, the reason I'm optimistic about the Stability Pact is that I think that the experience of Kosovo, coming after the experience of Bosnia, was very sobering for me and for the European leaders. And I think we saw clearly that if we didn't want another Balkan war, we had not only to take a strong stance against Mr. Milosevic and against ethnic cleansing; we had to offer a better future for all the people of the region. There had to be a way to bring people together around a common economic and political future within the region, and then a way to bring the region closer together with the rest of Europe and to keep us involved in a positive way.

So that's why I'm optimistic. I think that all these people who came here today, I think they understand that. I don't think they're kidding. I think they really know that.

Well, let me make one other point, back up if I might. In 1993, when I became President, I realized that we had fought two World Wars in Europe; that we had had this long cold war with communism in Europe; that before the 20th century, Europe for hundreds of years had been afflicted by wars as people sought advantage of land; and that for the first time ever, we now had a chance to build a Europe that was democratic everywhere, that was drawing together in a common political and economic union and that was at peace; and the biggest threat were the religious and ethnic conflicts of the Balkans.

I think now, after all this work of the last 6 years, we now know that unless we build a common economic future and a common political future, we're going to have—there will someday be another Balkan war. And that's why I'm optimistic, because I think we have learned our lessons, and I think we are ready to make this common commitment.

One more. Yes, let him ask one more, and then we've got to go.

Corruption in Southeast Europe

Q. With new power, we have new problem, corruption. Does the international community intend to fight against our corruption?

The President. Yes, but a lot of it is you have to do it yourself, and we have to help you fight against it because—and you see this everywhere. Again, a lot of former socialist states convert to democratic states and privatize property, but when we privatize—when we have private property in America, we also have strong economic institutions to preserve the integrity of the economy, to keep dishonesty out. We have strong, sophisticated law enforcement institutions, and even we still have problems. Everybody has problems.

So, I think you should—you shouldn't feel that there's something wrong with your country because this vulnerability is everywhere. And we have to—we will help you—we have to help you fight corruption. But you shouldn't feel that there's something really badly wrong with you; you should just fight it.

And one of the most important things is a free press. Keep in mind, in any society, most people are honest. In every society on Earth, most people are honest. And in most societies, the people who do turn to crime don't do it unless they have—they feel like they have no

other choice. That is, in any society, there are only a small percentage of people who deliberately decide to make money illegally.

But this is a worldwide problem we face, this corruption problem now. And if you will fight it, we will help you. And the press has got to be a major part of the battle.

Thank you.

NOTE: The discussion was recorded at 6 p.m. at Treca Gimnazija (Third High School) for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to indicted war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic; President Milo Djukanovic of Mon-

tenegro; Prime Minister Milorad Dodik of Republika Srpska; Prime Minister Edhem Bicakcic of the Federation Government (Muslim and Croat); Presidency Chairman (Serb) Zivko Radisic, Presidency Member (Croat) Ante Jelavic, and Presidency Member (Muslim) Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina; and Benjamin Nathaniel Smith who allegedly killed two and wounded seven in Illinois and Indiana before committing suicide on July 5. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 30 but was embargoed for release until July 31. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this discussion.

Radio Remarks on Proposed Legislation To Help Farmers *July 30, 1999*

As America's farmers look ahead to this year's harvest, what should be a time of reward and satisfaction is instead becoming a time of disappointment and for some, for too many, a time of ruin.

From dropping crop prices to diminishing foreign markets to devastating droughts in some parts of the country, many of our farmers and ranchers are facing the worst crisis in a decade. My administration has done what we can to ease this crisis, from increasing our food purchases for humanitarian aid around the world, to speeding up farm program payments, to ensuring \$6 billion in emergency aid last year to help farmers in need. To really help our farmers and ranchers, we have to fix the underlying problem.

Let's just face it: The 1996 farm bill simply does not do enough to help our farmers and ranchers cope in hard times. It doesn't give me or the United States Department of Agriculture the tools we need to help farmers and ranchers thrive over the long term, from providing critical income assistance to farmers who need it most in bad years to making it easier for farmers to buy crop insurance and improving our crop

insurance program to continuing our efforts to expand markets abroad and ensure fair practices here at home. That's the right way to help our farmers and ranchers over the long term.

I am committed to working with Congress to provide the resources to help our farmers and ranchers by dealing with today's crisis and by fixing the farm bill for the future. We must do so in a way that maintains the fiscal discipline that has created our prosperity and that now makes it possible for us to save Social Security, to strengthen and modernize Medicare with a prescription drug benefit, and to pay off our national debt, guaranteeing our long-term financial prosperity. These things are good for America's farming and ranching families, too, and they're good for all Americans.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10 p.m. aboard Air Force One at Aviano Air Base, Italy, for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 31. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

The President's Radio Address

July 31, 1999

Good morning. More than a year and a half ago, I asked Congress to pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights that ensures critical protections for Americans in managed care, from the right to see a specialist if your doctor recommends it to the right to emergency room care whenever and wherever you need it to the right to keep your doctor through a treatment—even if your employer changes HMO coverage—to the right to hold health plans accountable for harmful decisions.

Now, according to a new survey out just this week, physicians believe that when their patients are denied services under managed care, up to two-thirds of the time those denials lead to serious declines in patients' health. Clearly, patients need protections. The bottom line must never take precedence over patients' needs, and too often it does today.

Using my authority as President, I've already acted to make these rights real for 85 million Americans who get their health care through Federal plans, from Medicare and Medicaid to the veterans administration health plan that serves millions of veterans and their families. Evidence shows putting in patients' rights raised the cost of these plans by only a dollar a month, so we know these rights are affordable, as well as crucial. Yet, until Congress acts, tens of millions of Americans in managed care are still waiting for the full protection of a Patients' Bill of Rights. Democrats in Congress have long been pressing to pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights that would cover all Americans in all health care plans, and nearly every doctors' association, every nurses' association, every patients' rights group in America—over 200 of them—supports this approach.

The Republican leadership in Congress, on the other hand, has long resisted, supporting instead a weak alternative that is a Patients' Bill of Rights in name only. It doesn't even cover 100 million Americans. Now, the Senate barely passed such a weak bill over the opposition of every single Democratic Member and a couple of brave Republicans. Hopefully, we can still make progress. Just this week several Repub-

lican House Members, led by some who, themselves, are doctors, forcefully raised their voices in support of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. This is very good news, indeed. It means there is a bipartisan consensus emerging behind a bill that would give all Americans the health protections they need. This bill should be debated and voted on this coming week, before Congress adjourns for the summer. If that happens, I believe the bill would pass, and the American people would benefit.

Unfortunately, House Republican leaders, who earlier this week said they would schedule a vote on the Patients' Bill of Rights this month, yesterday began backing away from that commitment when it became clear that a real Patients' Bill of Rights might well pass. This is very disappointing, and I call on them to reconsider. If the House is brave enough to protect the American people over the intense lobbying of the health insurance companies, the Republican leadership shouldn't stand in their way. The American people sent us to Washington to get work done, and Congress shouldn't go on summer vacation without voting on the Patients' Bill of Rights.

Protecting patients' rights shouldn't be a political issue; after all, no one asks us what our party affiliation is when we show up at the emergency room or the doctor's office, and in fact, this isn't a partisan issue anywhere else in America. It shouldn't be in Washington, DC. Let's make this summer a season of progress for all Americans. Let's hold an open and fair debate and pass a real Patients' Bill of Rights that will truly strengthen our health care system, strengthen our families, and strengthen our Nation for the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 10 p.m. on July 30 aboard Air Force One at Aviano Air Base, Italy, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 31. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks on the Youth Antidrug Media Campaign August 2, 1999

The President. Thank you so much. Andy, you might consider politics when you get out of skateboarding. [Laughter] You have to fall down a lot. It's about as dangerous, and we could use you. I thought he did a terrific job. Let's give him another hand. [Applause]

General McCaffrey, thank you so much, and all your team, for the wonderful job you do. I met General McCaffrey when he was still in uniform, and I decided he could do just about anything he put his mind to, and I think he's just about proved it. I think he and the whole team, all of them who are here, have done a wonderful job. I'm grateful to them.

Jim Burke, thank you so much—you and the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, for everything you have done, and for the inspiration and the urging you have given to me these last 6½ years. Thank you, Peggy Conlon, and the Ad Council, for all you have done to make this media campaign a success, and I want to thank Senator Specter and Congressman Levin and Congressman Cummings for being here, because the Congress has been a critical part of this.

Let me say, before I get into my brief remarks and we watch the ads, which is why we all came here—because this is my first opportunity to meet with the media today, I want to say a word about this heat wave that is going on in our country that now has claimed at least 190 lives and caused great hardship, especially for a lot of our farmers and ranchers.

Emergency Assistance for Farmers

Our Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, today issued an emergency declaration for all of West Virginia and for counties in surrounding States which will give family farm operators eligibility for low-interest emergency loans. We're also working with local governments and private agencies to help farmers get water and hay to keep their livestock alive. It's literally a problem for them to keep their livelihoods alive. I'm also committed to working with this Congress to provide the resources to help our farmers and ranchers to deal with the crisis today and by fixing the farm bill for the future.

To others, especially our elderly who are very vulnerable in this heat, we have provided \$100

million to pay for air-conditioning and fans, and I expect we will be doing more things in the days ahead.

Youth Antidrug Media Campaign

Now, let me talk a little bit about this whole antidrug effort, and let me begin with something that has not yet been mentioned. We owe a profound debt to the men and women who are engaged in this struggle for our children's lives and future. All those who are here today or their groups have been mentioned. I also want to say a special word of appreciation to the young people who are here who remind us what this campaign is all about. And there are a lot of young people here today, and I want to thank all of them for being here.

I'd also like to say that we should not let this moment go by without acknowledging the enormous courage of a lot of our men and women in various Federal services and the armed services who are working to prevent drugs from coming here in the first place.

Last week we mourned the loss of five U.S. Army personnel who died with their Colombian colleagues when their antidrug reconnaissance plane crashed in the Andes. They perished far from home, but in a very real sense they gave their lives to protect our families, our neighborhoods, our Nation, indeed, our national security. We honor their commitment. We remember their sacrifice. And I'm sure all of us will join in a pledge to continue their work.

I also want to say that as much work as still remains to be done, I'd like to take a moment just to celebrate the work that all of you have done. When we were out there running for office in 1992, the Vice President had this hilarious rap about everything that should be up was down, and everything that should be down was up, and everything was all mixed up. And it is true. And one of the sad things that was up was drug use.

All of you, I suppose, have heard me say this, but I have had personal experience with the devastation drugs can bring to families. I know they can bring death, and, as I saw in my own family with my brother, they can also destroy lives. I also saw that they are not fatal if you survive them, that you can come back.

For all of you who deal with drug treatment and who help young people overcome their problems, I am personally, profoundly grateful.

Since I've been here, I've done what I could to work with people who were committed to turning our children away from drugs and saving more families from going through what my family did. And again I say, under the remarkable leadership of General McCaffrey and with the help of all the community groups and all the others here represented, we have seen the unrelenting increase in drug use begin to turn around. In the last 2 years, drug use has begun to decline among people of all ages for all types of drugs.

We've tried to do more with enforcement and prevention, more police on the street, doing more to keep drugs from coming into the United States, more drug testing of prisoners and parolees to break the link between drugs and crime. And of course, in December of 1997, we'd launched this sweeping effort to change the attitudes of an entire generation of young people with the unprecedented youth antidrug media campaign.

I'd like to just say a word here. Normally, the press in Washington focuses on what we are fighting about and what the parties disagree about. But we had enormous bipartisan support in Congress for this endeavor, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

It seemed a little awkward at first when General McCaffrey and I went to the Congress to ask for this money, but I kept pointing out—I said, "Look, guys, look how much money we raise every year to advertise. Every election, we advertise because we think that we have to get our message out. When I'm doing something up here people disagree with, groups get together and raise money, and they advertise, and they say the President is wrong." And it's part of the American system. And here we've got a problem that is just as important, if not more important than anything else in our society, where we know we have a large number of our young people who may not be getting the right message, and it seemed to me totally illogical that we would not be using one of the most important weapons for influencing attitudes in a modern information age.

The media campaign appears to be working even better than we had thought across all grade levels, income levels, races, and genders. Today I will release the results of a detailed evaluation

of the second phase of this campaign in which we began rolling out the ads nationwide. This report shows that if you're a teenager or a parent, it is nearly impossible to avoid seeing or hearing our antidrug messages on television or radio several times a week. It shows the percentage of young people who said the ads made them stay away from drugs increased significantly during the course of the study.

We expected the ads would greatly increase awareness. What we didn't expect was that the ads would already have a measurable effect on attitudes. This is a very good sign. What it proves is, I suppose, what we should have known all along, that if advertising works in commerce and advertising works in politics, advertising ought to work on this issue as well.

I have to say a special word of appreciation to the Ad Council and all those who put the ads together, because they were, one, effective, and two, honest. And in order to have any enduring impact, I can tell you, having participated for 25 years, now, in doing political advertising, they have to be both effective and honest in order to last. And to all those who helped us put these ads together, I am very, very grateful.

Today we launch the next phase of the campaign. I think the most appropriate thing to do is just to show you a couple of our newest ads, and you will see that the gentleman who introduced me is in truth a professional athlete. [Laughter] So let's turn out the lights and watch the ad. We ought to turn the lights out. Otherwise, we won't be able to see them. [Laughter]

[At this point, videotapes of the ads were shown.]

The President. I told Andy that I had already seen him on television; even I, when I'm channel-surfing, sometimes catch the skateboarders. [Laughter] Every time I see him do that I think, you know, a couple of years ago I fell 6 inches and was hobbled for 6 months. [Laughter] Thank you.

Let me say, as important as this advertising is, it isn't enough. And I want to say a special word of appreciation for the partnerships at the national and community level, because everywhere young people go during every part of the day, they will see more than the television. They will see the message that drugs are wrong; they can kill; they are illegal.

This will outdo the "Star Wars" promotion for name and brand. You will see not just television, radio, newspapers, magazines, the Internet; you will see this message on bus stops and subway cars, movie screens, and video games. It will be in the classroom through cable programming in schools and substance abuse materials we'll provide the teachers.

It will be part of after-school activities, through organizations like the YMCA. The message will be part of an increasing number of sporting events, like basketball tournaments sponsored by the New York Knicks. And last month during the X Games, not only did we place antidrug messages everywhere the TV viewer could constantly see them, we also handed out stickers with the slogan, "Get vertical, not high." They became one of the hottest items for the hundreds of thousands of spectators who came to the X Games.

And as General McCaffrey said, we will get the word out in 11 languages other than English, including Spanish, Cantonese, Vietnamese, and Navajo and Lakota, a language I just tried out when I was at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

I think that this phase will be even more effective than the last phase of the campaign. And I think you will see real impacts on the behavior of our young people and that teen drug use will continue to decline.

But I would also say that no matter how effective all of you are, we still have to have more help as close to home as possible, with

the parents sitting down and talking to their children, not waiting until their children are using drugs to talk about them, and with all the teachers, the coaches, the mentors, the community police, the health care workers and, of course, the religious leaders, making up what the First Lady always calls the village, that have to help raise our children.

And finally, I'd like to say that young people should not ever minimize the impact they can have not only on their own lives but on their friends and their siblings. In every school in America there's a young person who is a good kid but just a little lost or confused, who can be reached by a friend, very often who can be reached by a friend more than the President or any other figure in apparent authority.

So I say to all of you, first, thanks, and second, let's keep going. Together, we can give every single child in this country a chance to grow up in a world where the only limits are the outlines of their hopes and dreams. Not every child can be a skateboard champion like Andy, but every child can fly.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:57 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Andy Macdonald, professional skateboarder, who introduced the President; James E. Burke, chairman, Partnership for a Drug-Free America; and Peggy Conlon, president, Ad Council.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Dan Dutko

August 2, 1999

First, I would like to say on behalf of Hillary and myself how grateful we are for the life of our friend and how grateful we are for all of you who have come to be with us in honoring it and for those who have spoken before. I have now laughed, and I have cried, and I still miss him terribly.

Of all the metaphors we might use about Dan, most of which are funny, I think one which is not funny that really is best is that he was a gardener, for in all of our lives he planted seeds that bore fruit. In the Psalms,

it says, "A good man shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. His leaves shall not wither. Whatsoever he do, it shall prosper." Dan made the Earth bloom, wherever he planted himself.

The work and the people he touched were his blossom. All of us in this room, those of us who are in politics, those of us who are in private life, however he knew or touched us, he made us blossom more than we would have otherwise. And therefore, as decreed in the Psalms, his memory will never wither.

Now, I have a story to tell. I met Dan Dutko 27 years ago, in one of our great lost causes. [Laughter] I mean, this is a doozy. [Laughter] We were in the McGovern campaign in Texas. [Laughter] Now, it was bad enough to be in the McGovern campaign anywhere in Texas. [Laughter] Dan insisted on leading the effort in west Texas—[laughter]—where it was hard to find anyone who would mention Senator McGovern's name.

He wanted to work for the campaign. He actually ran our effort in Tom Green County, where we got 30 percent of the vote. I might add, that was only 3 percent less than we got in the whole State. [Laughter] And everyone who looked at it thought it was the most remarkable performance of the entire campaign.

Well, all his life he loved big challenges. He stayed with me, and I turned out to be a bigger one than he bargained for. [Laughter] He was really—you know, talk about big words—he was sort of an oxymoron in popular imagination. He was someone others might call a lobbyist, whose integrity, honor were unquestioned. He became a person of consequence in Washington, even though he was born without a nickel to his name, because of that integrity and honor, because of energy and ability, and because, as you see, he had a huge network of devoted friends—enough, Rabbi, that probably we are violating some fire code here today.

He lived too briefly, but he did live the American dream. And he was a self-made man who never forgot where he came from. That's why he stayed in the Democratic Party and loved it so much. He thought everybody ought to have a chance to live out their dreams and become what God meant for them to be.

I want to say just one thing that meant a particular—a lot to me. When we got our brains beat out in the congressional elections of 1994, a lot of people became sunshine soldiers and were running for cover. Not Dan Dutko; man, he stepped out. He said, "This is just the sort of thing I'm looking for." [Laughter] Everyone wrote us off for dead, said the Democratic Party was becoming a historical artifact. Al Gore and I would have to next appear in a wax museum somewhere. [Laughter] Not Dan Dutko. He never had a doubt. He never paused. He never shirked. He was there in '96. The Vice President mentioned his role in our Inaugural in '97. He was there in '98. He was always the guy on our team that no one ever had to buck up.

He was always the one who was lifting everyone else up. He was always the one who had that miraculous combination of an infectious smile and a steely will and a genuinely good heart. But most of all, he was a gardener. He planted, and what he planted bloomed.

One of the previous speakers mentioned how much he liked to take promising young people and mentor them and help them flourish. So many of you here are a testament to that, including the new Senator from my home State, Blanche Lincoln, who started her career in Washington here as his personal assistant.

One of the things that I am most grateful that he nurtured was AmeriCorps, our national service program, which Debbie now leads magnificently. Whenever we were having trouble in Congress, he was there. His heart was there. His soul was there. His determination was there. And it came not just from his devotion to his wife but from his belief that all young people should have a chance to serve.

In no small measure, because of Dan Dutko, 100,000 of those young people have had their chance to serve. Hillary told me that even over our last weekend together in Aspen, Dan was talking to her about AmeriCorps' fifth anniversary and asking folks to help out with the celebration.

So we are grateful to him not only for his help to me and the Vice President but for his role in making America a better place. Most of all, we're grateful for his friendship. We loved having Dan and Deb over to the White House to watch movies. He was like me; he liked action movies. We thought there should be a category at the Academy Awards for best performance in totally inane film. [Laughter] The last one, we saw together just last month.

I don't think I ever met a man with a more genuine smile, more direct, clear, undebatable sense of good will just coming at you over and over and over again. I'll miss the way he talked about his wife and his sons. I'll miss the fact that he was always there, in the rain as well as the sunshine.

I want Deb, and most of all, his sons, to know that he was one of the principal reasons that I had a chance to serve our country as President. And I want them to know that we all know he was a good and loving father and husband—cared more for them than his own life. And that is something that can sustain them for their lives.

This is a town obsessed with success. We normally score it by winning and losing. So if I might, I would like to close with Ralph Waldo Emerson's definition. He must have written it about Dan Dutko. "To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children. To appreciate beauty, find the best in others. To leave the world a little better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a redeemed social condition. To know even one life has breathed easier because you

have lived—this is the meaning of success." And the meaning of our friend's life.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. at Temple Sinai. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator and 1972 Democratic Presidential nominee George McGovern; Rabbi Fred N. Reiner of Temple Sinai; and Mr. Dutko's widow, AmeriCorps Director Deborah Jospin, and his sons Jonathan and Matthew.

Statement on Action To Reduce the National Debt

August 2, 1999

Today my administration announced that the U.S. Government will pay down more than \$87 billion in the public debt this year—the largest debt reduction in America's history and a total reduction of \$142 billion over the last 2 years. This is an important result of the fiscal discipline which is helping keep our Nation on its path to economic prosperity. Six and a half years ago we made the decision to set a new course for our economy, to abandon the large deficits to pursue a new economic strategy of fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and expanded trade abroad. One of the results of this economic strategy has been a public debt that is \$1.7 trillion lower than it was projected to be when I came into office.

Debt reduction brings tangible benefits to America's working families through lower interest rates. These lower interest costs effectively represent a real and significant tax cut for America's families. Debt reduction lowers long-term

interest rates for home mortgages and autos and lowers borrowing costs for businesses, fueling private sector investments for continued economic growth. A typical American family with a home mortgage of \$100,000 could expect to have an estimated savings over the long run of more than \$2,000 a year because of these lower interests rates.

Despite the continued progress, now is not the time to rest on this achievement. We must continue this commitment to debt reduction and maintaining fiscal discipline. Under my framework to pay down the debt, save Social Security, and strengthen Medicare and invest in our children, the publicly held debt will be eliminated by 2015. This would represent the first time the Nation would be debt-free since the administration of President Andrew Jackson in 1835. We must maintain our commitment to reducing our debt and investing in our future.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions

August 2, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance

with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). My last report, consistent with Public Law 102-1, was transmitted on May 19, 1999.

Overview

We are convinced that as long as Saddam Hussein remains in power, he will continue to threaten the well-being of his people, the peace of the region, and vital U.S. interests. We will continue to contain these threats, but over the long term, the best way to address them is by encouraging the establishment of a new government in Baghdad. To this end, we continue to work intensively with the Iraqi opposition. In May, the Iraqi National Congress (INC) Interim Presidency Committee met with the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and several Members of Congress in Washington. The Department of State has been assisting the INC in its preparations for a National Assembly meeting. Also, the Department has been working with other nongovernmental organizations to develop projects to assist the Iraqi opposition and the Iraqi people in their efforts to achieve a regime change. In June, delegations from the two main Kurdish parties traveled to Washington to discuss the next steps in implementing the reconciliation agreement they signed in Washington last year.

During the last 60 days, we have also been working with members of the UNSC to build support to adopt a resolution that would reestablish an effective disarmament and monitoring presence inside Iraq, better meet the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people, and increase pressure on Iraq to account for those missing from the Gulf War, and return Kuwaiti property. The Security Council is currently continuing its discussions on these matters.

The United States continues to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the oil-for-food program. On May 21, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1242, extending the program for another 180 days.

U.S. and Coalition Force Levels in the Gulf Region

Saddam Hussein's record of aggressive behavior necessitates the deployment of a highly capable force in the region in order to deter Iraq from threatening its neighbors, reconstituting its WMD program, or moving against the Kurds in Northern Iraq. We will continue to maintain a robust posture and have established a rapid

reinforcement capability to supplement our forces in the Gulf, if needed.

Our forces are a balanced mix of land and carrier-based aircraft, surface ships, a Patriot missile battalion, a mechanized battalion task force, and special operations units. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel are also deployed.

Operation Northern Watch and Operation Southern Watch

Aircraft of the United States and coalition partners enforcing the no-fly zones over Iraq under Operations Northern Watch and Southern Watch are regularly illuminated by radar and engaged by anti-aircraft artillery, and occasionally, by surface-to-air missiles.

As a result of Iraq's no-fly zone violations and attacks on our aircraft, our aircrews continue to respond with force. United States and coalition forces are fully prepared and authorized to defend themselves against Iraqi threats while carrying out their no-fly zone enforcement mission and, when circumstances warranted, have engaged various components of the Iraqi integrated air defense system. While threats to our aircraft continue, actual Iraqi aircraft violations of the no-fly zones have declined.

The Maritime Interception Force

The multinational Maritime Interception Force (MIF), operating in accordance with Resolution 665 and other relevant resolutions, continues to enforce U.N. sanctions in the Gulf. The U.S. Navy is the single largest component of the MIF, but it is frequently augmented by ships, aircraft, and other support assets from Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Kuwait, The Netherlands, New Zealand, the UAE, and the United Kingdom. Member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) provide logistical and personnel support to the MIF, and accept vessels diverted for violating U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

The smuggling of refined petroleum products through the Gulf has remained at a low level since Operation Desert Fox. The MIF, and our ability rapidly to augment it, will continue to serve as a critical deterrent to both the smuggling of petroleum products out of the Gulf and the smuggling of prohibited items into Iraq.

UNSCOM/IAEA: Weapons of Mass Destruction

There has been no United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presence in Iraq since December 15, 1998. UNSCOM informed the Security Council on June 1 of the status of UNSCOM's chemical laboratory, biological room, equipment, and components in the Baghdad Monitoring and Verification Center (BMVC). The Canal Hotel houses UNSCOM offices along with those of other U.N. activities in Iraq, such as the Office of the Iraq Programme, which implements the oil-for-food program. UNSCOM has analytical equipment and materials it would like to see removed in a straightforward technical operation as a precaution. The samples include less than one kilogram of seized Iraqi mustard agent. There are no immediate safety concerns. In June, UNSCOM recommended to the Security Council that UNSCOM send a team of experts to destroy the conventional lab chemicals, chemical standards, and biological samples, and request that Iraq cooperate. In July the U.N. Secretariat, in consultation with UNSCOM, deputized a team of experts to decommission the lab. UNSCOM provided an operations plan for the mission to the Secretariat. UNSCOM and U.S. experts trained the U.N. team in Bahrain. The U.N. team consisted of an UNSCOM administrator, a biologist from a German university, and four experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Dual-Use Imports

Resolution 1051 established a joint UNSCOM/IAEA unit to monitor Iraq's imports of allowed dual-use items. Iraq must notify the unit before it imports specific items that can be used in both weapons of mass destruction and civilian applications. Similarly, U.N. members must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of such dual-use items. Since the withdrawal of UNSCOM and IAEA monitors, only some limited monitoring in certain sectors is being conducted by the U.N. Office of the Iraq Programme inspectors. This situation has presented new challenges for the U.N. Sanctions Committee and is a factor in the contract approval process. As a precautionary matter, the United States has placed holds on a number of dual-use contracts that might otherwise have been approved.

The U.N. Oil-for-Food Program

We continue to support the international community's efforts to provide for the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people through the oil-for-food program. On May 21, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1242, extending the program for another 180 days. As in phase five, Iraq is again authorized to sell up to \$5.2 billion worth of oil in the coming 180 days. Because of the increase in world oil prices and increased exports, Iraq may reach the ceiling during this phase. As of June 14, U.N. reporting indicates that since the start of the oil-for-food program, 5,375 contracts for humanitarian goods worth over \$7 billion have been approved with 389 contracts worth \$351 million on hold and approximately 1,000 contracts in various stages of processing in the United Nations.

Within the oil-for-food program, Resolution 1242 maintains a separate program for northern Iraq, administered directly by the United Nations in consultation with the local population. This program, which the United States strongly supports, ensures that when Iraq contracts for the purchase of humanitarian goods, 13 to 15 percent of the funds generated under the oil-for-food program are spent on items for northern Iraq. The separate northern program was established because of Baghdad's repression and disregard for the humanitarian needs of the Kurdish, Assyrian, Yezidi, and Turkoman minorities in northern Iraq.

Humanitarian programs such as oil-for-food have steadily improved the life of the average Iraqi living under sanctions while denying Saddam Hussein control over Iraq's oil revenues. Currently, the ration basket provides over 2,000 calories per day per Iraqi. We will continue to work with the U.N. Secretariat, the Security Council, and others in the international community to ensure that the humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people are met while denying political or economic benefits to the Baghdad regime. In addition, we are working with the United Nations and other Security Council members to mitigate the effects of the current drought in Iraq.

Northern Iraq: Kurdish Reconciliation

In June, delegations from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) traveled to Washington to discuss the next steps in implementing

the accord they signed in September 1998. Consensus was achieved on a number of confidence-building measures, including opening party offices in major cities throughout northern Iraq, eschewing negative press statements, countering the divisive influence of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), beginning the return of internally displaced persons, and creating a voter registration commission for upcoming elections. The delegations discussed other issues, such as revenue sharing, internal security, and the formation of an interim joint regional assembly and administration. They will continue these talks in northern Iraq and seek to implement steps that were agreed.

The Human Rights Situation in Iraq

The human rights situation in Iraq continues to fall far short of international norms, in violation of Resolution 688. That resolution explicitly notes that the consequences of the regime's repression of its own people constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region. It also demands immediate access by international humanitarian aid organizations to all Iraqis in need. However, for over 7 years the Iraqi government has refused to allow the U.N. Human Rights Commission Special Rapporteur for Iraq, Max Van der Stoep, to visit Iraq. U.N. human rights monitors have never been allowed into Iraq.

Severe repression continues in southern Iraq, as the regime works toward the destruction of the Marsh Arabs' way of life and the unique ecology of the southern marshes. The regime has repeatedly ignored appeals by Max Van der Stoep and others for access by human rights monitors to investigate these reports. The human rights monitors have asked to investigate the alleged assassination of three of Iraq's most senior Islamic clerics: Ayatollah Mohammed al-Sader in February 1999, Ayatollah Borujerdi in April 1998, and Ayatollah al-Gharavi in June 1998.

In the north, outside the Kurdish-controlled areas, the government continues the forced expulsion of ethnic Kurds and Turkomans from Kirkuk and other cities.

The Iraqi Opposition

We are deepening our engagement with the forces of change in Iraq, helping Iraqis both inside and outside Iraq to become a more effective voice for the aspirations of the people. We

will work toward the day when Iraq has a government worthy of its people, a government prepared to live in peace with its neighbors, and respects the rights of its citizens. We believe that a change of regime in Baghdad is inevitable, and that it is urgently incumbent on the world community to support the Iraqis who are working to ensure that change is positive. These Iraqis include the resistance inside the country, and those free Iraqis now in exile or in northern Iraq, who seek to improve the chances that the next government of Iraq will truly represent, serve, and protect all the Iraqi people.

The INC has stepped up its activities since the April 7-8 meeting of the Executive Council at Windsor. The Interim Presidency Committee visited Washington from May 24 to May 28 for meetings with the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, and several Members of Congress. In a demonstration of the growing cohesion among the Iraqi opposition, the INC leadership was accompanied by other key Sunni opposition leaders. The INC also sent a delegation to the United Nations in May to discuss humanitarian and human rights issues.

Over the last several weeks, the INC Executive Committee met again in London and the Interim Presidency Committee has worked on preparations for their National Assembly. The Department of State assisted the INC in these efforts by funding conference planning services with Economic Support Funds. Using these same funds, the Department of State worked with other nongovernmental organizations to develop projects to assist the Iraqi opposition and the Iraqi people in their efforts to achieve regime change.

The United Nations Compensation Commission

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to Resolutions 687, 692, and 1210, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued over 1.3 million awards worth approximately \$10 billion.

Thirty percent of the proceeds from authorized oil sales are allocated to the Compensation Fund to pay awards and finance UNCC operations. The UNCC Governing Council has determined that certain small claims by individuals will receive initial payments of \$2,500, before paying larger claims of either individuals or businesses and government agencies. In June, the

Governing Council established the rules for making payments on the remaining small claims and the larger individual, corporate, and government claims. To date, the U.S. Government has received funds from the UNCC for initial installment payments for approximately 2,288 U.S. claimants.

Conclusion

Iraq remains a serious threat to international peace and security. I remain determined to see Iraq fully comply with all of its obligations under Security Council resolutions. The United States

looks forward to the day when Iraq rejoins the family of nations as a responsible and law-abiding member. I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Message to the Congress Reporting a Budget Deferral

August 2, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report one revised deferral of budget authority, now totaling \$173 million.

The deferral affects programs of the Department of State.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 2, 1999.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

August 2, 1999

Thank you very much. I will be brief, but let me begin by thanking John Kerry for having us in his beautiful, beautiful home. He and Teresa have been very good for our country and very good for our party, and I am delighted to be here. And I want to thank all of you for coming.

Let me ask you to think about what I hope we'll be discussing in the following way. When I became President, I was trying to make sure that America would begin to function again at an acceptable level of performance so that the American people, who are basically out there getting up every day, working hard, doing a good job, would find some way to be better rewarded, and so that we could maximize these sweeping changes going through the world in how we work and how we live and how we relate to one another, both within this country and beyond our borders.

And so we set about trying to do that, and the results, I think, have been quite satisfactory in a lot of ways. And I'm grateful for that. If I could just make one point about it, the President does not do these things alone. John Kerry's leadership in the areas that he mentioned has been nothing short of brilliant. And without the support of the people in Congress who are our allies, none of it could have happened. So I'm grateful for that.

Now, I have a year and a half left on my term, and yet, I'm thinking more about the long term than I did even when I got here, for the simple reason that we are now in a position to think about the long term and about how we can do more than just make the country work but how we can secure a framework for opportunity for America, for a greater social justice, for a greater good at home and around the world than ever before. That's why I think

it's important that we not blow this surplus we waited 30 years to produce until we have fundamentally secured the challenge of the aging of America by doing something about Social Security and Medicare. It's why I think it's important that we not, while the economy is rocking along very well, pass a tax cut that would undermine our ability to meet our commitments in education, the environment, biomedical research, and other areas. I think that's very important.

But I also think we need to be thinking about those fundamental things in society that have not fully incorporated what most of you have done very well doing, which is riding the wave of the information revolution. We have, thanks to the Vice President, done our best to have good policies, whether it was in the Telecommunications Act or a lot of other specific issues, some of which Senator Kerry mentioned, or just doing no harm. And we've been able to, far more than ever before, maximize the use of information technology and Government, which is why we now have the smallest Government we've had since 1963. But if you really think about it, we should not be satisfied with where we are. And I'll just give you a few examples.

In education, we finally have test scores turned around, not only in mathematics and science but also in reading, which is really quite an important achievement, since so many of our children do not have English as their first language. But no one seriously believes we have the best system of elementary and secondary education in the world. And we have all this diversity in our country. How can we use technology to lift the level of all education?

I'll give you another example. We have now, as you all probably have seen, I think we have reached the benefit, the limit of the benefits that traditional management can bring in moderating inflation and health care costs. When I became President, health care was rising at 3 times the rate of inflation and people were dropping coverage dramatically. Now, unfortunately, that's continued to happen. But one of the reasons that there's this intense debate in Washington over the Patients' Bill of Rights is that so many people, including a lot of health care professionals, believe that we have reached the limit which you can get management-related—traditional, management-related savings out of health care without eroding the quality of care.

What can we do to maximize the impact of all the things that we do to make the health care system work better and extend coverage to more people? I'll give you a third example. Someone told me in Silicon Valley one day that people in high tech businesses work 3 to 9 times faster than people in normal businesses do, and Government worked 3 to 9 times slower, and therefore, the marriage was impossible, which I thought is an interesting observation and painfully accurate from time to time.

What can we do, what still is out there that we should be doing that makes Government more responsive, more accessible to people? And then the two that I'm particularly interested in: How can we use technology to bring economic opportunity to people in places that are not part of this recovery in the United States; and how can we use-it—or can we use it to help people bridge a whole generation of economic development around the world?

Ron Dozoretz and I have talked a lot about what could be done, for example, for the Indian reservations. We were in Appalachia; we were in the Mississippi Delta—a lot of the places that are still poor are not in inner-city neighborhoods; a lot of places are literally, physically—[inaudible]—from mainstream American economic life. And I'm convinced that if we can't figure out ways to bring opportunity to these places now, we will never get around to it because of the high performance of our economy generally and because it's really an opportunity for investors to go into places where there's a lot of labor, a lot of willing labor, and the cost of doing business is modest.

It seems to me that while what we've done with the empowerment zones, under the leadership of the Vice President, and what I propose that the Congress adopt, which is essentially to give the same set of financial incentives to people who invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in the Caribbean or Latin America or Africa or Asia, is a good start. But I think there has got to be, at least for those people that are physically isolated, some thought to how technology can be used to trigger the infusion of economic opportunity and, therefore, the inclusion of those people into the mainstream of American economic life.

And finally, politics, which has already been mentioned by Senator Kerry—it seems to me

that there is, on the one hand, this sort of exponential increase in the cost of running campaigns, because we try to—because of the cost of communication. Let's not kid—and if you look at the cost of the campaigns as compared with the size of the Federal budget, for example, it doesn't look like such a big, carrying cost. But it's an enormous burden for people who have to go out and raise the money and spend the money. And basically we're communicating with each other in traditional ways. Most of the costs of the campaign today comes from television and mail, and in some places a lot of money is spent on radio and occasionally, depending on what the communications are, on newspaper advertising. But most of it's TV and mail.

Increasingly, we see these breathtaking stories of people just opening a webpage for a given cause and all of a sudden having 200,000, 300,000, 400,000 people within a matter of weeks signing on and going forward. Is there some way to use the Internet to further democratize politics, to energize more people to participate, to energize more people to contribute at modest levels, and to lower the relative cost of reaching voters or increase the relative impact of voter reach?

Because if you think about it—like when we run TV ads, there's a reason that an ad on the Super Bowl costs so much money. And that is that more people are watching it than now watch the evening news on the networks combined because they have so many other options. As the television audiences become more dispersed, I think you will see more sophisticated use of mail to identify, at least, people you think you can reach. And that's good, but is there some way we can use this both to broaden the base of contributors at modest levels but also to increase the relative effectiveness or decrease the relative costs of reaching people, so that people feel like they're participating in the democracy and so that more people have a chance to participate in ways that will make all of us feel better about the way we conduct our democracy as we go toward the next century?

So these are things that I think about a lot. And I think, you know, meeting the challenge of the aging of America is a big deal. I think meeting the challenge of education is a big deal.

I'll give you one more example. America's got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. I think that's a very good thing. And it's easy to lose that when we have these gripping, horrible incidents like we had in Atlanta or the horrible thing in Littleton, Colorado. But why shouldn't we be the safest big country in the world? I mean, if we have the most powerful technology base in the world, we can figure out how to solve any other problem. Why can't we think of a way to organize ourselves that would make us the safest big country? Why shouldn't that be? Why shouldn't we have a big goal that is—and bring to bear all these things.

Nothing is—I agree with John; I think that 50, 60, 70 years from now, when people look back and write the history of this era, they will conclude that this was a bigger deal than the industrial revolution, that this sort of had the combined impact of the industrial revolution and the printing press, which produced the Gutenberg Bible, and that it was just breathtaking. Now, what we who are living through this ought to do—in addition to those of you who are good enough to profit from it and contribute to our economy and make our society stronger and hire people and do all the good things you're doing—we ought to say, if this is profoundly changing the way we work and the way we live and the way we relate to each other, by definition it ought to be able to be effective in helping us meet society's biggest challenges, including those I outlined tonight.

So I'm very interested in it. I thank you for your presence here. And I am all ears.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Senator John F. Kerry and his wife, Teresa Heinz; and Ronald I. Dozoretz, founder, FHC Health Systems.

Opening Remarks to the National Welfare to Work Forum in Chicago, Illinois

August 3, 1999

Thank you so much. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the warm, wonderful welcome when I came in. Mr. Mayor, thank you for your friendship and your leadership. Chicago is a beautiful, beautiful city, and it works.

I think I should simply begin by thanking the people of this city and this State for being so good to me and to Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore and to our administration, and for setting an example of what we can do to make America work. I'm also kind of getting used to seeing all these pretty cows all over the place here. *[Laughter]* I was trying to think of what animals I could start putting all over the White House lawn when I get back, to follow the mayor's lead. *[Laughter]*

I would like to say that Governor Ryan and Governor Thompson were here earlier. I thank them for coming by. I thank Governor Carper of Delaware for being here; Mayor Webb, Mayor Helmke, Mayor Morial, Mayor O'Neill. I thank Secretary Herman, our Secretary of Labor; Secretary of Transportation Slater; and Secretary Bill Daley, another native of this great city, for his work at Commerce; and Small Business Administrator Aida Alvarez.

Secretary Shalala, our HHS Secretary, has been heavily involved in this. She's not here today, but I want to thank Olivia Golden and Al Collins for being here. And most of all, I want to thank the leaders of this remarkable business partnership, my good friend Eli Segal, who is the best startup person in the world.

Many of you know this, but when I became President, I asked Eli to head our national service program, AmeriCorps. And we got it through the Congress, and in 4 years, AmeriCorps had 100,000 young people serving in our communities, earning money to go to school, a goal that took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach.

So, I thought, "Well, we need to get more employers involved in hiring people from welfare to work. I'll ask Eli to do it. Then I won't even have to think about it anymore." *[Laughter]* And so Eli got Gerry Greenwald and Paul Clayton, Robert Shapiro, Bill Esrey, and Jim Kelly, and they started, with five. And I said—then there were 5,000. And I said, "But we

need 10,000." And now there are 12,000. I think if I told them we needed 25,000, next year we'd have 30,000 employers here. And I thank him so much.

And I want to thank Gerry especially for chairing our efforts. I understand he runs an airline company in his off hours—*[laughter]*—but I think most of the time, he's spent on this project in the last few years.

Six and a half years ago I asked the American people to join me on a crusade to transform our system of welfare into a system of work; to transform a system of dependence into a system of independence; to prove that poor people could succeed, at the same time, at work and in raising their children; to bring a whole generation of Americans into the mainstream of our life.

Now you see the signs of the transformation everywhere: Inner-city buses that used to be empty at rush hour are packed; tax preparation services are moving into abandoned storefronts, helping former welfare recipients fill out the first tax forms of their lives. There are more subtle changes: mothers collecting their mail with a little more pride because they know they'll see a bank statement, not a welfare check; children going to school with their heads held a little higher.

It's difficult to remember that 7 years ago our country was largely out of work and out of ideas. Our economy was stagnant, burdened with a crushing debt and soaring deficits, high interest rates and high unemployment. But so was our political debate. For some, the welfare system was our last line of defense against abject poverty. To others, it was exhibit A of America's decline.

Clearly, it had become a system that undermined our cherished values of work and family. When I was a Governor, a job I had for a dozen years before you were kind enough to give me this one, I had the chance to actually go to welfare offices, talk to caseworkers, talk to recipients, watch people check in. I spent hours, over a period of years, talking to welfare recipients, asking them, what would it take to make the system work for them, and listening

to them tell me all the manifold ways in which welfare discouraged work and independence.

I asked the American people to change course, to restore with all of our people the fundamental bargain that we ought to have opportunity for all in return for responsibility from all our citizens, and to include everyone in America's community.

Today, the bargain is being fulfilled, and our country is working again. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history, nearly 19 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in a generation, the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded, the highest homeownership in history. From a deficit of \$290 billion, we are moving to a surplus of \$99 billion, and this year alone we will pay \$85 billion on our national debt.

And a big part of this is the decision the American people, through their elected Representatives, made to end welfare as we know it. We raised the minimum wage and passed the earned-income tax credit, which says to working families, if you work full-time, you shouldn't have to raise your children in poverty. We gave 43 waivers to States to launch their own welfare reform efforts when I took office. And then in 1996, as has already been said, a big bipartisan majority, big majorities of both parties and both Houses reached across the divide to pass this welfare reform bill.

We recognize that in addition to requiring able-bodied people to work within a certain period of time, millions of people who had never known anything but dependency, who had never even seen, many of them, their own parents have a job, could not make the transition on their own or easily. So we made sure there was extra support for child care, for transportation, for housing, and we kept the national guarantee, after two vetoes, but we kept the national guarantee of medical care and nutrition for the children of people on welfare and for those moving off.

We also provided new tax incentives to encourage employers to hire people from welfare. Today I am very proud to be able to tell you that all 50 States and the District of Columbia have now met the work requirements for the percentage of people on welfare in their States that have to be in work that we set in 1996. Every single State is in compliance.

The welfare rolls have been cut in half; they're at their lowest level in 32 years. And those who are on welfare today are 4 times

as likely to work as when I took office. Now, while some of the credit, doubtless, goes to our booming economy, the Council of Economic Advisers recently did a study for me which found that welfare reform, with its new emphasis on work, has been the single most important factor in reducing the rolls. Three-quarters of the 6.8 million people who have left welfare since I took office did so after welfare reform was signed in 1996. And many who left before did so under the reform efforts adopted by the States.

The credit goes to all of you in this audience and people like you across our country. When we passed the law in '96, I said moving Americans from welfare to work would take the commitment of every element of our society, not just Government but businesses, faith-based organizations, community groups, and private citizens. The Vice President has done a tremendous job of bringing our religious and service organizations together in his coalition to sustain success. And in 1997, as I said, my long-time friend Eli Segal agreed to help to rally the business community and you know the rest. Today, he, Gerry Greenwald, and the other founders have built a partnership that is 12,000 businesses strong.

Members of this welfare to work partnership, businesses both large and small, have given—listen to this—just the members of this partnership have given 410,000 welfare recipients the opportunity to have a job. More than 8 in 10 executives report great success in hiring people off welfare rolls. They're finding these employees are a good investment. They work hard; they stay in their jobs as long or even longer than other employees. And in this era of labor shortages, we must not forget that welfare recipients can be a rich pool of untapped talent, people who are good for the bottom line. I thank you for recognizing the important role you can play in extending these opportunities to all Americans.

I am proud to say, also under the Vice President's leadership, the Federal Government has done its part. Our goal was to hire 10,000 people by this year from welfare. We have now hired 14,000—in the smallest Federal Government since 1963.

Mr. Mayor, one of the people we hired from welfare is here with us today. Her name is Maria Hernandez. She was on public assistance for more than 3 years; now she's worked as

an administrative assistant in our Cook County north census office since January. Thank you, Maria, and thank all the rest of you who are here who reflect the same story.

Now, before we get on with the program today, I want to tell you that as pleased as we are, we have to do more. And I'd like to mention the things that I believe we have to do to make the most of this economic opportunity for America, to fulfill our moral obligation, to promote the values of work and family to the people still on public assistance and those who teeter going back and forth.

First, we must continue to honor our commitment to welfare reform. There are some in Congress who want to cut the welfare block grants we give to the States and take some of that money back, because the welfare rolls are so low, to finance a big tax cut. I think that would be a mistake, and here's why; here's why: In every State, there are still people who could move from welfare to work if they had more training, if they had transportation, if they had child care. In every State, there are people who may be working today who might have to leave the work force, for lack of transportation or child care. In every State, there are people who can stay on the job if they get further training.

So I say, let's spend this money to develop the human capacity of our people. It will make the economy stronger, and we will all be better off.

There are other things which need to be done. I have asked the Congress to build on the welfare-to-work program, by helping those who are least prepared to work. My welfare-to-work budget this year contains extra funds for adult literacy and for education and training for adults. I think that's important.

We must also do more to help low-income fathers honor their responsibility to pay child support to their children. Three years ago we strengthened our child support enforcement laws. This welfare-to-work budget targets funds to help responsible fathers work and pay child support. I hope Congress will pass it.

Let me say, we also need to make sure that when people move from welfare to work, they understand, if they're in low-income jobs, that their kids are still entitled to Medicaid coverage if their employer doesn't offer health care, and to food stamps, so they'll have adequate nutrition.

The only piece of troubling news in this whole happy scenario is that there has been a drop in use of food stamps among low-income people that is greater than the number of people who have moved into jobs with incomes above that level. No one can find the answer for me, and we've been looking now for weeks and weeks and weeks. But I think, clearly, what has happened is, a lot of people moved from welfare to work; they're delighted to be at work; and they literally don't know that they're still eligible for this assistance. That's what I think is going on. So we have to work on that, and a lot of you here can help.

We also have to strengthen our commitment to child care. For years, mothers on welfare chose not to work because to do so would literally have hurt their children, because it would have cost them more in child care than they could make on the job. In 1996 we added \$4 billion to our child care subsidy, but believe it or not, we have only met one-tenth of the need. So I ask Congress to pass our child care initiative, to provide more child care subsidies and tax credits to needy families and new funds to improve the quality of care. This will also help to sustain welfare reform.

To finish the job, I've asked Congress to double our commitment to transportation assistance to provide 25,000 new welfare-to-work housing vouchers so people can live near their jobs. To finish the job, I have asked Congress to increase the minimum wage, to make sure, when people work, they are living above the poverty line. And to finish the job, we have to recognize that there are whole communities—big inner-city neighborhoods, places in Appalachia, places in the Mississippi Delta, small towns where the only factory has moved away, Native American reservations—where the light of prosperity has not shined on the whole community.

Last month I traveled across America to shine that spotlight on the inner cities, on the Mississippi Delta, on Appalachia, on the Native American communities. I saw families doing their best to raise children in neighborhoods where unemployment and poverty were more than double the national average. On some of our Indian reservations it is above 70 percent.

I ask your help in passing my new markets initiative, because it will give American investors the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in America we give them today to invest

in poor countries around the world. I think it is a very, very good idea.

And finally, I ask you to continue your work. We all know that the people who still are on welfare, by and large, are the most difficult to place in work. We all know that they are the most likely to have children with special needs, or limited levels of education and skills, or to be a long way from an available workplace with no transportation funds. We know there are problems out there, but we also know that there are good people who wish to go to work and ought to have the chance. And so I ask you to stay at this and to recruit some of your vendors and clients, to reach out to small business people you know, to ask others to join this crusade.

I want to say a special word of thanks to IBM for sponsoring a new on-line network that can help match businesses who need workers with welfare recipients who need jobs. And for out part, I want you to know I'm working to extend the welfare-to-work tax credit and the work opportunity tax credit to reward those of you who take the chance on giving more Americans a chance.

The great Russian writer Leo Tolstoy once said that, "work is the true source of human welfare." In this era of unprecedented prosperity, we still have some work of our own to do to make sure the we embrace all Americans in this prosperity and to give every American the chance to succeed at work and to succeed at home.

I thank every one of you for what you have done, and I ask you to support the initiatives I outlined with the Congress and to stay at the job until we can literally say we have completely ended welfare as we know it, and America is a better place because our families are stronger, our children are growing up in more stable homes, and every adult American who is willing to work has a chance to do so.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. at the Navy Pier Festival Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Gov. George H. Ryan of Illinois; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin; Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware; Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Mayor Paul Helmke of Fort Wayne, IN; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans, LA; Mayor Beverly O'Neill of Long Beach, CA; Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services Olivia A. Golden, Administration for Children and Families; Alvin C. Collins, Director, Office of Family Assistance, Administration for Children and Families; Eli Segal, president and chief executive officer, Welfare to Work Partnership; Gerald Greenwald, chairman and chief executive officer, United Airlines Corp.; Paul Clayton, president, Burger King North America; Robert B. Shapiro, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Monsanto Co.; William T. Esrey, chairman and chief executive officer, Sprint Corp.; and James P. Kelly, chairman and chief executive officer, United Parcel Service.

Closing Remarks to the National Welfare to Work Forum in Chicago August 3, 1999

I've been asked to announce that as soon as we adjourn this meeting, in this very spot, Rodney will be offering memory training to everyone who would like to stay. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you for your devotion to this cause. And Jim, thank you for giving us this fine man. I just want to ask you all to think about something. You know, while Rodney was talking to all the people here, I just got to sit here in the middle, and so I could see everybody else. And I would turn around, and I would look—every time somebody was talking,

I would look at every face in the section. And what I saw was that all of us had the natural human response. We were exhilarated by the stories that these people told. We were gratified by the enlightened self-interest of the employers.

I had a funny thing happen to me a couple of weeks ago. We were in an unrelated fight in Washington, and one of the people who took the opposite position from me said, "Oh, the President is always up there telling stories. What have stories got to do with this?" Well, we found

out today, didn't we? I mean, all of our lives are nothing but our stories.

I say this, one of our small business owners said that she was once on public assistance herself. I'm in a line of work where every politician would like you to believe that we were all born in log cabins that we built ourselves. *[Laughter]* But the truth is, none of us who are here today, who have been fortunate in our lives, got here without somebody giving us a helping hand, without opportunity. I always tell everybody, you know, a couple of different bumps in the road, I could still be home doing wills and deeds in Arkansas in some small office. *[Laughter]*

We should recognize that we can pass these programs to empower people, but it takes human beings with real commitment, like the employers we have honored today and all the others in this room and all those like them around this country. And then it takes people with the courage to stand up and say, "I'm going to change my life."

You know, this was hard for—a lot of these folks, they had to stand up here and give a little speech in front of the President today. That wasn't easy, right? They did a good job. But as difficult as it was, it was probably harder for some of them to actually stand up and say, "I'm going to change my life." That's harder.

And I'm just telling you, all over this country today there are people just like them who still don't have the lives they have. And we can reach them, too. And if we do it, America will be a better place. We will be closer to the one America of our dreams when we start this new century. We'll have a stronger economy.

And again I say, there are legal changes we need to make; there are investment commitments we need to make in Washington. I hope you'll help us make them. But in the end, it will be the personal marriage of employers and employees that will see us through.

And Rodney, we'll follow your lead. We'll follow the lead of our founding companies. But I ask you all to leave here with a renewed sense of energy and commitment and go out and tell other people about what you have seen and what you have participated in and what we can do. And if you do that, we will finish this job. And we'll hear a lot more of the stories that make our hearts soar.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. at the Navy Pier Festival Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Rodney J. Carroll, forum moderator and division manager, Metro Philadelphia Division, and James P. Kelly, chairman and chief executive officer, United Parcel Service.

Remarks to Heat Relief Volunteers in Chicago

August 3, 1999

Thank you very much. I want to say, first of all, I came here mostly just to say thank you. Thank you to the volunteers, the firefighters, the police officers, the emergency workers.

I am joined by three members of our Cabinet over here: our Secretary of Labor, Alexis Herman, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater, and Chicago's own, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley.

Every time I come to Chicago, I get excited. I tell everybody all across America, you know, this is the way cities ought to work. It's a well-organized, beautiful, clean, ever-changing, dynamic city, and one that doesn't run away from its problems but embraces them and tries to

work through them; and that is what I want America to be like.

I know this has been a very difficult time. This heat wave has claimed over 190 lives nationwide. It has been very, very tough. And I just wanted to join the mayor in saying thank you. Normally, you know, when something like this happens, the role of the Federal Government is to declare emergencies, provide help to the farmers or the business people, or extra help to the seniors and others who are vulnerable. And I rarely get an opportunity to go out and see the people who do the work, save the lives, and help people get through the tough times. And so mostly I am here just to tell

you, you've done a great job, and I am profoundly grateful. Thank you.

As we can all see, thankfully the blast-furnace heat has subsided a little bit here in Chicago, and believe it or not, it was a little better in Washington yesterday and today. Over the weekend, it was scorching. But we probably haven't seen the last of the heat for the season. And we know that many low income people in this area and throughout our country are now saddled with energy bills they can't begin to afford. So earlier today I authorized the release of another \$55 million in emergency funding to help them.

The funding will be used in Illinois and eight other States in the Midwest and the South to help people pay for air-conditioning and pay off their high utility bills. About \$16 million will go to the State of Illinois alone. We have now provided \$150 million-plus for cooling assistance this summer across America, and I hope it will be enough.

We know that some of the elderly people who died in this heat wave were people on fixed incomes who were reluctant to turn their air-conditioning on. We know they were afraid they wouldn't be able to pay their bills at the end of the month. So the one news item I would hope would come out of this meeting is that through this announcement the seniors in this area and in any other area that might be hit by this kind of heat wave will know that

there is Federal help available, Congress has set aside the money for this purpose. We know that when heat waves like this come along that are virtually unprecedented there will be people who need to be cool who can't afford to pay the bill.

So turn on the air-conditioner, and if you don't have one, send for a fan or a room unit; send for something that will keep you alive. That is the message we want to come out of here. I want your efforts all to be successful, and I hope that that message will go out across the country today. People should never have to worry in this country about risking their lives because they can't pay their power bills.

Again, let me say, I want to thank you. The executive director of the Chicago Housing Authority, I understand, said recently, there is no substitute for human contact. That's probably a good general rule, but it is certainly true in this case. You have provided that human contact, and the rest of us are very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:42 p.m. at the Lake Shore Park Pavilion. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; and Phillip Jackson, chief executive officer, Chicago Housing Authority. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Death of Willie Morris

August 3, 1999

Hillary and I were greatly saddened to learn of the death of our good friend Willie Morris. When I was a senior in college, I was captivated by his wonderful memoir, "North Toward Home." I had the opportunity to visit New York City and meet him, then the remarkably young editor of Harper's magazine, who had started out in a small Southern town not unlike my own and who never lost his fascination with the human condition. In the 1980's, we became

reacquainted, and I have enjoyed his wit, warmth, and wisdom ever since. Willie Morris was not only my friend, he was a national treasure. He had enormous pride in and love for the South, but he also had a passion to right the wrongs of our racial history. He will take his place beside Faulkner and Welty in the pantheon of the South's greatest writers. Our thoughts and prayers go to his wife Joanne, his son David, and his family and friends.

Remarks on Reducing the National Debt and an Exchange With Reporters August 4, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. I've just had a meeting with the members of my economic team, and I'd like to talk a few moments about the course we have decided to chart for the future.

Seven years ago, when I ran for President, I said we had to put our fiscal house in order, to start living within our means. Most Americans agreed, but few believed we would do it. Irresponsible policies in Washington had piled deficits upon deficits and quadrupled our national debt in the 12 years before I took office. As a result, interest and unemployment rates were high, and growth was low.

In 1993 Vice President Gore and I took office determined to change our course, to follow a new economic strategy founded on fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and expanded trade. Today the success of that strategy is very much in evidence. We have balanced the budget, turned a deficit of \$290 billion into a surplus of \$99 billion, the largest ever. Since 1993, our economy has produced almost 19 million new jobs, wages and homeownership are high, inflation and unemployment the lowest in a generation.

America has come a long way in the last 7 years, from recession to recovery, from economic disorder to a fiscal house finally in order. We have even begun to pay down our debt. Just this week our administration announced that the Federal Government will pay down more than \$87 billion this year alone, the largest reduction in our Nation's history. Over the last 2 years, we've paid down over \$142 billion.

The debt held by the public is now \$1.7 trillion—that's \$1.7 trillion—less than it was projected to be when I took office.

Furthermore, I have proposed a balanced budget that would actually eliminate the debt by 2015. By putting first things first, by saving Social Security and strengthening Medicare, our Nation can actually become debt-free for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President.

Today the Treasury Department has proposed new steps to further our progress. Secretary Summers discussed them earlier today, but I just want to summarize. These proposals would

help us to manage Federal finances in a new era of budget surpluses. They would give the Government the same kind of tools, the same flexibility that families and companies have in managing their finances. They would, in effect, allow us to refinance old debt and pay it down on the best terms possible, saving taxpayers billions of dollars in the process.

If past policies brought a vicious cycle of budget deficits and high interest rates, our new economic strategy drives a virtuous cycle of budget surpluses and low interest rates. We know what paying down the debt means for America's families. It is the equivalent to a tax cut worth hundreds, even thousands of dollars to them in lower interest costs. Smaller debt brings lower interest rates. When interest rates fall, more families can afford a home or a car or a college education for their children; more businesses borrow more to invest, boosting productivity and creating more jobs.

In the past 7 years, we've balanced Washington's books; we've cut its credit card balance. Now let's refinance our Nation's mortgage and then wipe the ledger clean. Paying down the debt creates wealth, creates jobs, creates opportunity. It's the right and responsible thing to do, and we have the chance of a lifetime to do it.

If we're to make the most of this prosperity, we simply have to put first things first. We should maintain our fiscal discipline by investing the bulk of the surplus to pay down the debt, save Social Security, strengthen Medicare and modernize it with a long-term, long overdue prescription drug benefit. We should honor our values by honoring our commitment to educate our children, protect our environment, strengthen our defense, and fight crime. And we should move forward with an economic strategy that is successful and sound, not revert to one that is a proven failure.

On Capitol Hill, Members of the majority have been at work on a tax plan that is risky and plainly wrong for America. Let me repeat what I have said many times: If they conclude this plan and send it to me, I will have to veto it. I will refuse to sign any plan that signs away our commitment to America's future, to

Social Security, to Medicare, to paying down the debt. We can do these things and still have a sensible tax plan, and I remain committed to work with any Members of Congress, from both parties, to achieve that goal.

Thank you.

Tax Cut Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you believe you can reach an agreement with Republicans later in the year on taxes, and is \$300 billion the most you would be willing to allow for a tax cut?

The President. Well, I hope we can reach an agreement. And let me suggest that the way to proceed—and I think that the only way we can reach an agreement is if they would do what I have tried to do. I think first they ought to produce their own Medicare plan that lengthens the life of the Trust Fund and provides a modest prescription drug benefit. Then, of course, they have to calculate how much more money they want to spend over and above the caps. And they have to figure out what's left, and whether they agree with me that we should pay off the debt.

We could certainly do this. I want all of you to understand, for me this is not a political issue; this is a matter of basic arithmetic. We returned to basic arithmetic in 1993, and it has served us well. Gene Sperling once said that to pass the big tax cut first, without knowing how you're going to meet your responsibilities, is like a family saying, "Let's take the vacation of our dreams, and when we get home, we'll try to decide if we can pay the home mortgage and send the kids to college." I think that the order of this is wrong.

So I think if they would have a very clear idea of what their Medicare proposal would be and what the impact of their proposed increases in expenditures would be, then I think we'd be able to make an agreement. And I'm willing to work for it, and hope we can achieve it.

Q. Mr. President, by the time Congress comes back from its recess, it will be a little more than a year towards the 2000 election. What is to make this—what is to possibly keep this from becoming a political issue, if it isn't already?

The President. Every issue in Washington, I suppose, is a political issue. The point I'm trying to make is, if we want to save Social Security and Medicare and pay the debt off, then you have to figure out how much money you have

left and how much money the Congress is determined to spend over and above the present budget caps, and you can spend what is left on the tax cut.

But to pass a tax cut first and then say, well, I'm sorry, we can't really save Social Security and we're not going to lengthen the life of the Trust Fund, or, I'm sorry we're not going to lengthen the life of the Medicare Trust Fund a day—neither one a day under their proposal—and we may or may not be able to spend money on education and national defense and, if we do, we'll go back into deficit spending again—I don't think we want to get into that.

So I'm saying—you asked me, can we achieve this? Of course we can. Remember, in 1996, in an election year, we passed welfare reform with overwhelming majorities of both parties in both Houses. And yesterday we celebrated cutting the rolls in half. And 12,000 companies are helping us to hire people off welfare. So we can do this. We can do this.

We were never going to be able to do it, I might add, unless we had big majorities of both parties in both Houses. It is in our interest, if you want to talk about it in that way, to do the people's work here, to do it this year and to do it next year. And I think it's terribly important, so I hope we'll do it.

Social Security Reform Plan/Talk Magazine Interview

Q. Mr. President, why haven't you submitted a plan to reform Social Security? And secondly, sir, would you also comment for us on the First Lady's interview with Talk magazine and clarify for us, if you will, what she meant in saying that you were scarred by abuse and that's affected your behavior?

The President. Well—what was the first part of that question? [Laughter] I'll answer the second part. What's the first part?

Q. The first part was why haven't you submitted a plan to reform Social Security yet.

The President. Well, I am working on that, and I have been talking to Chairman Archer about it, and I would be prepared to do that. But keep in mind, that is not what is holding this up, because we both agree on what we have to do with the surplus. That is, we both agree—and let's not lose sight of the fact that we've actually reached one agreement here; we both agreed to keep the Social Security portion

of the surplus apart from regular Government spending.

My plan, however, is more detailed than theirs in the sense that I also propose to take the savings that we receive in 5 years of this 15-year period on the debt reduction and put that back into the Trust Fund to lengthen the life to 2053. If Congress wished me to do that and that would help to get this agreement—I've been working very hard on this, and I would be prepared to do that.

Now, let me just say on the other thing, I think anybody who read that article would draw two conclusions. You can draw a thousand conclusions, but I think there are two conclusions that anyone would have to draw, amid all the differences they might have in the way they read the piece. One is that my wife is an extraordinary person with a passionate commitment to public service and a genuine record of important achievement. And the second is that we love each other very, very much. And I think those are the two important things.

Now, I don't believe that anybody could fairly read the article and think that she was making any excuses for me. I haven't made any excuses for what was inexcusable, and neither has she, believe me. And as to my childhood, everybody knows that's looked into it I didn't have a bed of roses as a kid. But I can tell you this, as I think about other children in the world and in our country that have difficulties growing up, I am convinced from my own life and from my research and from my experience with other children, the most important thing is that every child needs to know growing up that he or she is the most important person in the world to someone. And I knew that, so—I knew that. And I have no complaints.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], happy birthday. [Laughter]

Ms. Thomas. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Mr. President, the First Lady has indicated that the trauma of this was to the degree that

you can't even take it out and look at it anymore. Are you trying to work through the issues and look back over that time of your life?

The President. Look, I think that I have said all I need to say about that. I have—I think every reflective person thinks about his or her life, but what I conclude about my childhood is what I said. It had its really tough moments, but I always knew I was well loved. And I think that's important for all of our children.

Japanese Economy

Q. Mr. President, are you going to call the Prime Minister of Japan to discuss the fluctuations in the currency market? And how concerned are you that they're more interested in market manipulation and intervention than in stimulating domestic demand-led growth, which Secretary Summers and Secretary Rubin have advocated ad nauseam?

The President. The first—Japan, how concerned I am about Japan? I think, first of all, in the last 6½ years, we've seen the currency fluctuations. They go up; they go down. I don't have anything to comment about that.

I think that we do see some signs that Japan's economy is beginning to grow and that Prime Minister Obuchi has formed a coherent and strong and effective government and has secured the necessary support from the Japanese people to continue to move forward.

So we will continue to consult with Japan about what we think is important for their economic recovery, as we should because they're our partners, and they're our friends and our allies, and their recovery is critical to Asia's recovery. But I basically believe that the trends are positive there, and so I have a positive view.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan.

Statement on Proposed Hate Crimes Legislation

August 4, 1999

Two weeks ago I was glad to see the Senate pass S. 622, the important hate crimes legislation

I supported with a bipartisan coalition in Congress. But there is much more work to be done.

Today the House Judiciary Committee will hold hearings on hate crimes. That is welcome news, but it must lead to the entire House's consideration and passage of strong, effective hate crimes legislation and ultimately to enactment of a hate crimes law.

Effective legislation must accomplish three objectives. First, it must remove serious jurisdictional limitations which require proof that victims were attacked because they were engaging in particular activities. Second, it must expand Federal coverage for violent hate crimes based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability. There is no question that innocent people have been targeted and attacked and in some cases even killed solely because of their sexual orientation, gender, or disability. Such hate crimes must be covered by any legislation passed by the Congress. Third, it must recognize that State and local authorities should continue to prosecute the great majority of hate crimes and that

Federal jurisdiction should be exercised only when it is necessary to achieve justice in a particular case. Any bill that does not include these three elements falls far short of what America needs in our battle against hate.

No American should have to suffer the violence of a hate crime. Unfortunately, many do, and therefore we must work together to ensure that all Americans receive greater protection. This should not be a partisan issue. It is a national concern requiring a national response in the form of strong hate crimes legislation. I call on the House of Representatives to meet its responsibility in combating violence that is fueled by hate and to complete what the Senate has begun. If we work together, we have it within our grasp to enact a bill that will take a very strong stand against those who perpetrate crimes based on prejudice and hate. We must not let this opportunity pass us by.

Statement on the Selection of the New NATO Secretary General *August 4, 1999*

I am very pleased that our NATO Alliance has selected British Defense Secretary George Robertson to be NATO's next Secretary General.

George Robertson is an extremely talented and dedicated public servant. He has made a tremendous contribution to the United Kingdom's effort to modernize its military forces. He displayed extraordinary leadership during the Kosovo conflict and has continued to lead in the effort to restore stability there. I look forward

to working with him as he guides NATO into the new century.

Secretary General Solana has done a superb job, steering NATO through conflict in the Balkans, ushering in three new members of the Alliance, reaching out to our security partners across Europe, and meeting other vital challenges. I look forward to continuing to work with him in his new role at the European Union.

Memorandum on the Year 2000 Computer Problem *August 4, 1999*

Memorandum for Members of the Cabinet

Subject: Year 2000 Computer Problem

The end of 1999 is less than 6 months away. Federal agencies have made significant progress

in meeting the challenges posed by the Year 2000 (Y2K) computer problem since the Vice President and I discussed this issue at the Cabinet meeting in January 1998. Virtually all of the major Federal agencies have completed, or

will soon complete, work on their mission-critical systems, and agencies are working aggressively to encourage compliance among their organizational partners for the delivery of key Federal services.

Our efforts to solve the Y2K problem provide an important example of the Government's ability to respond to difficult management challenges, and I appreciate your commitment to this critical issue. However, your ongoing support through 1999 is essential to the Nation's ability to achieve the ultimate goal of minimizing Y2K-related failures in the public and private sectors.

You should continue your outreach efforts to organizations domestically and internationally. We must encourage compliance efforts among our partners, such as State and local governments helping to deliver Federal services and private sector organizations supporting the Nation's critical infrastructure. Internationally, the continued exchanges of technical information

with other governments about Y2K experiences will help to limit potential Y2K problems in our trading relationships.

You also should maintain your focus on contingency and back-up plans. While many systems and processes have been tested multiple times, being prepared with alternate operating plans provides an important extra layer of insurance against unexpected difficulties and will enhance our ability to respond to any challenges associated with the date change.

I also encourage you to continue to work closely with my Council on Year 2000 Conversion, and with each other, as we approach January 1, 2000. If we continue our hard work on this important issue, I am confident that we will be able to oversee a successful transition to the new millennium.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 5.

Remarks at a Democratic Unity Event *August 5, 1999*

Thank you so much. First, let me thank Senator Daschle and Leader Gephardt for their outstanding, passionate eloquence today and their consistent leadership for the best interests of all the American people. And I think that all of us on this stage feel that way. And I just wish every American could know them as we do, could see how hard they've worked, how consistently they've worked, and how steadfast they have been. Nothing that I have been able to achieve as President would have been possible without their leadership and without the men and women on this platform today. And I thank them so much.

They have already spoken about what we need to do. What I want to say to you is that I want to echo something Mr. Gephardt said. We are here united as a party, but we want to work with the members of the Republican caucus to do things that are good for America.

Let's remember that in the past years, when we have done that, we have been successful. Last year, in the teeth of the election process, they eventually did join us to put a downpay-

ment on hiring 100,000 teachers, to do more to clean up toxic waste, to increase our investments in science and technology, to set aside a part of the surplus for Social Security, which they have continued to agree to do. And we made real progress with our agenda, even though we weren't the majority party.

Now, what was the result? Because we made real progress and because in 1998 we said, "Here's our future agenda: Save Social Security; keep the economy going; pass a Patients' Bill of Rights; continue to invest in our children's education," the public responded. And we moved closer to being a majority in that historic election in 1998. And now, thanks to Mr. Forbes, we're quite a bit closer still, and I want to thank him.

I would like to use him to illustrate the point I really wish to make today about our position. We are held together by unity of conviction, and we don't agree on everything. You ought to hear some of the arguments these folks have among each other. You don't have to agree on

everything to be a member of our party, but we have certain core commitments.

I have letters in my files that Mike Forbes wrote me when he was a member of the Republican caucus about the importance of our education agenda to the children that he represented. And I have numerous accounts of his passionate commitment to a Patients' Bill of Rights and how frustrated he was with over 200 organizations, all the doctors, all the nurses' groups, all the consumer groups pleading for the protections of people in HMO's to be able to see a specialist and go to the nearest emergency room and keep their doctor during treatment and enforce those rights—how frustrated he was that the leaders of his party would not permit that sort of bill to become law. So we are united by what we believe is best for the vast mass of the American people.

And I think it is important to remember that that is the source of our strength. In 1776 Thomas Paine said, "It is not in numbers but in unity that our greatest strength lies." But our unity must be rooted in conviction. We think we ought to keep the commitments we made in 1998 to modernize 6,000 schools and put teachers out there, 100,000 of them, so the class sizes will be small in the early grades. We think we ought to have that strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. We think we ought to reform campaign finance, and we think we ought to raise the minimum wage for the people who are out there working who should not be in poverty because they're willing to go to work.

We believe that we ought to make common-sense efforts to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children, and we have lots of evidence that we have work to do. So I urge the conferees in both parties to stay here during the recess and do whatever is necessary to get us a good juvenile justice bill to protect our children.

And we believe it's right to stay with the economic strategy of fiscal discipline and investment in our people that we started in 1993. You know, we Democrats have a lot of fun reading those quotes that Dick and Tom read about what the Republicans said about our economic plan in '93. But, to be fair to them, at the time they could argue that it wouldn't work. It violated all of their sort of ideological inclinations, and they could argue.

But now there is no argument. And that's why this discussion we're having is so important.

We don't have to debate this anymore. Now we have 6½ years of evidence. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history. We turned the biggest deficit into the biggest surplus. We've got 19 million new jobs, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment in history, a 30-year low in the welfare rolls. There is nothing more to argue about. This economic strategy works, and we should not abandon it in this moment.

You know, this is a moment of testing for the generation of leaders represented on this platform, and those in the other party as well. I think generations as well as individuals have certain moments in their life where they can make a decision that will have profound consequences that go far beyond the moment, and this is such a moment.

A lot of you who are here were in the World War II generation. I had the great honor to go to Normandy to represent the United States at the 50th anniversary of D-day, and say, when they were young this generation saved the world. Well, there have been a lot of disparaging remarks made about the baby boom generation over the last 30 years, how we were self-indulgent, and all the things you've heard. Well, we are about to be tested, because we have the opportunity of a lifetime.

If I'd come to you 7 years ago and I said, "Vote for me, and vote for them; 7 years later we'll come back, and we'll talk about how to spend the surplus"—[laughter]—after the debt of this country had been quadrupled in 12 years—just think about it—I'd be home doing deeds and things in a law office in Arkansas. If I had run on that platform, "Vote for me; 7 years from now, we'll come back and talk about how to spend the surplus," you'd say, "You know, he seems like a nice young fellow, but he's totally out of touch." [Laughter]

But here we are. Why? Because these people said, "We are not going to let America go down the drain. We're going to stop this deficit spending. We're going to get interest rates down. We're going to get the economy going again. And we're going to do it in a way that does not require us to walk away from our obligations to our seniors, to our children, to the environment, to the defense. We can do it." And we have done it.

Now we have, perhaps, an even bigger test. You know, when times are tough, sometimes people don't have many options, so they just

take a deep breath and go on and do the hard thing. When times are easy, we are vulnerable to making our biggest mistakes. And that is what this decision before us is about. Now we have this projected surplus, about two-thirds of it coming from Social Security taxes, about a third of it coming from the other revenues paid by the American people. What are we going to do with it? What we do with it will determine the shape of America for decades to come. What we say is, "Deal with the big challenges first; deal with the aging of America; save Social Security; save Medicare; add a prescription drug benefit; add the preventive tests; and get America out of debt for the first time since 1835, so our children can have a good economy, too."

Now, what they have said is, "Let's pass this big tax cut first; make everybody happy tomorrow; and then we'll talk about these long-term challenges." And normally, that's better politics. Normally, that's better politics. Everybody knows we've got a surplus; let's give a lot of it back. The distributional problems are enormous, as Senator Daschle pointed out. But that's what they say.

Here's the problem. There will be twice as many people over 65, 30 years from now, as there are today. The Medicare Trust Fund goes broke in 2015; Social Security Trust Fund runs out of money in 2034. Now, those of us who have lived a little know that 15 years passes in the flash of an eye. I was talking to somebody yesterday about something I did 15 years ago—seemed like it was yesterday. And we are the stewards of this country's future. We must respond to that. We cannot let this opportunity go. This is a chance of a lifetime. We've got to take care of Medicare now. We've got to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund now.

You all know, also, that Medicare benefits have not kept up with medical science. Today, there are preventive tests that can catch diseases like cancer, heart disease, osteoporosis early and save lives and keep people healthy. Medicare will pay for you if you get cancer, osteoporosis, or heart disease and go to the hospital. But we don't pay for these preventive tests that will save huge amounts of money but, more importantly, save lives and save the quality of life and make the later years better. So we say, "Let's do something to make it more accessible for people. We want more people to take these preventive tests."

Every day, millions of seniors pull out their plastic pillboxes, each pill with today's ration of medicine, don't they—medication today that was unknown 35 years ago when Medicare was created, that keeps you healthy, that keeps you out of the hospital, that lengthens life and improves the quality of life. But today, three out of four of our seniors lack dependable, affordable prescription drug coverage. And the percentage with good coverage goes down as the price of the prescription drug goes up. Medigap coverage, for example, gets more expensive for people as they get older and have less money to spend on it.

So I say we have a chance now, because of our economic good fortune and our surplus, to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, to provide a modest prescription drug benefit so that we can keep more people healthy and out of the hospital and improving their quality of life, and to make much more aggressive use of these preventive tests. And we ought to do it. The drug benefit is totally voluntary. It is affordable, and it will help a lot of people.

Now, rather than respond to the Medicare plan, I was hoping that the Republicans in Congress would say, "Well, Mr. President, this is your plan. This is our plan. There are differences. Let's work it out." Rather than do that, they said, "Before we spend a penny to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, we want to pass this tax cut that's so big, so bloated, and so weighted towards special interest and upper income people that there won't be any money to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund"—not a penny to extend it a year under their plan.

Now, they've decided to vote on this plan today, but for some reason they don't want to send it to my desk. [Laughter] Now, I say again, we should not be doing this until we figure out how we're going to save Medicare, save Social Security, and pay the debt off. We ought to figure out, what is it we have to spend to educate these kids here; to provide for the national defense; to invest in medical research; to do the basic things. Then we ought to ask ourselves, how much is left? And whatever it is, we ought to give it back to the American people in a tax cut. That's the way we ought to do it.

Next month the Senate Finance Committee has promised to take up Medicare, and I hope they do. I hope that they will give me their

idea of a plan that will extend the life of the Trust Fund and deal with the challenge of prescription medicine and preventive tests and say how they're going to pay for it.

But you know—let me just say what's going on here. On the one hand, the Congress passes large tax cuts. On the other hand, they say they want to spend more money—for veterans, to deal with problems that a lot of our teaching hospitals are having with Medicare, to deal with the legitimate problems that our farmers are having—which is not just a one-year thing, it needs to be dealt with on a longer-term basis—but they want to have this big tax cut.

Their plan does nothing to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, nothing to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund. It will not pay off the debt. And if we do both things, one of two things is going to happen: We're going to do nothing about Medicare; we're not going to pay off the debt; we're going to have huge cuts in the things they say they're spending more money on—or we're going to totally erode this surplus; and we're going to squander the opportunity of a generation.

One of the young men who works for me said the other day that their approach is sort of like a family that sits down at dinner tonight, around the table and says, you know, "Let's take the vacation of our lifetime. Let's blow it out. Let's take the vacation of our dreams, and when we get home, we'll figure out whether we can make the mortgage payment and send the kids to college." [*Laughter*]

Now, you wouldn't do it. You didn't do it. And we shouldn't do it. So I will say again,

this is a remarkable moment in history. We can't take advantage of it if we don't work with the Republicans. They have to work with us. We are here to say, "We can't support this tax plan because it squanders the opportunity of a lifetime, but we have worked with you before, and we will again."

President Johnson, who signed Medicare, said, "There are no problems we cannot solve together and few we can solve by ourselves." We need an American solution here. But we say, "First things first; meet the challenge of the aging of America; save Social Security; save Medicare; add that prescription drug benefit; meet the challenge of our children's generation by getting us out of debt for the first time since 1835, so we'll have low interest rates, high investment, more jobs, and people will be able to afford to live better; invest in our education, do the things that we have to do. Figure out what it costs and then give the rest of it back to the American people. But do first things first."

We will be judged, 20, 30, 50 years from now by whether we use this historic opportunity to think of the twilight years of Americans, to think of the morning years of Americans, to think of how we can bring our country together. It is the opportunity of a lifetime, and we, those of us on this stage, intend to use it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. in the Russell Caucus Room at the Russell Senate Office Building.

Statement on the Executive Order on Federalism

August 5, 1999

As a former Governor, I know how important it is for the American people that the Federal Government and State and local governments work together as partners. The Executive order on federalism I signed will strengthen our partnership with State and local governments and ensure that executive branch agencies are able to do their work on behalf of the American

people. I want to thank the representatives of State and local governments who worked with my administration in developing an Executive order that enables us to better serve all of the American people.

NOTE: The Executive order of August 4 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of United States Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations

August 5, 1999

I am deeply gratified that the Senate has approved Ambassador Richard C. Holbrooke's nomination to be the U.S. Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations. I am grateful to Ambassador Holbrooke for his commitment to public service and especially for his willingness to persevere through the confirmation process.

Vice President Gore, Secretary Albright, and I welcome him back to our foreign policy team. With the U.N. facing significant challenges in

Kosovo, Iraq, Africa, and elsewhere, Ambassador Holbrooke is the right person to lead our efforts at the U.N. He will play a key role in working with the Congress to meet our obligations and to secure needed reforms at the United Nations.

Since he joined the Foreign Service 37 years ago, Ambassador Holbrooke has served our Nation with distinction in Asia, Africa, and Europe. I am confident that he will represent the United States with dedication.

Statement on Administration Action on Steel Imports

August 5, 1999

Many steelworkers and communities are experiencing continuing hardship as a result of last year's sharp rise in steel imports. I am determined to continue taking forceful action to address the unfair trade practices that have contributed significantly to this crisis. But from the start, we have maintained that we must do it the right way. We must ensure that our actions are consistent with our commitment to open markets and respect for international trade rules, just as we insist that other countries do the same. My administration has executed a strategy of vigorous, timely enforcement of our trade laws and direct high-level engagement with major steel exporting nations. These actions have cut imports to pre-crisis levels.

Now, we must ensure that imports remain at pre-crisis levels and give the industry a chance to regain its competitiveness—even as we put in place measures to prevent any recurrence. Today I am releasing a steel action plan

containing a number of measures to identify and address factors that pose continuing risks for the health and vitality of U.S. steel communities and companies and the U.S. economy. These include a systematic analysis of foreign subsidies and market-distorting trade barriers for steel and steel inputs, an international conference on unfair practices that support economically unjustifiable production capacity, bilateral discussions with key steel exporters to ensure that they play by the rules of fair trade and eliminate market-distorting subsidies, working with the international financial institutions to eliminate subsidies for steel production, enhancing our ability to detect incipient import surges before they happen, and strengthened enforcement of our trade laws.

I will continue to work with steelworkers, the steel industry, and Members of Congress to attack unfair trade practices around the world.

Statement on Proposed Legislation Advancing the New Markets Initiative

August 5, 1999

Not long ago I invited CEO's and other business leaders to join me in visiting new markets

across the country to highlight economic opportunities and to emphasize the need for greater

investment in underserved rural and inner-city areas. I am pleased to announce that today bipartisan legislation based upon my new markets initiative is being introduced in both the House and the Senate. This legislation expands upon the innovative approach to community empowerment that Vice President Gore and I have pioneered for nearly 7 years.

We need to provide the same encouragement to invest in Appalachia, Native American reservations, the Mississippi Delta, and the inner cities that we provide today to invest in new markets overseas. Through new tax incentives and investment tools, this legislation will help to attract equity capital that entrepreneurs and businesses need to start and expand enterprises

and create new jobs in low and moderate income communities. These tools will help corporate America to develop new markets in places where major corporations have rarely, if ever, looked before. It's good for business; it's good for America's growth; and it's the right thing to do.

I am encouraged by the bipartisan support for the new markets initiative, as demonstrated by the lead sponsorship of this legislation by both Democrats and Republicans. We will continue to work with Congress to pass this new markets legislation into law. At a time of remarkable economic prosperity, we need to ensure that no community or person is left behind.

Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation *August 5, 1999*

With today's announcement led by Drs. Ganske and Norwood and Congressman Dingell, it is clear that there is now a bipartisan majority of House Members ready to vote for a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Unlike the partisan Senate-passed bill, this bipartisan initiative is a Patients' Bill of Rights not just in name but in reality. It provides meaningful patient protections to all Americans in all health

plans, and it holds plans accountable when their actions cause harm to patients.

Today's action proves that patient protections need not and should not be a partisan issue. It is time to do what this bipartisan coalition has done, put the well-being of patients before politics and special interests. I call on Speaker Hastert to schedule a vote on this long-overdue legislation immediately upon return from the congressional recess in September.

Statement on Proposed Juvenile Crime Legislation *August 5, 1999*

Months after the tragedy at Columbine and the day before they are set to recess, Congress will finally begin the conference on juvenile crime legislation. Let's show our children that, when it comes to their safety, Washington will not take a break. I urge the conferees to stay in Washington and finish work on the bill during the August recess. This is a vital opportunity

to take commonsense steps to keep guns out of the wrong hands, prevent youth violence, and steer young people away from crime. They should send me a balanced and bipartisan juvenile crime bill, with the Senate-passed gun provisions, so we can give our Nation's parents more peace of mind as our children return to school.

Statement on the Intention To Veto the Proposed Republican Tax Cut *August 5, 1999*

Whether the Republican tax plan is sent to me today, tomorrow, next week, or next month, I will have no choice but to veto it immediately. It threatens Social Security and Medicare, makes

it harder to pay off the debt, and imperils the prosperity that has brought real benefits to American families.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Support Democratization in Central America and Haiti *August 5, 1999*

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999." Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis. This legislative proposal, which would amend the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997 (NACARA), is part of my Administration's comprehensive effort to support the process of democratization and stabilization now underway in Central America and Haiti and to ensure equitable treatment for migrants from these countries. The proposed bill would allow qualified nationals of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti an opportunity to become lawful permanent residents of the United States. Consequently, under this bill, eligible nationals of these countries would receive treatment equivalent to that granted to the Nicaraguans and Cubans under NACARA.

Like Nicaraguans and Cubans, many Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Haitians fled human rights abuses or unstable political and economic conditions in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet these latter groups received lesser treatment than that granted to Nicaraguans and Cubans by NACARA. The United States has a strong foreign policy interest in providing the

same treatment to these similarly situated people. Moreover, the countries from which these migrants have come are young and fragile democracies in which the United States has played and will continue to play a very important role. The return of these migrants to these countries would place significant demands on their economic and political systems. By offering legal status to a number of nationals of these countries with long-standing ties in the United States, we can advance our commitment to peace and stability in the region.

Passage of the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999" will evidence our commitment to fair and even-handed treatment of nationals from these countries and to the strengthening of democracy and economic stability among important neighbors. I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this legislative proposal by the Congress.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 5, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 6.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Convention on the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

August 5, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification of the Convention (No. 182) Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, adopted by the International Labor Conference at its 87th Session in Geneva on June 17, 1999, I transmit herewith a certified copy of that Convention. I transmit also for the Senate's information a certified copy of a recommendation (No. 190) on the same subject, adopted by the International Labor Conference on the same date, which amplifies some of the Convention's provisions. No action is called for on the recommendation.

The report of the Department of State, with a letter from the Secretary of Labor, concerning the Convention is enclosed.

As explained more fully in the enclosed letter from the Secretary of Labor, current United States law and practice satisfy the requirements of Convention No. 182. Ratification of this Convention, therefore, should not require the United States to alter in any way its law or practice in this field.

In the interest of clarifying the domestic application of the Convention, my Administration proposes that two understandings accompany U.S. ratification.

The proposed understandings are as follows:

The United States understands that Article 3(d) of Convention 182 does not encompass situations in which children are employed by a parent or by a person standing in the place of a parent on a farm owned or operated by such parent or person.

The United States understands the term "basic education" in Article 7 of Convention 182 means primary education plus one year: eight or nine years of schooling, based on curriculum and not age.

These understandings would have no effect on our international obligations under Convention No. 182.

Convention No. 182 represents a true breakthrough for the children of the world. Ratification of this instrument will enhance the ability of the United States to provide global leadership in the effort to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. I recommend that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of ILO Convention No. 182.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 5, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 6.

Statement on the Convention on the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

August 6, 1999

Yesterday I sent to the United States Senate for advice and consent to ratification International Labor Organization Convention Number 182, the "Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor."

Around the world, tens of millions of children are deprived of their childhood and subjected to the worst forms of child labor: slavery; forced

or compulsory labor, including forced recruitment for use in armed conflict; prostitution; pornography; use for illicit activities; and other forms of harmful and unsafe work. Education, not hard labor, is ultimately the path to a better life for families and a stronger economy in the countries affected. But too often, very young children are denied an education and forced into abusive and exploitative work that poses

immediate risks of harm and can also perpetuate the cycle of poverty.

Convention Number 182 was adopted unanimously by all the government, labor, and business delegates to the ILO Conference at its 87th session in Geneva on June 17, 1999. The convention will establish a widely recognized international standard for the protection of children against the worst forms of child labor. During my visit to the ILO Conference in June, I urged other nations to ratify the convention. The United States should do so as well.

Under the leadership of Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, the U.S. helped to shape a convention that can be widely ratified. A tripartite panel of American government, labor, and business representatives has reviewed the convention and concluded that the United States can ratify the convention without changing our laws or regulations. Under the convention, the United

States and all ratifying nations accept a basic obligation to "take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labor, as a matter of urgency."

By ratifying Convention Number 182, the Senate will make clear our resolve that no child should be subjected to slavery, prostitution, or pornography, used for drug activities, or work under conditions likely to harm their health, safety, or morals. I urge the United States Senate to support this convention to demonstrate our commitment and enhance our ability to help lead the world in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. I thank Senator Tom Harkin for his continuing leadership in the fight to eliminate abusive child labor. I look forward to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate leadership to advance this convention toward ratification.

Remarks on the Drought and the National Economy and an Exchange With Reporters

August 6, 1999

The President. Good morning. Before I leave to go home to Arkansas, I want to comment briefly on two matters.

First, I want to talk about the action we're taking to address the terrible, crippling drought that continues to grip so much of our Nation. Throughout much of this country, we have seen the worst drought since the Dust Bowl days. And as the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration will formally announce later today, in Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, this is the worst drought for farmers ever recorded.

Such a natural calamity can have devastating consequences, not only for farmers but for small businesses and communities that depend upon a thriving agricultural sector and for the electric power systems so vital to our Nation. We're worked hard to help the victims of the drought and the heat wave. But as weather disruptions become even more common, and they will, they will demand a more coordinated response by the National Government. So today I'm directing that the White House immediately convene a task force of the relevant cabinet agencies

to coordinate our efforts and focus our attack on this problem. We must do more. It is our duty as a national community.

Second, I want to talk a little more about our efforts to continue our prosperity for all Americans. For 6½ years now, we have pursued a different economic strategy from the previous 12 years; one based on fiscal discipline, investing in our people, selling our products around the world. It has produced sustained prosperity, the longest peacetime expansion in history. Now, it has also produced an era of surpluses after 12 years in which we quadrupled the national debt. This is working. Today we received more evidence.

Just this morning it was announced that America's remarkably low unemployment rate remains at a remarkably low rate of 4.3 percent, that inflation is low, and that last month alone, over 300,000 new jobs were created in America. This brings the total since January 1993 when I took office to 19.2 million new jobs.

We should not abandon a strategy that is working, especially since now we are beginning an era of surpluses which will enable us to meet

our big, long-term challenges for the 21st century, the aging of America, the education of our children, sustaining our long-term economic growth. Therefore I am disappointed, though not surprised, that the majority party in Congress has chosen to pass its massive tax cut; one that plainly would damage our economic future and make it impossible to secure and modernize Medicare. But again, I want to assure the American people—because this tax cut will not save and strengthen Medicare, because it will not add a day to the Social Security Trust Fund, because it will not pay down the debt and pay it off for the first time in over 150 years—this tax cut will not become law.

This morning it was reported in the press that the Republican leadership has revealed that actually they have the secret strategy even to spend the Social Security surplus. They very explicitly want to raid the Social Security surplus to pay for huge economic—huge tax cuts and a risky economic scheme. They say they're spending more money now to force that result. Now, that's the sort of thing they did before that got us in trouble and gave us an average unemployment rate that was too high and a growth rate that was too low and huge, huge deficits.

This really troubles me because for the last 2 years they have promised the American people they would work with us to save Social Security first. I can think of nothing more cynical and irresponsible. My strategy is still the same. Let's do first things first. Let's save Social Security, save and strengthen Medicare, pay off the national debt for the first time since 1835, figure out what we have to invest in the education of our children and in the national defense and preserving the environment and our essential mission, and then give the rest of the money back to the American people in a tax cut.

We can have a tax cut, but it is wrong to put the cart before the horse. It is wrong to plan the vacation before we pay the home mortgage and send the kids to college. That's what they're proposing to do. It is wrong. It will take us right back to the situation that got us in so much trouble in the 1980's, and I will not countenance it. But we can make progress.

Just today there was a report that, led by the Republican physicians in the House of Representatives, enough Republicans have joined the Democrats to guarantee that the House will pass a strong Patients' Bill of Rights. This is

the sort of thing we can do if we work across party lines, as we did with welfare reform, as we did in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. We can do something that would have seemed impossible just a few years ago. We can pay off the national debt, keep interest rates low, and give our children a healthy economy for a generation. We can save Social Security. We can save and strengthen Medicare with preventive benefits and the prescription drug. We can do these things. We can invest in our children's future. We can use this historic opportunity of a lifetime to do our duty by the next generation.

This is not a time to walk away from that duty, and again I implore the Members of the Republican majority to come up with their own Medicare plan, sit down with me and talk about it, figure out what we have to spend and invest, and then we can give the rest back to the American people in a tax cut. But we have to do first things first.

I will not—I will not see, after 6½ years of progress, us return to the problems that we faced in the years before I took office. We're not going to do it. It is not right. We should be looking to the 21st century and facing the challenges and doing right by our children. And that's exactly what I intend to do.

Drought Relief and Emergency Assistance to Farmers

Q. Mr. President, on this Federal drought task force, sir, what specifically do you have in mind? What could the Federal Government do that it's not doing now? And how do you respond to critics who say you haven't pushed hard enough for drought relief now for drought-stricken farmers?

The President. Well, I think that there should be more drought relief in the agricultural efforts. I believe we have to go back and, before the farm bill comes to me—the emergency farm bill that is working its way through Congress is designed largely to deal with the problems of the last 4 years: record-high world crops, the collapse of the markets in Asia, the collapse of the prices, and that's important because that deals with what all the farmers do off the east coast. But if you look at what they're facing here, there needs to be a special provision to deal with the drought crisis. And I hope that and believe that there will be.

So, I wish we could have done it before the August recess, but I think it will be there in

time to aid the farmers. I don't believe that this Congress will walk away without doing something to deal with the emergency problem caused by the drought. I'm going to be with James Lee Witt in Arkansas tonight. We're both going to be home, and I expect to have a discussion with him about it, about what we should do.

Yes, go ahead.

Q. And what about the task force?

Nomination of Roger W. Ferguson, Jr.

Q. What about Roger Ferguson? We understand that you're going to appoint him today to the Fed?

The President. I am. He will be the first African-American Vice Chair of the Fed. He is superbly qualified. He has served well. And I am very excited about the prospect of his service. I'm glad he's willing to do it.

Tax Cut

Q. Mr. President, you've made a point of saying that the only way of strengthening Medicare and meeting your priorities would be to have a tax cut in the \$300 billion range. Are you saying that the Republicans have to come down to that range? And if so, if it were to include an across-the-board tax cut or components that you don't philosophically agree with, would you be willing to entertain those as long as it's in the \$300 billion parameters?

The President. No. Let me back up and say first of all, the most important thing to me is that Congress engage in the same exercise I did and that I believe the Democrats on the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee tried to do, which is to say, what do we believe it will take to secure Medicare, provide a modest prescription drug benefit, these preventive changes, and all the modernization and competition things that I think we all agree need to be done? What will it take to do that?

What does the Congress—even the Republicans are up there spending a lot of money. What about the money they're going to spend over and above the '97 balanced budget limits for education, for medical research, for the teaching hospitals, the inner-city hospitals, the therapeutic services? What about the veterans? Have they decided—what do they want to spend for defense? And we have to protect Social Security.

Now after we do all that, then they ought to ask themselves what their revenue estimates or whatever revenue estimates they intend to use—what is left? And then that is how we ought to determine the size of the tax cut. We're doing this backwards. So you have this curious situation where the majority party is both passing a big tax cut and passing big spending bills without any sense of how this is going to be reconciled. So to me, the most important thing is that we engage in the same process, that we put first things first.

Now, if we can agree on an amount, do I have to be flexible on how it's done? Of course I do; they have more votes than we do. Even the Democrats in Congress had a different plan than I did, and I thought they had some good ideas. The most important thing is that we engage in a process that saves Social Security and Medicare, that pays the debt off, and that continues to invest in education, defense, and the things we have to invest in. Then I think we ought to give whatever's left back to the American people in a tax cut. I obviously will argue for the fairest possible way.

I mean, if you look at the tax cut they adopted, the top one percent get 25 percent, the bottom 81 percent get 25 percent. So I think that, you know, 75 percent of the benefits go to the top 20 percent of the people. I think that there are problems with it, but I'm—clearly we'd have to negotiate the content, the details. But the amount should be determined not by politics but by arithmetic and by what we agree on in Medicare and the investments we agree to make in our country's future and our education and defense and the environment and by what we have to spend for the agriculture, for the veterans, for the problems that are now out there with the teaching hospitals, the inner-city hospitals, the therapy services have been canceled, those kinds of things. We need to find out what we are going to do and what we have to do and what is right for the long-term interest of America, and then we can have the short-term tax cut.

And let me just make one other point about that, as we celebrate 300,000 more jobs and finally breaking the 19 million job barrier. We have seen warning after warning after warning in the business press in the last 2 weeks that a big tax cut in the face of this growing economy would be viewed as an inflationary measure which would cause the markets to raise interest

rates, which would turn right around and take the benefits away from ordinary Americans that they get from tax cuts. If you get a tax cut today and the tax cut causes higher home mortgage rates, higher car payment rates, higher interest—credit card rates, higher college loan rates, and a weaker economy, then it won't take long for that tax cut to disappear in the flash of an eye. And that's another thing that ought to be considered here.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan and Inflation

Q. Mr. President, regardless of the tax cut debate, the unemployment report today was only the latest in a series this week that have raised concerns about inflation. Would a small increase in interest rates now be an understandable response to that? And secondly, have you made any decisions on Chairman Greenspan and another term at the Fed?

The President. Well, first of all, I think he has done a terrific job, and they will make their own judgments. But what I am doing is designed—he testified in the Congress along these lines. Now I'm very gratified that the actual inflation rate is not high. It is true that we're finally getting some wage increases the last 2½ to 3 years for ordinary people, and they're getting ahead again after 20 years of falling behind. And I think that's good. But we—what—we

should do everything we can, those of us with political responsibilities in the Government, to fight inflationary pressures so we continue to create jobs and raise incomes without inflation which will certainly raise interest rates. The market will raise them, whatever the Fed does, if we really have big inflation come back into the economy.

So I'm doing my best to hold inflation down, and that's the signal that I want to send today. I never comment on the interest rate decisions of the Fed, and I don't want to start now. I think that we have had an independent policy, but our policies have reinforced one another, which is to have growth and jobs without inflation. And that's what I think we should do.

Thank you very much.

End of the Fiscal Year

Q. The end of the fiscal year is just 2 months away. Do you think we'll have a train wreck, sir?

The President. No.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for Little Rock, AR. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Anniversary of the United States Embassy Bombings in Kenya and Tanzania

August 6, 1999

One year ago twin explosions at America's Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam claimed the lives of 12 dedicated Americans, 44 Kenyan and Tanzanian nationals working to support our diplomatic efforts, and more than 200 others going about their daily lives. Thousands more were injured, many seriously.

The intended victims of this vicious crime stood for everything that is right about our country and the world: Americans and Africans working together for peace and progress and a better future. They were good people, taken from us precisely because they were doing good.

Terrorists murdered these men and women and tore the hearts of those who loved them.

But their violence could not and did not destroy the ideals for which their victims stood. Instead, we have only intensified our commitment to fundamental values: democracy and human rights, justice and tolerance.

Their violence could not and did not damage America's bonds with Kenya, Tanzania, and the other striving nations of Africa. Instead, our Governments and peoples worked hand in hand to respond to the tragedy, and we remain united in our determination that terrorism will not destroy Africa's progress.

Their violence could not and did not make America shrink from the world. Instead of giving in to those who wish us harm, we have stayed

engaged to promote freedom and opportunity, fight hunger and disease, build peace and stability, and thereby protect our national interests; and we have intensified the struggle against terrorist violence and strengthened security to protect our people. We have increased pressure on the Taliban and Afghanistan to deliver suspects in the Embassy bombings. Working with our friends abroad, we have tracked down, arrested, and indicted key suspects. And we will not rest until justice is done.

The terrorists who bombed our Embassies could not and did not erase the lives of selflessness, courage, and joy that these 12 proud Americans lived. Today their names are inscribed at the State Department, so that all who pass through its halls will be reminded of them and their good deeds: Sergeant Jesse Nathan Aliganga; Julian Bartley, Sr.; Julian Bartley, Jr.; Jean Dalizu; Molly Huckaby Hardy; Sergeant Kenneth Hobson; Prabhi Guptara Kavalier; Ar-

lene Kirk; Dr. Mary Louise Martin; Ann Michelle O'Connor; Senior Master Sergeant Sherry Lynn Olds; Uttamlal "Tom" Shah.

We remember their contributions, their sacrifice, and the happiness they brought to those who knew them, and we will remember our obligation to all the men and women who serve our country overseas and to their families, to help them do their jobs and live their lives in the face of peril and to reward their service and faith in America with our gratitude and support.

The struggle against violent hate and for a peaceful and tolerant world is far from over. But in the end, we will prevail against terrorism, because the spirited dedication of men and women like those who perished last August 7th lives on among people of good will all over the world. No bullet or bomb can ever destroy it.

Remarks at the Arkansas Broadcasters Association's 50th Anniversary Dinner in Little Rock, Arkansas

August 6, 1999

Thank you very much. Congratulations on your 50th anniversary. And thank you for honoring my friend and my partner James Lee Witt.

You know, Bobby—I was wondering what Bobby would say. I thought he would say, "You know, I knew I could guilt Bill Clinton into coming to this dinner once I found out he was going to be in Arkansas and I reminded him how many early-morning radio interviews I'd given him over the last 20 years." And I want to thank Bobby Caldwell, who is my longtime friend, and all of you for the work that you do, as well as for honoring a wonderful man tonight.

I am honored to be joined by Rodney Slater, and I know there are others here in our administration, Kay Goss, Buddy Young; and people who were in our administration in Arkansas, like Bill and Judy Gaddy, are here, and many others that I haven't had a chance to see. I thank the members of the legislature who are here, Steve Faris and Don House; and Bud Harper, who has the job that James Lee used to have

and, like James Lee, used to be a county judge, and therefore, was prepared for it.

And I want to acknowledge my good friend John Paul Katz, who served as Speaker of the House when I was Governor. And also, James Lee's family; James Lee and Lea Ellen have done a great job, and you know they're building a political dynasty in Yell County, and if your last name is not Witt, you can't be county judge in Yell County anymore—[laughter]—not ever.

Let me say that—I know most of this has been said, but I want to say a few things about James Lee and what he represents in terms of what I've tried to do as your President. This is one of the best times in American history, but when it comes to weather, it's been one of the worst. Since 1993, we've had the worst flood of the century in the Midwest; the worst earthquake in Northridge, California; weather disasters in places they weren't supposed to happen. We've had tornadoes in Minnesota, ice storms in Florida. And now the farm crops are burning up, not in the South, but in the East

and the Northeast, where today we acknowledged the worst drought ever for the farmers from Maryland to New Jersey to Rhode Island.

We have had in total more than 250 natural disasters in all 50 States and territories. And many of them have cost a lot of human lives.

Well, the old saying that God doesn't send you anything you can't handle was made true from the point of view of my administration and millions of Americans because James Lee Witt agreed to be head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

I got this idea. I have to tell you, when I went to Florida as a candidate for President and I saw the enormous anxiety that people felt in the aftermath of the terrible hurricane, where their whole lives had been wrecked, and I talked to Senator Pryor about this—I remember this very clearly—that people kept saying the Federal Government is not working; they're not helping; I don't know what they're doing; they're taking too long; they act bureaucratic. You know, just one thing after another. And I realized what the problem was, and that is that for decades, through Democratic and Republican administrations alike, the Federal Emergency Management Agency was treated like a political appointment, and normally the person who got it was somebody who wanted something else, who was a big supporter of the President, but couldn't quite become an Ambassador to a European country or couldn't quite get a position in the Cabinet. I took care of that by putting FEMA in the Cabinet.

And all these people that had this job were good people. They were not bad people; they were good people. And there were all these dedicated professionals who were working day in and day out. But there was no one at the helm who wanted the job and who had experience in what the job was and who could put every fiber of his being into dealing with people in the most difficult times imaginable.

And, you know, when I was Governor and James Lee was head of the office of emergency services here, we had horrible floods; we had tornadoes that leveled little towns. I remember going over to West Memphis when the whole place was decked and the glass had been shattered at the dog track and glass was flying through the air over there at more than 100 miles an hour. Just a miracle that we didn't have lots of people killed by something that was just like a hail of bullets.

And I knew that he cared what happened to people when they were running tight, and I knew he knew that people were frustrated, they were angry, they were disoriented, when they'd lost everything in the world. And we needed somebody who actually had that kind of experience and that kind of ability doing this job.

You know, when everything is going along all right, most people think of the Cabinet of the President as the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, and the Attorney General, and maybe if you're from Arkansas, you think about the Secretary of Agriculture. But when your house is blown away and when your community is buried in water, the most important person in the Federal Government is the person that heads the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

And because of all the things we've been through as a nation in natural disasters in the last 6 years, James Lee Witt has very often been the most important person in the Federal Government to tens of millions of Americans.

I kid him every time we have a disaster someplace, 3 weeks later there's another State he could be elected to State office in. When we went through all this terrible thing in southern California with that earthquake—they think of themselves as a big, modern place, and a lot of them, actually, are from places like Arkansas, but they forget it from time to time. And he gave them a whole new take on what it was to have a grassroots sense of common sense and compassion.

So I can just tell you that I think we're going to have more of these difficult natural problems, and I think we're going to have a lot of challenges to meet. But it will be a long, long time before any Federal official ever has this position who can remotely equal James Lee for his experience, his knowledge, his ability, and his compassion. He has served America well, and he has done Arkansas proud.

I'd just like to take advantage of the fact that you gave me this podium to give you a brief report on a couple of other things, by using, if I might, James Lee. The way he runs FEMA and the way he conducts his business is the way I believe the Federal Government as a whole should be run, that we should basically put people ahead of politics and power.

Now, all you've got to do is read the paper every day or listen to the news to know that

that's not the way Washington works and that's not the way some people who report about Washington want it to work, because they think it would be immensely boring if it did, I think. But James Lee is exhibit A of the kind of Government we've tried to bring to Washington. So is Rodney, I might add.

You have these two Arkansans serving with great distinction, by the way, who are quite popular with both Republicans and Democrats in the United States Congress, both of them, because they treat people decently; they give them a quick answer; they shoot straight. They don't say yes when the answer is no, but they try to say yes whenever they can. And they are very well thought of. And they don't become the kind of lightning rods that normally just titillate the day-to-day coverage of politics in Washington.

I believe, out here in the country there is a national consensus around a vital center for America moving forward. It crosses party lines on nearly everything. I believe it exists nearly everywhere except in Washington.

I'll just give you one example, this debate we're having over the Patients' Bill of Rights. I have supported health maintenance organizations. I have supported managed care as a way of holding down the costs of health care. Let's not forget, in 1993 when I took office, health care costs for several years had been going up at 3 times the rate of inflation. And they threatened to absolutely engulf the budgets of businesses and of families. But I also believe that you can't manage a system if you forget what the primary mission of the system is. In this case, it is to improve the health care of the American people.

Now, I believe if you went out to anyplace in Arkansas, I think if you took an exhaustive survey, if you polled 20,000 people here in Pulaski County, or in any part of our State, and you divided them properly among the parties, you would find overwhelming support for the idea that every American in an HMO ought to have the right to see a specialist if their doctor tells them they need to see a specialist.

And in a lot of big cities, believe it or not, when people have accidents, when the ambulance picks them up, they have to go by two or three emergency rooms until they get to one in a hospital that's covered. Well, if it's you in the back of that ambulance, you want to go to the first emergency room you come to.

You don't want to have to bump two or three until you get to one that just happens to be in a plan.

And a lot of you run small businesses. And small businesses that do provide health insurance for their employees often have to change providers, and they have to look around, from time to time, for the most cost-effective provider. But if there's an employee in that business who's in the sixth month of a difficult pregnancy, or in the middle of a chemotherapy treatment, I think that those people ought to be able to keep their doctors until the treatment is finished. These are just basic, simple things. And I think 70 percent of the American people agree.

Now, there is a glimmer of good news. About 20 Republicans in the House of Representatives—including all of their doctors, about a half dozen of them—have said they want to help us pass this. And I hope we can get it done. But the fact that we've been fighting for it for nearly 2 years is an example—we'd never have a 2-year fight over this in the Arkansas legislature. We just wouldn't do it, because it would be such a clear, human, basic thing that we'd figure out how to get it done without imposing undue burdens on the businesses involved.

And that's what we have to do in Washington. If you take the debate we're having over the surplus today, I know it may just seem like politics to you, but believe me, it is not to me. It's about everything I've tried to stand for and do since I went up there. Just remember, when I went to Washington, we'd been running on a balanced budget down here for 12 years, and they had quadrupled the debt in 12 years. And we had—the deficit was \$290 billion and projected to be \$390 billion this year. And we were able to turn it around by arithmetic, which meant we have to make hard and controversial decisions, and a lot of Members of my party lost their seats in Congress in the '94 election because they voted to reduce the deficit.

But just today, before I came down here, we announced that we have gone over 19 million new jobs since January of 1993—19 million—the longest peacetime expansion in history; the highest homeownership in history; the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded; a million and a half fewer children in poverty. Record numbers of new small businesses have started in every single year. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; there

are fewer toxic waste dumps. We've got 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood illnesses for the first time in the history of the United States.

We've set aside more land to be preserved forever than any administration, except those of the two Roosevelts. We've got 100,000 young people that have served their country in AmeriCorps in their communities, earned money for college. The HOPE scholarship essentially guarantees that everybody can have at least 2 years of college; and already, 15 million people have taken advantage of it; 12.5 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law.

This country is a stronger country because we have looked to the future and tried to put people first, tried to keep thinking about what's best for tomorrow. And that's what this whole debate is about. But I just want to give you my take on it. And it's exactly the same attitude I'd have if I were still Governor sitting here watching it go on.

This country quadrupled our debt in the 12 years before I took office. We have turned that around, but we're looking toward a 21st century in which, among other things, the following will happen. I'll just give you two things. Number one, the number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years when the baby boomers all get into the retirement age. Right now Medicare is supposed to go broke in 15 years; Social Security is supposed to go broke in 33 years, 34 years. We are not prepared for the aging of America.

Number two, we've got the largest number of children in our school system we have ever had—bigger than the baby boom generation—and we have the largest percentage of them who come from all different kinds of backgrounds.

I saw an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* the other day that said Arkansas was one of the two States in the country with the fastest growing Hispanic populations. And nobody really believes seriously that we're giving every one of our children a world-class education. But our future as a nation, and those of us who are baby boomers, the security of our retirement depends upon our ability to educate all of our children.

Now, here's what I think about this surplus. First of all, it's only going to materialize if we have a good economic policy. And secondly, only

if we have a good economic policy will any tax cut be worth a plug nickel to anybody.

So what I think we ought to do is meet the big challenges of the country. And I'll just mention three. Number one, we ought to save Social Security and strengthen Medicare and provide a modest prescription drug benefit to the three-quarters of the seniors in this country that don't have access to it.

Two, we ought to decide how much money we have to invest in our future, in everything from education to national defense, the environment, to things that are important in Arkansas—veterans' health care. We have to put some more money into the university teaching hospitals. Everybody agrees with this up there. And we've got to do something about the farm problem. It's about time that we admitted that '95 farm bill, as I said when I signed it, reluctantly, had no safety net and will not work in bad economic times. It doesn't work, and we ought to fix that. But it costs money. So we need to figure out how many other things we have to invest in.

And then the third thing we ought to do, in my opinion, is to save enough of this surplus for Social Security and Medicare that we actually pay this country's debt off. We can be out of debt, in 15 years, for the first time since 1835. And if we do that, that means in every community represented in this room, lower interest rates for businesses, for home mortgages, for college loans, for credit cards, for car payments. It means that the children in this room will grow up into an economy that is much stronger than it otherwise would have been.

Now, can you imagine what people would have said and thought of me if I had gone out in 1992 and said, "Now, I want you to vote for me, and 7 years later I'll come back, and we'll have a little talk about what to do with the surplus and getting America out of debt." They would have said, "You know, that young fellow from Arkansas is a nice young man, but he's deluded, and we need to send him home." [Laughter] But that's where we are today, because people like David Pryor put their political necks on the line and stood up and did the right thing.

And I'm just telling you—I see this now in the broad history of our country. A generation gets a chance like this maybe once in a lifetime. The World War II generation, they did for us

by getting us through the Depression and winning the war and saving the world for freedom. And now what we're being asked to do is to look down the road and think of the long-term interest of America, and the strength of our country in good times and bad, and do what's right for our children.

If you save Social Security and Medicare, when those of us in the baby boom retire, we won't have to burden our children with our retirement and undermine their ability to invest in our grandchildren. If you invest in education, we'll have a stronger economy. And if you pay the debt off, we'll sure have a stronger economy, by far, than we otherwise would have.

So here's my simple idea. I know this sounds simple, but why don't we figure out what we've got to do for Social Security and Medicare? Why don't we figure out what—even the Republicans, they're up there spending all the money—what they want to spend on everything from education to agriculture and veterans and what it takes to pay the debt off? There will be some money left, and give it back to the America people in a tax cut.

But this debate, it's all backwards, you know. They're up there giving the money away with no Medicare plan, nothing to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, ignoring the commitments that they want to make in everything from defense to veterans to agriculture, with no prospect of paying the debt off.

One of the young men that works for me said this is kind of like a family sitting down at dinner and talking about what they're going to do for the summer and deciding they're going to have the vacation of their lifetimes; they're going to just blow it out. And when they get home from this month-long vacation, they'll see if they can pay the home mortgage and send the kids to college. That's exactly what is going on here.

And it is not partisan, from my point of view. I'm not running for anything. But when I come home here, and we put that library up down

on the river, and I'm looking at the next generation of young people and trying to bring people from all over the world here to see our State and to talk about what we did and what we still need to do in our country and in our world, I want to go to bed every night knowing that we did everything we could to give the children in this room the 21st century they deserve.

So I ask all of you, as you watch this debate unfold. We can't even have this argument about how big the tax cut should be until we have met our fundamental obligations to you and to our future. I will work with the Republicans; keep in mind, we passed the Balanced Budget Act in '97; we passed welfare reform in 1996, in the teeth of the election. And I would remind you that we have now cut the welfare rolls in half; they're the lowest they've been in 32 years.

So we are capable of working together up there across party lines. But we can't forget about common sense and basic arithmetic. And we need to maintain the spirit of kindness and concern and humility that James Lee Witt has brought to that FEMA office every day he's been there. And I hope that, in whatever way you can, you will get that message out to the people who listen to you, because a lot of people do, and we've got an awful lot riding on it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:16 p.m. in the Ambassador's Ballroom at the Embassy Suites Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Bobby Caldwell, member, board of directors, Arkansas Broadcasters Association; Raymond Lloyd (Buddy) Young, Region VI Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency; William Gaddy, former director, Arkansas Employment Security Division, and his wife, Judy Gaddy, former special assistant to the Governor; State Representatives Steve Faris and Don R. House; W.R. (Bud) Harper, director, Arkansas Office of Emergency Services; Lea Ellen Witt, wife of Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt; and former Senator David H. Pryor.

Remarks to the Community in Helena, Arkansas

August 7, 1999

Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you for coming out in the heat. Congressman Berry asked me—we were standing up here; Congressman Berry said, “You smell that cotton dust that’s been in here a hundred years?” [Laughter]

I am glad to be back. I want to thank Senator Lambert Lincoln who has done such a wonderful job; my good friend Congressman Berry. I want to thank Mayor Weaver for coming out and Dr. Robert Miller, the mayor of Helena, my longtime friend. And I want to thank our Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, from Lee County.

Let me say to all of you, I’m about to go down to the Cultural Center for a business meeting about the future of the Delta in Arkansas, but I just want to say a word or two. And I’ll be brief because it’s hot, and I want to get out and shake hands, and then I want to go to work.

Yesterday in Washington I was able to announce that our country had produced 19 million jobs, and then some, since I became President. But the unemployment rate in the deep Delta is still twice the national average. The income is less than two-thirds the national average. And a lot of the things that we have tried to do in the last 6½ years have helped some discrete communities, but not the whole region.

In my State of the Union Address this year, in an attempt to build on the work that we’ve done with the enterprise zones and the empowerment communities, under the leadership of Vice President Gore, I proposed that we look at the Mississippi Delta, at Appalachia, at the Indian reservations, at the small towns and the inner-city communities that have been left behind as a big new market for America; that if we had parts of America where we hadn’t had new investment and new jobs and new opportunity, and we were growing like crazy and we had the best economy in a generation, we ought to find a way to get people to invest in the areas that have been left behind.

And one of the things that I asked the Congress to do is to give people in America with money to invest the same incentives to invest in poor communities in America we give them to invest in poor communities overseas.

Now, I just went on a tour. You probably saw the press when I was Clarksdale, Mississippi, but I was also in Appalachia; I went up to South Dakota to an Indian reservation; I went to Phoenix and East St. Louis and Los Angeles. There is an enormous feeling out there in the country today that we ought to really make an effort—it’s the first time I have felt this—there’s a great feeling in the Congress, and I think in both parties, that we ought to do something for the areas that have still not felt the economic recovery of the country. And that’s what we’re here to talk about. That’s what I’m going down to the Culture Center to discuss.

So the last thing I want you to know—and I know Secretary Slater would echo this—is that you couldn’t have two better people representing you than Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Marion Berry. They wear us out every single week to do something for you.

And finally, let me just say it’s good to be back here. All of you have been very good to me for more than 20 years now. I probably wouldn’t be President if it weren’t for eastern Arkansas, and I am very grateful. And I want you to know that in the year and a half I have left on my term, I am going to do everything I can to bring more economic opportunity not only to the Delta but to every place in America that is not a part of what our country as a whole is enjoying today.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the West Hangar at West Helena Municipal Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Johnny Weaver of West Helena, AR.

The President's Radio Address

August 7, 1999

Good morning. At the edge of a new century and an increasingly competitive global economy, we know that our children's futures will be determined in large part by the quality of the education they receive. More and more, what you earn depends upon what you learn.

Our administration has made education a high priority, focusing on standards, accountability, and choice in public schools and on making a college education available to every American, with increased Pell grant scholarships, better student loan and work-study programs, and the HOPE scholarship and other tax credits to help families pay for college tuition. Because of these efforts, more young people have the chance to make the most of their God-given abilities, and take their place in the high-tech world of the 21st century.

Today I want to talk about what we're doing to build on our progress, by reaching out to young people and challenging all of them to reach for their dreams by preparing for college. Because as far as we've come, we know, still, there is much to do; for too many children, especially in economically distressed communities, aren't getting the chance to reach their highest potential.

That's why we've worked hard to expand Head Start; to connect every classroom in America, even in our poorest communities, to the Internet; to launch the America Reads program, which has mobilized tens of thousands of student tutors to help millions of children learn to read; and to expand after-school programs to keep kids in school and learning, not on the street and losing their way.

But to really make a difference in disadvantaged children's lives, we must instill in them the unshakable belief that if they work hard, they will be able to go on to college. And we must give them the tools to achieve that dream.

I know how important this can be. No one in my family had ever gone to college before me. But I never doubted I was going to college, because everyone in my life guided me to reach that goal. That's what I want for every child in America. For years now, Congressman Chaka Fattah, Eugene Lang—who started the "I Have a Dream" Foundation—and the Ford Founda-

tion have been dedicated to supporting new partnerships to meet that challenge.

Last year, in my State of the Union Address, I asked Congress to support our plan to create hundreds of these partnerships between universities, colleges, middle schools, and community and business organizations. These innovative programs start early, reaching out to students no later than seventh grade, staying with them all the way, from providing students with mentors who encourage them to have high hopes and high expectations for themselves, to ensuring that schools teach the classes that prepare young people for college entrance exams, to helping families figure out how to pay for college. These programs can make all the difference in whether a young person goes to college.

Last year, with bipartisan support, Congress passed and I signed legislation creating the GEAR UP program. With the leadership of Senator Specter of Pennsylvania and Senator Harkin of Iowa, we secured the funds to put this plan into action. Today I am pleased to announce the first \$120 million in GEAR UP grants to help States and communities all over the country inspire and guide their children from the playground to the college classroom.

I'm glad to be joined here today by Congressman Fattah, by Senator Specter, and also by Congressman Becerra from California, who supports this program. And I ask Congress to fully fund my request to double our commitment to these programs now, so that we can reach more of our children than ever. GEAR UP is a great example of what we can accomplish when we put progress ahead of partisanship and put our children's future first.

Unfortunately, this is exactly the kind of program that the Republican large tax plan would jeopardize. Families don't take a costly vacation and then say they'll figure out when they get home whether they can make the mortgage payments or pay the college tuition. And I don't think we should decide on this big tax cut and just hope there's enough left over to pay for education and to save Social Security and Medicare and pay off our national debt. We have worked very hard to turn around the deficit.

Now is not the time to turn our backs on our children's future.

So today I say again, let's join together across party lines to put first things first and build a stronger America for the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:17 p.m. on August 5 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas August 7, 1999

The President. Thank you. Well, Myreon, you did a great job. I don't know what you're running for, but you've got a good chance. [Laughs] Congratulations.

Let me thank all of you for coming here on this hot summer Saturday afternoon. Especially, I want to thank Congressman Bill Jefferson, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Congressman Bennie Thompson for coming from out of State to join our Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Congressman Marion Berry back there. And I believe Congressman Vic Snyder is here. And also, a former Governor of Tennessee, Ned McWherter, our great friend, thank you for being here, sir.

I thank all the pastors and educators and businesspeople and community activists who are here. Many of you have been my friends for over 20 years, and all of you helped me to be elected President, with my friend and partner Al Gore. And then you helped us to be re-elected for the first time a Democrat had done that in 60 years. And we know it could not have happened without your support.

I want to say just a couple of things and turn the microphone over to the Vice President. Oh, let me also thank our Secretary of Transportation, Rodney Slater, who's from the Arkansas Delta. We're glad that he's here.

When we took office—a lot of people have forgotten what it was like when we took office. We had high unemployment, low growth, increasing social division, and gridlock in Washington. It was not a good time. We had social unrest in Los Angeles. A lot of you remember that. And we decided that we could pull this country together and turn it around if the people would help us.

Now, 7 years later we've got—yesterday we announced over 19 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the highest homeownership ever recorded, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in the welfare rolls, and a 26-year low in the crime rate. And I think that's a pretty good record.

Now, I want to say two things to you about that. First of all, I could not have accomplished anything I have as President without the absolutely unprecedented role that Vice President Gore played. A year ago—6 years ago the day before yesterday, he cast the deciding vote on our economic plan, which all the Republicans said would ruin the country, and they used their fear tactics to take over the Congress. And that's what has given us the biggest surplus in history and this strong economic recovery. And he did it, and you should know that.

He has supported efforts to help families and communities. A lot of the pastors here appreciate the fact that he helped—he actually was our leading person in developing the television rating system and the Internet—the video game rating system and the V-chip for families.

He has led all our efforts in technology. We passed the Telecommunications Act, which has already produced over 300,000 new jobs for America. And he led the way in saying, we cannot let America get caught on a digital divide. We have to have an E-rate, a special rate, so that the poorest schools and libraries and hospitals in America—like those in the Mississippi Delta—have to be able to get big discounts so poor children can have those computers in schools, too, and have access to everything kids in the richest part of America do. Al Gore did that for America and for its future.

He has managed much of our difficult relationships with Russia, much of our promising future with South Africa. He has been involved in every good thing we have done, from restoring democracy to Haiti to ending ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo.

I know a little bit about American history, and I can tell you that whatever anybody thinks about whether I was right or wrong about a given issue, when the history of the last 6½ years, and the next year and a half, is written, there is one thing that no one will be able to question, and that is that Al Gore was, by far, the most influential and effective and productive Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, here's the second thing I want to say. I think one reason we succeeded in helping the country is that when we asked you to hire us back in 1992, we put out a detailed plan of what we'd do if you gave us the job. An election is a job interview. He wants you to hire him. [Laughter]

The Vice President. I do. Absolutely.

The President. Okay? And all these other people that are running are perfectly nice people, but all of them are saying, you know, hire us, too; we want to be President, and sooner or later we'll get around to telling you why. [Laughter]

You already know more about him than anybody else running. But in spite of that, he said, here's my economic program; here's my crime program; here's my program to help attack social problems by working with faith-based institutions more in the community; here's my program to conquer cancer and other medical prob-

lems by increasing our efforts in medical research. Vote for me, and here's what I'll do.

And the third thing I want to say to you is this: Everybody always says they want change. Change is a good thing. We have been in continuous change. The next 4 years will be different than the last 4. We will have to change. The question is not whether we will change, but how we will change.

Don't listen to those folks who want to change by taking us back to what we tried before that got us in the ditch. What we want to do is to change in a way that goes beyond what we've done. And when 2000 rolls around, I'll be just a voter like every ordinary citizen. But I want you to know, too, finally, that this man is a good and decent man. He is a good man.

And he has been with me through thick and thin, through light and dark. I've seen him deal with the challenges of raising his children under the scrutiny of the spotlight. I've seen him work with his wonderful wife in helping to make us think about things like mental illness, that we normally never wanted to talk about before. And I am telling you—everybody knows he's got a good mind—I'm telling you he's got a heart of gold, and he deserves your support.

And for a long time now, he's been at my back, and I intend to be with his. Thank you.

The Vice President of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:37 p.m. in Hall One at the State House Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to student Myreon Coleman of Marianna, AR, who introduced the President.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception in Little Rock

August 7, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thanks for being here, and thanks for being in such a good humor. My remarks tonight could be summed up in two phrases: Thank you for everything; here's Al. [Laughter]

I want to begin by saying to Mark Pryor how much I appreciate his taking on this responsibility for the Vice President. I once did the same thing in the same job for President Carter, and I hope you have the same result.

I want to thank Blanche Lincoln for being here, for her support of our administration and of the Vice President, but most of all, for the people of this wonderful State of ours. It really is true that—you know, when Blanche decides that she wants something for Arkansas, you can let her wear you out, exhaust you, break you down until you're prostrate on the floor, and

you'll do it, or you just go on and do it anyway. Those are really the only two alternatives.

I want to thank Congressman Berry and Congressman Snyder for representing you so well and being such steadfast allies. I thank them. I thank the members of the Congressional Black Caucus who have joined us here today from other States in the South. And I thank Senator Bumpers and Senator Pryor for coming. I miss them.

You know, Dale called me last week and told me a joke—[laughter]—and it isn't repeatable from this podium. [Laughter] But it was just like old times. And I was kind of feeling low when he did it; I worked for another 3 or 4 hours in a fabulous frame of mind after he did that. Now I've got to try to give the rest of this introduction without thinking about the punch line and laughing in the middle. [Laughter]

I want to say just about three things tonight. The first thing I want to say is this. Yesterday, before I left Washington, we announced that the country has now produced more than 19 million jobs since I became President, as part of the longest peacetime expansion in history, which has given us the highest homeownership, the lowest minority unemployment in history, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare rolls, a 26-year low in the crime rate.

The air and the water is cleaner; the food is safer; 90 percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time. Because of the HOPE scholarship, virtually every kid in this country can get a \$1,500 tax credit to pay for tuition to go to college. A hundred thousand young people have served their country in AmeriCorps in 4 years. It took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach that milestone. We have been a force for peace from Bosnia and Kosovo to Northern Ireland to the Middle East.

And what I want you to know is I could not have achieved any of those things without the leadership and the support and the aggressive efforts of Vice President Al Gore.

In 1993, when all the Republicans said that the country would go down the drain if Bill Clinton's idea of economics—which was to return to basic arithmetic instead of smoke and mirrors—took off, he cast the deciding vote on the economic plan. And the rest is history. We went from the biggest deficit to the biggest surplus in the history of the country.

We made a decision that we wanted to do something to try to bring economic opportunity to people in places who had been left behind with the empowerment zone program, the enterprise community program. He personally ran it, and it's been a terrific success. And a lot of you know that I was in the Mississippi Delta region of our State this week, and in the Delta and on Indian reservations and Appalachia a couple of weeks ago, trying to take nationally the approach pioneered by Al Gore, proving that we can bring opportunity to poor people who want jobs in this country.

Everybody in Arkansas ought to be concerned about whether we can get computers into all of our schools and hook them all up by the year 2000. And one of the things that we don't want to do is to go into the 21st century with a big digital divide between the rich and the poor. Al Gore led the fight to make sure that the Federal Government required all the schools in this country to have affordable rates so that every classroom in the poorest schools in America can be hooked up to the Internet. He did that, and he deserves credit for it.

And there are so many more things that I can hardly list them all. But just let me say one thing. The management of our national security and for our foreign relations is very important. He has handled very important, complicated, difficult aspects of our relationships with Russia. He has dealt with any number of other countries. He played a major role in the decisions we made when they were not popular to liberate Bosnia and Kosovo from ethnic cleansing, to free the people of Haiti from a military dictatorship, to push ahead with our support for the peace process in the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to stand up to terrorists around the world and organize the world against it. In short, to prepare for the world we are living in.

People can say many things about these last 6½ years. Historians may have their different evaluations. There is one thing, I will make you a prediction, that there will not be a single voice of dissent on: Al Gore has been the single most influential, effective, powerful, important Vice President in the history of the United States of America.

Now, the second thing I want to tell you is this: He understands what the purpose of this election is. He understands it's a job interview. He wants you to hire him, and he's gone

to the trouble of telling you what he'll do if you give him the job.

Now, that may sound laughable to you. I think one of the reasons we've enjoyed the success we have is that I was forced to think through in advance what I'd do if I got the job, and I told the American people in greater detail than anyone ever had. Then when I asked Al to join me, we revised—we sat down together, and we went over every plan, and we revised it, and we put it out again.

And now that he's running, he's told you what his economic policy will be, what his anticrime policy will be, how he wants to use faith-based groups in communities to help solve social problems, how he wants to go out and do dramatic new things with medical research, to cure cancer and other things, and exactly how he proposes to do it.

And here's why that's important. Our generation—our generation, the baby boomers—have got an opportunity, because of the work we've done the last 6½ years, to save Social Security, to save Medicare and provide a prescription drug benefit, and to do it in a way so that when we retire, our kids don't have to support us and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. We have the opportunity to invest in the education of all of our children, so that we'll have world-class opportunities for the poor, the rich, the in-between of all races and backgrounds, so that our country will be strong. And we have the opportunity to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835.

Now, what I want you to understand is, we're living in a dynamic time. We're still embracing

change. Our administration is the force for positive change. This is not going to be change versus the status quo election. This election is about what kind of change do you want; and do you want to build on what's worked and go beyond it, or do you want to go back to the ways that got us in the ditch in the first place? That's what the issue is. And you don't have to guess with Al Gore, not only because of his record, but because he's given you a road-map.

And the third thing I want to tell you is this: I have been with this man in every conceivable kind of circumstance, good and bad, personal and political. We have talked about our children. We have talked about our parents and their deaths. We have talked about every conceivable subject, personal and political. I know him as few people do. He is a good person. He is a decent person. He is a strong person. If everything was on the line and I had to pick an American to make a decision that I knew would be good for my country when my daughter is my age, I would pick Al Gore, and so should you.

Ladies and gentlemen, Vice President Al Gore.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. in Hall Two at the State House Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to State Attorney General Mark L. Pryor; and former Senators Dale Bumpers and David H. Pryor. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association in St. Louis, Missouri

August 8, 1999

Thank you so much, Governor Carper, Governor Leavitt, and Governor Carnahan; thank you for welcoming me back to Missouri and to St. Louis, a place that has been so good to me and our family and our administration.

I must tell you, this has been a great day for me already. My staff says I'm entitled to a great day once in a while. I got to spend the night in my mother-in-law's house, go to early church in my church, and have breakfast

with my friends, and then come to meet with you. Something bad may happen tomorrow, but this has been a good day. *[Laughter]*

When I first spoke to the Governors as President in 1993, I promised that we would build a new partnership, and I said I would try to hold up my end of the deal in three ways: first, by bringing down the Federal budget deficit so we could have lower interest rates and greater investment and a recovering economy.

I've been a Governor through one boom and two busts; the booms make the job easier. Second, I promised to work with you to end welfare as we know it, to prove that poor people could succeed at home and at work. And third, I promised to loosen the rules and lift the regulations on Medicaid, that had long stopped Governors from providing more health care for less.

Six and a half years later I think it's clear that this partnership has worked, through the hard work of the American people and the economic plan we put in place in 1993, followed up with the bipartisan Balanced Budget Act of 1997. We've turned record deficits into record surpluses, as Governor Carper said. Most of your budgets also enjoy healthy surpluses.

We have the largest peacetime expansion in history, and on Friday I announced that we've gone over 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years, with homeownership the highest in the history and minority unemployment the lowest ever recorded.

You all know, and I think Tom referred to this, that with the welfare waivers that we granted the States, followed by the Welfare Reform Act in 1996, your initiatives have led us to the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years now. Last week in Chicago, I was able to announce that every one of your States is meeting the work requirements in the new welfare law, something that the American people should be very grateful for. And we now have 12,000 businesses in our Welfare to Work Partnership committed to hiring people from the welfare rolls into the work force.

With the bipartisan balanced budget bill of '97, we created the children's health insurance program, \$24 billion, the largest expansion of health coverage since the creation of Medicaid. We've waived or eliminated scores of laws and regulations on Medicaid, including one we all wanted to get rid of, the so-called Boren amendment. And last week I signed the federalism Executive order, putting to rest an issue that has divided the administration and the Governors for far too long.

In so many areas we share a common vision. I heard Governor Hunt talking when I walked in today. I thought, I've heard that voice for more than 20 years. It's still singing more or less the same song, and it gets better every time he sings it. I thank you, sir.

So I would say to you that this country is poised to enter a new century and a new millen-

nium with its best days still ahead. But we have some significant long-term challenges. I think we're in a position to meet those challenges. And I'd like to talk very briefly about the next steps that could affect you on the Federal budget, on welfare, and on health care.

First, let me say that I do see this as a generational challenge: to deal with the aging of America; to deal with the children of America, which are more numerous and more diverse than ever before; to deal with the long-term economic health of America; to bring the light of opportunity to places that have still not felt any of this recovery. Those are just a few, but I think the biggest, of our long-term challenges.

So what I propose to do is to take over three-quarters of this projected surplus and set it aside in ways that would enable us to lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, in ways that would cover the entire life of all those in the baby boom generation—that is, I don't expect to be around in 2053; I'd like it if it turned out that way, but I kind of doubt it will happen—in ways that would lengthen the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, bring the best that we know in terms of competitive technologies and other things to play, have more preventive screenings to try to keep people out of the hospitals, and have a modest prescription drug benefit, something we plainly would provide if we were creating Medicare for the first time today.

If we do that, there will still be enough money to meet our fundamental obligations—in education, national defense, medical research, veterans, agriculture, the environment—and to have a modest tax cut. And we can do it, and pay off all the publicly-held debt in this country for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President. We can do that in 15 years.

Now, I think that's important, because in a global economy where interest rates are set in part by the movement of money at the speed of light across national borders—I'll make you a prediction: In 20 years, people will think all rich countries should not have debt because that will keep interest rates lower, investment higher, more jobs, more incomes, smaller costs for everything from homes to college education. And our trading partners around the world that are struggling to lift themselves up, or countries that get in trouble as the Asian countries did over the last couple of years, will be able to get the money they need at lower interest rates,

recover more quickly, and help us to continue to integrate the world into a global market.

Now, as you know, I'm having a big argument about this in Washington. And I know you've already heard the other side of it. [Laughter] But let me just say, I think if you hear it at first blush, the plan of the Republican leadership has some appeal. They say, "Look, we've got this big projected surplus, and we want to let the Government keep two-thirds of it and give the people a third of it. And why is that unreasonable?"

Well, here's the problem. First of all, you all have been there; a projected surplus is not the same as one in the bank. And we don't know that. But secondly, there are the budget problems, economic problems, and aging realities that I would argue undercut this tax bill that has passed the Congress. Let me just mention them.

First of all, the two-thirds of the surplus that the Republican leadership—and I applaud this—is committed not to spend is that produced by the Social Security taxes. So they say we're not going to spend it at all, which means the only money available for spending over the '97 budget caps is the 100 percent they want to give away in the tax cut. And it is 100 percent, because it's not just the size of the tax cut, but when you cut taxes that much, you reduce debt less, so your interest rates are higher, the interest payments are higher. So you have to add to the tax cut the interest payments that we will have to pay that we would not otherwise have to pay.

So basically, it means that the surplus we project to come from Social Security taxes will be out here, and if it's kept that way it will be used to pay down the debt. And that's good; not as much as my plan, but it does pay some down, and that is good, and I applaud that. But it also means that you and we and the American people are stuck with the '97 budget caps for the next decade.

Now, let me tell you what that means. First of all, it's not real. The same people that voted for this tax cut are up there spending money to help the farmers, and they ought to be. We've got a terrible crisis on the farm in America, and we need to deal with the present emergency, and we need a long-term modification of the '95 farm bill to reflect the fact that it has no safety net. And we need to do it in a way that doesn't mess up market prices,

doesn't go back to the bad old days of overmanaged farm programs by the Federal Government. There are ways to do this, and we have to be careful how we do it. There are a lot of good things in that farm bill, in terms of having the Government get out of telling people what to plant and where; had a good conservation reserve program, had a lot of good things, but it had no safety net.

So the Congress on the one hand is cutting the taxes and on the other hand spending money for farmers. They're putting more money back into the veterans' health budget, which they ought to do; there's some need there. They want a defense increase even bigger than the increase I want, neither of which can be funded under the new balanced budget calculations if you keep the Social Security surplus out of it. And that doesn't count what you will want us to do to help you in education or Medicaid or anything else. And it doesn't count what I hear every place I go, in every State, in communities large and small, which is that we had cuts that were too severe in the Medicare budget in 1997, which has imposed enormous burdens on the teaching hospitals in every State in the country, on the hospitals with large numbers of poor people, and on a lot of therapy services, for example, for home health care, which have been cut back.

So, on the one hand we've got a construct that sounds simple and good. We keep two-thirds of the surplus; we give you a third back, to the people. But it means that we have to stay within the 1997 budget caps, which are already being broken, and which should be exceeded. You've got to do something about agriculture. We've got to do something about these teaching hospitals. We need some relief for the Veterans Administration, and that doesn't deal with all the things that you've been talking about, probably, before I got here. Now, so that's the budget problem.

So one of two things will happen. If we had this construct, we either have huge cuts in all these things—huge—or we would have a reversion to past policies. We'd go back to deficit spending. At least we'd be deep into the Social Security portion of the surplus.

Secondly, there are the aging realities. The plan that has passed does not do anything to extend the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, nor does it do anything—even though it holds

the taxes back—it doesn't do anything to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund.

Just taking the tax receipts and holding them separate does not extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. To do that, you have to do what I suggested, which is to take the interest savings you get from paying the debt down for 5 years and put them into the Social Security Trust Fund. And I believe we have to find some way of bipartisan agreement to increase the rate of return in the Trust Fund, and the only way to do that is to get out of buying something besides Government securities. And I think there's a way to do that, and I still believe we can get an agreement on that.

So there's—then the third thing is the economic realities. We have been told repeatedly, in a soft and indirect way, from the Federal Reserve Chairman to the pages of all the business articles that you read, that if, with the economy growing like it is, if we have a tax cut of this size, it will lead to larger interest rate increases, and most people will turn right around and pay back, in higher interest costs, what they are going to get in a tax cut.

Now, it is true, as Governor Carper said, that we don't have indexes of inflation here, because America has a relatively open economy and because of the breathtaking increases in productivity, because of technology and other things. We don't. But the Fed took a preventive step, as all of you know, the last time it met. And we have gotten a signal that is loud, clear, and unambiguous, that if you have a tax cut this big, an economy that's doing this well, there will be higher interest rate increases, and the people will lose what they get in a tax cut in higher interest costs. I personally think that is a mistake.

Now, consider the flip side of this. Here we, the baby boom generation, our generation, has been derided by others and by ourselves for 30 years for being self-indulgent and all that and been poorly compared to the World War II generation. Well, in their youth, they were required to save the world and to get us through the Depression. And we had no such challenge. But in our middle age, we are being given a chance to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. We are being given a chance to stabilize Social Security and Medicare, so that when we retire we don't have to have our hands out to our kids to support us and take money away from them that they would

otherwise spend on our grandchildren. And I think it's the opportunity of a lifetime.

Now, we can still have—my view is the way to resolve this is to stop putting the cart before the horse. To pass the tax cut before we decide what the Medicare fix is, what are we going to do on that, whether we're going to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, and what we need to spend for these other things is kind of like a family sitting down to dinner and saying, "Let's take the vacation of a lifetime; when we get home, we'll see if we can't make the mortgage payment and send the kids to college." You wouldn't do it. Nobody else would do it, and I think it's a mistake to do it.

Now, if you disagree with all this and you want to go back and spend the Social Security surplus, we can do it. We can do all these things. But you mark my words: Interest rates will be higher; this economy will be weaker than it otherwise would have been; and 30 years from now we will wonder what in the living daylight we did with the opportunity of a lifetime. And I think that's why one of the members of the Republican Party who voted against this was Governor Voinovich, who happens to be a Senator. And another was Senator Snowe, whose spouse was one of our colleagues.

And so I just would ask you to consider this. To me this is not politics; this is arithmetic. We went back to old-fashioned arithmetic in Washington the last 6½ years, and it worked pretty well. We had to get rid of 200 or 300 programs. We've now got the smallest Federal establishment since John Kennedy was President. And everybody had to take a little medicine they didn't like but because the economy has grown so much we've actually had more money to spend than we ever dreamed. And we've begun to lift children out of poverty; we've begun to do some other things.

But if you look at this looming problem of what the aging of America will do—twice as many people over 65 in 30 years—if you look at what you all are facing, with 2 million teachers about to retire, with the largest number of kids in schools ever, with increasing diversity, it just seems to me that—and if you look at the obligations I have and that any President would have of either party to maintain military readiness and deal with the aging of a lot of our systems and to compete for talented young people to get them into the military when they can get so many good jobs doing other things,

if you just look at all of this, and if you look at the fact that the money is not there yet, this is all projected surplus, it seems to me that the better course is to think of the long-term future of our children. And I really do believe this is a generational challenge for the so-called baby boomers, and I don't think we ought to blow it. And if I can stop it, I will.

But let me say something else. This is not—it is literally true that instead of spending more money on the farms, we'd have to cut the farm safety net programs; we'd have to eliminate the crop insurance bill. We'd have to have a \$32 billion cut in Medicare, which we're not about to do. We'd have to do all these things.

But let me say that I am also not pessimistic about this. To solve this problem we have to have a majority of both parties and both Houses. And most people say, "Well, you're already in the political season, all the States"—some of you have done this—"all the States have moved their primaries way up. So everything is now about nothing but politics; we can't get this done." I just think that is dead wrong.

We passed a bipartisan balanced budget agreement in 1997, overwhelming majorities of both Houses and both parties. In '96, in the teeth of the election, we passed that welfare reform bill, overwhelming majorities in both Houses and both parties. And you know, we're all still getting paid; every 2 weeks we're drawing a check up there, and if we just realize what we're supposed to do for our check we'll figure out a way through this.

I am not nearly as pessimistic as a lot of people are about the prospects of our reaching an agreement, and I am determined to try to do it.

Now, let me just talk briefly about two other things that were part of our partnership. One is welfare reform. I know a lot of you have been concerned, probably a lot of you in both parties, about the discussion in Washington where some of you, apparently, have been asked outright, how would you feel if we took some of your welfare reform money back? Now, to be fair, I want to just tell you, they're in a terrible bind, because they're living with the budget caps, and they want a tax cut that will keep them in the budget caps, and they've got to spend—they've got to help the farmers; they've got to do something for the farmers. And we probably have cut the veterans' budget too much, and they want to spend more and

more on defense, and there's a general consensus that we need to—not on how we should help you with education, but that we should continue to support that, as you have the largest school populations in history.

Now, I think that it would be wrong to take the money away. But what I want to urge you to do is to make sure that you have made every effort you can to spend the money in the appropriate way. We know, for example, that we're way below—and I'm trying to get this in the tax bill, by the way, because keep in mind, there can be a tax bill; it just can't be as big as the one that's passed—we're way below meeting the national need for child care for low-income working people. And if we're going to move more people from welfare to work, we've got to do more on that. So I hope you'll consider that.

There also are some States—I know, you know, Governor Thompson only has 14 people left on public assistance in Wisconsin. [*Laughter*] There are some States where the reduction has been so low that, arguably, it is physically impossible to do. And if you all can come up with a fix for that for, you know, if you get the rates below a certain amount that deals with the education of poor children or something, you know, tries to creatively deal with this, bring it to me. I don't want to put anybody in an impossible situation.

But I think that the problem of giving poor children a step on the ladder to a mainstream American life, beginning with education and health care and good parental support, is a problem that our successors and interests will be facing here 10, 20 years from now. And if we can set up the right framework we'll be doing a very good thing.

So you can do two things. You can just say—they can say, "Well, can we have some of this money back, because we've got a budget problem." And you can say, "No," and you can probably win then. And I'd be for it, by the way, I'd be for your position. I'd say no, too. But I recommend—I think the better course is for you to say, "No, but here's what we're going to try to do to spend this money that you're giving us," and if we're in a position like—I don't know how many States are in this position, but Tommy and I talked about this briefly in Chicago the other day—if you're in a position where you just can't, you say, "Here's how we really ought to make some changes so we can

invest this in our kids and their future." I think that's important.

There's also some discussion in Washington about whether the Congress should reduce the funding for the CHIP program. And again, I think that's a mistake, because between CHIP and Medicaid, as now funded, the vast majority of children in this country without health insurance could get it. And that would be a good thing. And I want to say that thanks to the efforts that a lot of you have made, and the outreach efforts that have been made, the Kaiser Family Foundation says that there's now 1.3 million kids enrolled in the CHIP program, which is a huge increase in the last 6 months. So it's finally beginning to pick up.

However, we know that there's money out there for 4 to 5 times that many children to get health insurance. And I think that rather than talk about giving the money back to Congress, we should talk about how we're going to invest it for the purpose for which it was intended. It was one of the signal achievements of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, a completely bipartisan thing, and a really laudatory effort. But all of you had to get out there and design programs and figure out how you're going to interface it with Medicaid and figure out how to tell people about it. It was a complicated thing, but we wanted to do it in a way that this portion of it would be as little hassle for you as possible.

And a lot of things have happened. In Nevada, for example, I know our educator-Governor there says the school principals are getting children signed up for CHIP. In Alabama, the All Kids program is mobilizing coaches to enroll children who want to be in sports. In California, Governor Davis is doing outreach for CHIP in 10 different languages. So a lot of good things are happening.

And I think it's important that we remember that this year, this coming school year, will be the first full year of full opportunity and operation of the CHIP program in all the States. So I think it's too soon to rush to judgment about this. This is the first full year of fully operational CHIP programs in all the States.

I think we need to do more to support the outreach and to take advantage of the children's health initiative. Now, beginning tomorrow, we're going to send every school superintendent in America a letter, and every member of the National Association of Elementary Principals

will get letters from that organization, asking them to participate in an outreach effort to inform parents about the value of health insurance and their eligibility.

Next month, when the children get back to school, the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services are going to launch outreach efforts with the United Way. For example, school lunch applications will come with flyers explaining the CHIP program; workers are going to be sent to local McDonald's to sign up families there; Health and Human Services is going to run a radio message campaign to publicize it.

I think there is an enormous amount of promise that is still to be fulfilled here. I need to ask you to do a couple of things. First of all, we need more data to really make the system work. We can't improve the program or know what's wrong with it unless we know how many children have signed up for it. To date, 20 States haven't sent us the information. Some haven't reported on the basic information about children on the Medicaid rolls. And we know that from outside studies that in some States individuals who are Medicaid eligible don't always get the opportunity to enroll without delay, as the present law requires. We need to figure out why this is happening and figure out how to stop it.

So this month, as was reported, I think, already, we will begin working with you in partnership to do some onsite reviews to ensure that there are no roadblocks, intentional or, even more likely, unintentional roadblocks, to those who are eligible for Medicaid. I think that now that we have the funding and the extra flexibility to manage welfare and health care, we've got to make the most of it. Let me just give you some examples.

There is \$500 million in the budget to reach out to families who lack health insurance, but are eligible for Medicaid, to simplify procedures for signing them up. We've gotten rid of the census rule that two-earner families that work over 100 hours a week are ineligible for Medicaid, even if their incomes are still low enough to qualify. All of you will get substantial funds on the tobacco settlements. They can be used for preventing youth smoking, but also for expanding health insurance. I hope you will make the most of this.

Let me just make a couple of specific suggestions about CHIP, in addition to what we're

trying to do. I think the things that would have the greatest impact are presumptive eligibility for CHIP, as well as Medicaid, and sending eligibility workers into schools, into churches, into health care centers, into day care and preschool centers, places where the children are where their parents will come.

We have—this is an enormous opportunity to shrink the health problem of no insurance for children. We know we have about 10 million kids without health insurance. And the last 6 months of the CHIP program indicate to me that if you just keep working at it, we can get up at least to the 4 to 5 million kids that we anticipated. But if you look at the combined eligibility and the level of funding of Medicaid and CHIP, there's no question that the vast majority of uninsured children in this country could in fact get coverage. And it would make a demonstrable difference in their health and in their performance in school over the long run.

Well, let me just finally close by saying that, in some ways, these are all high-class problems. If I had come here in '93 and said, "Now, I'll be back here in a few years, and we'll talk about how to spend the surplus," you would have said, "You know, I thought that guy had good sense, but he's completely lost it." This is a high-class problem. But all high-class problems have accompanying high-class responsibilities. This is the last NGA meeting of the 20th century; the 92d meeting of the Governors, or the 92d year in which you've met. I've been to 19 of them. The first one, in 1908, was called by—that's not the one I went to. [Laughter] Although some days I feel like I went to it. [Laughter] The first one, in 1908, was called by a former Governor, Theodore Roosevelt. He was a great Governor and a great President and a very farsighted man. And he called the meet-

ing, interestingly enough, about the conservation of our Nation's resources.

Now, I'll make you another prediction. When I look around this room and I see how many of you I've visited in natural disasters over the last few years—you and your successors will spend a lot more time in the next 20 years talking about the conservation of national resources in the context of natural disasters and climate change. And so, it will be *deja vu* again. And Teddy Roosevelt will look even smarter than he does today.

But I want to close with a quote that he gave to the first Governors' meeting. He said, "Both the national and the several State governments must each do its part, and each can do a certain amount that the other cannot do, while the only really satisfactory results must be obtained by the representatives of the national and State governments working heartily together."

I think that if we work heartily together, we will turn these high-class challenges into goldmine opportunities, and our children will live in America's greatest days.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the St. Louis Ballroom at the Adam's Mark Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Thomas R. Carper of Delaware, chair, and Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah, vice chair, National Governors' Association; Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; Dorothy Rodham, the President's mother-in-law; Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina; Senator Olympia J. Snowe's husband former Gov. John R. McKernan of Maine; Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin; Gov. Kenny C. Guinn of Nevada; and Gov. Gray Davis of California. The President also referred to CHIP, the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Remarks on the 50th Anniversary of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at Fort Myer, Virginia

August 9, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Cohen and Janet. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary for his remarks, his devotion, his remarkable leadership, and his willingness to

serve in our administration, to prove that when it comes to the national security of the United States, we are beyond party, and all Americans.

General Shelton, thank you for your leadership and for your remarks. And we are delighted to be joined today not only by your wonderful wife, Carolyn, but also by your mother. We're glad she came up to be with us.

Thanks, Secretary Slater, Secretary West, Senator Thurmond, for being here. Senator Thurmond may be the only person here who served in the military before there was a Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was at D-day, and he's here 55 years later, and we're delighted to have him. In both places, he has served our country well. Thank you, Senator.

I thank the service secretaries, the members of the Joint Chiefs who are here, General Ralston and others, and the former members of the Joint Chiefs, and all the other officers who are here. One in particular I would like to mention, General Wes Clark, because of his extraordinary leadership in our most recent military victory in Kosovo. I thank him and all the men and women of our Armed Forces who have served there.

I especially want to welcome here the former Chairmen and their wives: Admiral and Mrs. Moorer, General and Mrs. Jones, General and Mrs. Vessey, Admiral and Mrs. Crowe, General and Mrs. Shalikashvili, and, of course, Alma Powell. We're glad to have them here.

Fifty years ago—you've heard a lot about already today, but I think it is worth remembering what it was like to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff 50 years ago. It was a new job. It was clearly overwhelmingly preoccupied with the onset of the cold war and the need to defend Europe. But soon after General Omar Bradley was summoned to assume the job, war broke out in Korea. So he had not only to defend Europe, but also to defend freedom in South Korea, and fulfill the job description to coordinate the services, and also to coordinate with the State Department and the White House.

We have our White House Chief of Staff, Mr. Podesta, and the National Security Adviser, Mr. Berger, and others who are here. I think we can say with some conviction that sometimes the hardest military job of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is his coordination with the White House. And it has been so for 50 years. But General Bradley and then 13 other remarkable leaders have found a way to do that, and at the same time, to provide wise and honest counsel at crucial moments to every President and

Secretary of the Defense. And I would like to stop a moment and emphasize that.

There will come a time in the service of every President—in my time it has come, unfortunately, on several occasions—when you have to have the honest advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. And very often, it is the last thing in the world you want to hear, because he will either tell you that you really can't achieve the objective you want to achieve for the price you're willing to pay, or that you have to do something that you'd rather go to the dentist without novocaine than do. And I can tell you that, without exception, every time a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs has had to do that to me, he has done it. He has served our country well; he has served the President well; he has served the military and the men and women in uniform well. This institution has worked because the people who are part of it did what they were required to do in times of crisis. And our country should be very grateful to all of them.

Just think what has happened over the last 50 years. We look back on 50 years of constant vigilance, of two hot wars and a long cold war, of military victories in the Persian Gulf and the Balkans, of difficulties like the Cuban missile crisis and many others too numerous to mention. But through it all, and though new threats emerged continuously, we see the march to freedom, and we see the depth of America's security.

We can look forward to the 21st century with genuine confidence, in no small measure because of the 14 leaders we honor today. So again, I say, along with the Secretary of Defense, to those who are here, to the surviving families of those who are not, and to those who could not be with us today, our Nation is grateful. You have served it well.

I was very privileged to work with three Chairs: Colin Powell, John Shalikashvili, and Hugh Shelton; to work very closely with the previous Chairman, Bill Crowe, who has been my Ambassador to Great Britain and has done a lot of important work to alert us to the continuing dangers to our Embassies and their personnel from terrorists. I had the privilege of getting good counsel on the very difficult POW/MIA issue from General Vessey, and on our efforts to save innocent civilians from the dangers of landmines by General Jones. Of course, I still hear from General Powell on a regular

basis about his work with America's Promise and our shared interest in it.

The more I know the people who are involved in these endeavors, the more my esteem for them grows. I always have separation anxiety when someone important leaves. When Shali walked out the door and went all the way across the country, I thought Joan would never let him come back. But I've even found something for him to do from time to time that doesn't get him in too much trouble at home.

These people are unique. They have these unique experiences that they blend with their abilities and their patriotism. And I think we should think just a moment about the position beyond the question of advice to the President. If you think about it, with the world changing as much as it is today, and with the United States occupying the rather unique position we occupy at this moment in history, there are few positions which require the occupant to think harder about the threats the Nation faces and will face. There are few which force a leader to weigh more soberly the costs of action—which in a world where people are comfortable, are very high—against the costs down the road of inaction. There are few which require a person to spend as much time thinking about how to avoid war as how to win one if it should become necessary.

General Bradley said a long time ago that the way to win a nuclear war is to make sure it never starts. I would like to thank the former Chairs of the Joint Chiefs who have endorsed the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to end nuclear testing forever, proposed by President Eisenhower, championed by President Kennedy, signed now by the United States and over 150 other countries; 41 of them have ratified it. Four of our former Chairs—General Jones, Admiral Crowe, General Powell, General Shalikashvili—have issued a statement endorsing the treaty, agreeing with the current Chair, General Shelton, that it is in America's interest.

Why? Because we have already stopped testing; our leading experts say we can maintain a safe and reliable nuclear deterrent without further tests; and the only remaining question is, will we join or lose a verifiable treaty that can prevent other countries from testing nuclear weapons. If we don't ratify it, by its terms the treaty can't enter into force. And countries all around the world will feel more pressure to develop and test weapons in ever more destruc-

tive varieties and sizes, threatening the security of everyone on Earth.

So today, once again, as we honor the Joint Chiefs, the individuals and the institution, I ask the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to hold hearings on the treaty this fall and the full Senate to vote for ratification as soon as possible. This will strengthen national security not only of the United States but of people around the world. This will help the new Chairs of the Joint Chiefs in the future not only to prepare for war but to avoid it.

Let me finally say that as we approach a new century, we can still be proud, indeed, never prouder, of our men and women in uniform. Thanks to their courage and skill in the most recent campaign in Kosovo, a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing has been reversed; our alliance has been preserved and strengthened; there is new hope for a world where people are not murdered or uprooted because of their ethnic heritage or the way they choose to worship God.

Operation Allied Force was a truly remarkable military campaign: over 30,000 sorties flown; no combat casualties. Still we must not indulge the illusion of a risk-free war. In Kosovo, our pilots risked their lives every day. They took enemy fire, faced enemy aircraft, time and again put themselves in even greater danger just to avoid hitting civilians on the ground. And we know not every conflict will be like Kosovo; not every battle can be won from the air.

We must remember, too, that the rigorous training we require of our men and women in uniform is in itself dangerous. We lost two helicopter pilots training in Kosovo. In every single year, we lose a good number of men and women in uniform just doing their duty.

Our job from the top down is to reduce the risks of their service as much as we can and to send our service men and women into harm's way only when we're certain that the purpose is clear, the mission is achievable, and all peaceful options have been exhausted.

When we do send them, we have to make sure they have the tools to do the job. We must always match their skill and courage with a high level of readiness. And we must always prepare today for tomorrow's threats. All those jobs, in the end, fall on the shoulders of the Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In his remarkable memoir of World War II, Omar Bradley wrote the following words. He

said, "No matter how high an officer's rank, it's important to scoff at the myth of the indispensable man. For we have always maintained that Arlington Cemetery is filled with indispensable men."

Now, that statement is a tribute to his decency and his humility. Nevertheless, for 50 years now, the role of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been indispensable to the preservation of life on this planet from nuclear holocaust, to the security of the United States, and to the march of freedom across the world.

Fourteen Americans of great ability and even more intense patriotism have occupied that office and made it indispensable. So, to all of those who are here and their families and those

who are not here today, a grateful nation says, thank you, thank you, thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at Summerall Field. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Cohen's wife, Janet Langhart Cohen; General Shelton's mother, Sarah Laughlin Shelton; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe; former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Thomas H. Moorer, USN (Ret.), and his wife, Carrie; Gen. David C. Jones, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Lois; Gen. John W. Vessey, Jr., USA (Ret.), and his wife, Avis; Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., USN (Ret.), and his wife, Shirley; Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Joan; and Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), and his wife, Alma.

Remarks at the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps Graduation Ceremony

August 9, 1999

Thank you. When I came up here, Josh said, "I warmed them up for you." [Laughter] He certainly did that. Now he's sitting in my seat, which might be—[laughter]—might be a good omen. [Laughter]

Let me thank all of you for being here today. I want to say a special word of thanks to Harris Wofford, who, as you heard from his own speech, his public service to America goes all the way back to World War II. He was a major player in the civil rights revolution, the establishment of the Peace Corps. He served in the United States Senate. He agreed to come back and run our national service program and to do it in a way that reached out to all Americans from all walks of life and all political backgrounds. And he has done a superb job. I'm very grateful to Senator Harris Wofford for his leadership of AmeriCorps. He's been great in our whole national service program.

I want to thank General Chambers and Kate Becker for their leadership, and welcome all of you here, but especially the AmeriCorps NCCC graduates. Senator Wofford mentioned that on the morning you were sworn in with great symbolism in front of the FDR Memorial, it was quite cold. But within, literally 24 hours, many of you were already off to Texas and Puer-

to Rico to help the victims of a hurricane and a flood. After a year of such duty—I think you call them spikes, just like these fellows did so many years ago—you have fulfilled your AmeriCorps pledge. You have made a difference; you have gotten things done for America.

So to all the parents and family members and friends here today, let me say that your sons and daughters may look about the same as they did a year ago, but they have grown in remarkable ways. They are now firefighters, homebuilders, relief workers, community organizers, mentors, educators. They are confident. They are leaders; they are also servants as they lead.

Congratulations to class five of DC. Like the CCC alumni here today, you have touched lives and changed communities in ways that will be remembered and appreciated for years and years to come.

You know, in so many ways, AmeriCorps is the embodiment of the deal I struck with the American people in 1992. At the time, unemployment was high; the debt had quadrupled in the previous 12 years; social division was increasing; political stagnation was the order of

the day in Washington. And I wanted our country to change course and come together. I acknowledged that Government can't solve all the problems, but we can't leave the people that you've been helping out there to sink or swim on their own, either. And so I wanted to create a Government that would give people the tools to solve their own problems and live their own dreams and to basically have a new compact in which we said, we will attempt to create opportunity for all Americans who are, themselves, responsible, and we will attempt to build an American community of all responsible citizens.

AmeriCorps embodies that. You go out there creating opportunity every day. You are fulfilling your citizen responsibilities. And you have certainly helped us to build one American community.

So far, as Harris said, there have been 100,000 of you. You have built tens of thousands of homes, immunized hundreds of thousands of children, taught millions of students to read, planted millions of trees, and are now in New Jersey enrolling children in the new Children's Health Insurance Program, an initiative I hope to take nationwide, because we have still over 8 million children without any health insurance in American today, and we now have the funds in Washington to cover most of them. We just have to get them enrolled.

Now we're trying to take AmeriCorps up to 100,000 a year. Think what we could do; just think about everything you've done in this last year. Think how we could change the face and future of America if there were 100,000 of you out there every single year from now on doing what you have done. Think how many more young people would also be able to use the AmeriCorps scholarships to go on to college. Think how that would change the face and future of America, the range of opportunities available, the lives that people would live.

I think this is a very important moment for America. We have the strongest economy in a generation, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, highest budget surplus we've ever had, highest homeownership in history. What are we going to do with it?

I think we should use it to meet our big long-term challenges. The baby boomers, people

like me, when we retire, if we don't do something now, Social Security and Medicare won't be able to sustain the burden of our numbers. But we now have the ability to fix Social Security and Medicare in a way that enables us to retire without imposing burdens on you, so that you will be able to raise your children without having to spend your hard-earned money to support your parents. I think that is very important.

Because of the surplus, we can get this country out of debt, for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. And if we do that, if we do that, it means that when you go out into the world, interest rates will be lower, businesses will be stronger, jobs will be more plentiful, incomes will be higher, homes will be more affordable, and so will college education. It's important.

It means we can invest in the education of all of our children and meet our other fundamental responsibilities and still afford a modest—not a big, but a modest—tax cut designed to help people deal with the biggest challenges they face.

It means that we can go out into the areas that you know all too well, which, in spite of this fabulous economy, have not yet felt this recovery. I was in Appalachia, in the Mississippi Delta, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, in south Phoenix and East St. Louis and Watts and East L.A. And you know as well as I do that for all the economic progress of the last few years, there are still some people who are living only in the shadows of this prosperity.

All of this we can do now. And I think it is my responsibility—and not just my responsibility as President, but my responsibility as a member of my generation, and that of every other member of my generation—to leave you an America in the 21st century that is strong and that is worthy of the service you have just rendered. That is really what we're discussing up here.

You heard Josh talking—we don't have to put up with things we don't agree with in America, with conditions and human suffering and problems that we know we can change. It doesn't have to be this way. You have proved that lives can be changed. You have proved that circumstances can be improved. You can prove—have proved that dreams can be realized, not only yours but the people you've tried to help. And this is sort of a magic moment for our country, and if we do the right things now,

then the feelings you have from your service as AmeriCorps volunteers are things that you will be able to put into practice, to good effect for your country and for young people that come along behind you for the rest of your lives.

I can tell you now, having lived a good deal longer than you have, there are two things that I want to tell you about the difference in my age and yours. One is, it doesn't take long to close the gap. *[Laughter]* Right? Is that right? I mean, when I said that, every person here in this room that's at least 50 years old was thinking the same thing: It seems like yesterday when I was 20. *[Laughter]* Isn't that right? We're all sitting here thinking the same thing. By the way, I'd let you be President for a year and a half if you'd let me be 20. *[Laughter]* I'd take my chances on doing it again. One.

Number two, there are certain chances that come along every day and others that just come along once in a lifetime. For example, my parents' generation won World War II and endured and whipped the Great Depression. The youngest of them are about Senator Wofford's age. He looks a lot younger than he is and acts even younger than that. And they did that, and they were called upon to do that when they were young, to save freedom and to beat a depression.

Then in the intervening generation, they dealt with the civil rights revolution in America and gave us an America that looks more like this AmeriCorps class. And thank God for them, all of them.

Our generation was blessed to be raised with enormous material satisfaction, and when I was young, it was the last time the economy was about as good as it is now. And we have waited a long time for the time when we would be presented with our one great opportunity and responsibility of a lifetime. We have it now in the present economic conditions of America.

I've tried to fulfill our generation's responsibility by giving you the chance to serve and by helping to build one America across all the racial and religious and cultural and other lines that divide us. But we are being tested now, and our values are being defined.

One of the things that is most amazing to me is that there are still some Republicans—and I want to say the word some; we've had good bipartisan support for AmeriCorps—but there are still some who are determined to zero out funding for AmeriCorps, in other words,

ideological argument in the face of all the evidence of all the good you've done. Well, if they zero out the funding, their bill has zero chance of becoming law, because I will veto it.

But the AmeriCorps budget is just one example of what will happen, or would happen, if their big tax cut could become law. I mean politicians normally, when they have money, like—you give it back to people in an election season, say, "This is your money. I'm going to give it back to you. Please vote for me." And that's normally a better political position than the one I'm in, which is, "It's your money, but I don't think we can give it back to you, at least we can't give as much back as they want to give back to you." You can readily see which is the more appealing position, can't you?

Remember when you were kids, you used to argue about your parents, you know. You can just hear them arguing up there: "My tax cut is bigger than your tax cut." *[Laughter]* But that's not really the question.

The question is, what does it take to save America's future in the face of the aging crisis? It means you have to lengthen the life of Social Security past the lifespan of the baby boomers. That's what it means. And my plan takes Social Security out to 2053. A lot of you will be around then, but I probably won't. But we owe it to you to lengthen Social Security beyond the lifespan of the baby boomers. It means we should strengthen Medicare and provide for a prescription drug benefit because of medical revolutions which enable people to live longer and better if they can access medicine. It means we should get out of debt, so we can give you the strongest possible economy. It means we should invest in education and the environment and health care and national defense and saving our farmers that are in so much trouble today, and the care of our veterans. And then we should give what is left in a tax cut.

The reason that you have people up there trying to zero AmeriCorps is they know they can't pay for their tax cut without big cuts. There are special interest tax breaks in this tax bill that I threatened to veto, just special interest provisions, that would fund AmeriCorps 10 times over. And I would urge the American people to look at the fine print of this bill, because it also has big cuts in education, in research and development, in the environment. It could even force closure of some of the national parks you worked on.

And again I say, this doesn't have to be a partisan issue. This should be a generational issue. Just like when you go out on a project, you have to do first things first. If you're working on a mountain, you've got to put the right kind of shoes or boots on before you go up there. This debate over this tax cut in Washington has not actually been a very good object lesson for the older generation to you. This debate is like a family getting around the table and saying, "Hey, let's take the vacation of our lifetime, the vacation of our dreams, and when we get home we'll see if we can't pay the mortgage and send the kids to college." That's what's going on.

It is the reverse of what you have done: getting things done for your country, making a difference, thinking about the future.

So I say to all of you, I hope you will always believe you can make a difference. And I hope all of the leaders here in Washington will realize that we have the chance of a lifetime to make a difference.

When you leave this program, I hope you will remember the other thing I said to you, which is that the distance between your age and mine is shorter than you think. It looks like a very long way from where you are, but from where I am, it looks like it happened in the flash of an eye. What you have done for your country and also what you have done for yourselves proves that it is truly more blessed to give than to receive and that in giving you do receive.

All over the world today there is turmoil, from the Balkans, Kosovo, and Bosnia, to Northern

Ireland to the Middle East to the tribal conflicts of Africa, where people are fighting and dying because their vision is so limited that they believe their life only counts if they can lift themselves up by putting someone else down, someone of a different race, someone of a different religion, someone with a different slant on life, someone in Africa of a different tribe. All over the world this is happening.

AmeriCorps is living, daily, practical, flesh-and-blood proof that there's a better way to live; and that what we have in common is more important than what divides us; and that if we work together and hold hands and believe we're going into the future together, we can change anything we want to change.

You are the modern manifestation of the dream of America's Founders. And I hope, when you leave here, you will never, ever, ever stop being proud of what you've done. And I hope you will never stop preaching the lessons you have learned. For in the end, if we're all working toward one America, the chances are we'll get where we're going.

Good luck, and God bless you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. in the Sidney Yates Auditorium at the Department of the Interior. In his remarks, he referred to AmeriCorps volunteer Joshua Watson, who introduced the President; National Civilian Community Corps Director Lt. Gen. Andrew Chambers, USA (Ret.); and AmeriCorps National Capital Region Campus Director Kate Becker.

Remarks to the American Bar Association in Atlanta, Georgia

August 9, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I want to say to all of you how very grateful I am to be here today at the American Bar Association, and especially under the leadership of my long-time friend Phil Anderson. I'm sure you could see there was a sort of an Arkansas tilt to a lot of the people who were introduced here today. [Laughter] Bruce Lindsey used to be one of his law partners. He even had his minister here. [Laughter]

What you may not know is, the reason I'm here is that I got beat for Governor in 1980, and I was the youngest former Governor in the history of America. I had extremely limited career prospects, and Phil Anderson is the only guy in Arkansas that offered me a job. [Laughter] He's either a great prognosticator or a good gambler—[laughter]—and he's done a superb job.

Let me say, seriously, how very much I appreciate the remarks that he made on the issue of gun safety at the outset of your convening here. It's a very important issue to the Attorney General and me and, of course, to Atlanta's wonderful mayor, Bill Campbell, and all of those who have struggled to make our streets safer. We're honored to be here. I think the Lieutenant Governor of Georgia and the secretary of state are here, and I thank them for being here.

I want to join—I know that they've already been introduced, but Congressman John Lewis and Andy Young and Hank Aaron have been all very good friends to me and to Hillary over the years, and I'm profoundly honored by their presence here and their contributions to our country. I thank you all for being here.

I want to thank all the people from the Cabinet: Secretary Slater, who is also a native son of our State; and the Attorney General for coming with us; and Mr. Podesta. But I want to say a special word of appreciation to Chuck Ruff; this, I think, is his last day as the White House Counsel. Actually, I think Friday was his last day, but I made him come with me today. *[Laughter]* He has demonstrated throughout his career, in many positions of public trust and in private practice, with extraordinary power and dignity, a ferocious ability to be a legal advocate and an even deeper devotion to the Constitution and laws of the United States. He is a magnificent human being, and the United States and his President will always be in his debt. Thank you, Mr. Ruff.

Several of you were at the White House last month when we celebrated the 35th anniversary of President Kennedy's historic call to the legal community to advance the cause of civil rights. We talked then about the role our lawyers must play in building one America, renewing our commitment to combat discrimination, to revitalize our poorest communities, to encourage diversity in the legal profession and all its institutions, and to continue the legal community's commitment to pro bono work.

This has been very important to me and to my family. A lot of you know that Hillary was formerly the chair of the ABA's committee on women in the profession and the chair of the Legal Services Corporation. We have lived with these issues for almost 30 years now. And I want to thank the ABA for working with our initiative for one America, headed by Ben Johnson in the White House, who is also here

today, to launch a national drive to increase diversity in all sectors of the legal profession.

I also want to thank your incoming president, William Paul, for his efforts to raise \$1 million for aid for the ABA scholarship for minority students and for his very generous contribution to kick off the drive.

I know that you are also committed to ensuring that our legal profession serves all Americans equally. I've asked Congress to fund my request for the Legal Services Corporation. Phil has already given it a good plug, and I can hardly compete with birthday cake. *[Laughter]* But we need your help. I've had to fight for the Legal Services Corporation every year since 1995, and I am happy to fight for it again, but I'll have a lot more success if they know that all of you from all the States, from both political parties, understand the importance of its preservation and its vital role.

I also want to ask you to work with us to make our Federal sentencing guidelines fairer, to correct some of the discrepancies in sentencing for similar crimes. This is an issue that most people in public life are reluctant to discuss, because there is always another election coming up and no one wants to be judged soft on crime and because there are always exceptions which can be made to seem the rule.

But I think every person in our criminal justice system, from the members of the Supreme Court to the Attorney General, right through the ranks, knows that there are certain inequities in these sentencing guidelines that cannot be countenanced when measured against the standards of justice, fairness, or our common interest in having the safest possible society. So I ask you to help. You cannot expect the elected officials to deal with this alone, but if you give them the support they need and the evidence they need and the arguments they need, we may be able to continue to improve this system.

We have the lowest crime rate in this country in 26 years. We should now be focusing on making this the safest big country in the entire world. But we can only do it if we are not only making this country safer but fairer and more decent and more just. And like most everybody else that's had experience with this, I am absolutely convinced we can continue to remove the inequities from the sentencing guidelines without seeing the crime rate go up or increasing the number of innocent victims. But we need your help to do it.

Finally, I'd like to ask for your support in another goal that is critical to building one America, and that is establishing a judiciary that is both strong and vibrant, that is both fair and diverse. Having a judiciary that reflects both excellence and diversity is critical to equal justice under the law, to safe streets broadly supported by the public, and to building one America. It is also a very important part of America setting an example for the rest of the world.

Your president mentioned that you have representatives here from over 50 countries. And when he said it, it put me to thinking that I have spent an inordinate amount of the time that you gave me to be President in the last 6½ years worrying about wars and rumors of wars and conflicts that spread from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans to Africa to Kashmir. All across the world, on every continent, people continue to fight each other. And the roots of their fighting are their racial, their ethnic, and their religious differences; people who can't help looking at other people who are different from them and seeing someone who is alien; people who do not see past the color or the faith to the common humanity, which is far more important than that which divides us.

If the United States is going to be a force for good in the 21st century, we must continue to be better here at home. And we cannot expect everyone else in our society to be better unless those of us in the Government set a good example. Anybody who has ever been in a courtroom, either as an advocate or a client, knows that if you are in court, the judge is the most important person in the world. And to have a judiciary that reflects the diversity of America, as well as its commitment to equal justice under law and to professional excellence, is a profoundly important national goal.

If I might, I'd like to take just a moment to pay tribute to a man whose life and career were a testament to these objectives, Judge Frank Johnson. Few Americans struck so many blows for equal justice. I was honored to award him the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995. We all miss him, but our Nation is better because he lived and served.

When I leave you tonight, I go to honor with another Presidential Medal of Freedom, another American whose commitment to equal justice and to world peace are unequal, President Jimmy Carter. Among President Carter's many

and varied contributions to our national life is his record of support for civil rights and for diversity and excellence on the Federal bench. I have worked hard to build on that record.

I'm proud that the judges I have appointed during my tenure are the most diverse group in American history. Nearly half are women and minorities; more than half the current judicial nominees are. But they have shattered the destructive myth that diversity and quality do not go hand in hand. In fact, thanks to your committee, my appointees have garnered the highest percentages of top ABA ratings of any President in nearly 40 years.

It is against this backdrop that I tell you about two historic nominations to the Federal bench. It's difficult to believe that in 1999, despite the fact that more African-Americans live in the fourth circuit than any other appellate jurisdiction, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit has never had an African-American judge. On Thursday, we took steps to remedy that, when I nominated Judge James Andrew Wynn, a highly respected judge on the North Carolina Court of Appeals, to serve as the first African-American judge ever on the fourth circuit.

I was also proud to announce another first—in some ways, given the history of the last 30 years, even more hard to believe—when I nominated Judge Ann Williams, a Federal trial judge in Chicago, known throughout the bar for her talent and dedication, to become the first African-American judge ever to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

Now, both Judge Wynn and Judge Williams will make outstanding contributions to our courts and to our country. But first, they must be confirmed. And recent experience shows this can be an unnecessarily long and grueling process that I believe serves neither the judiciary nor our Nation.

Judge Johnson once said, the hallmark of any civilized society lies precisely in its ability to do justice. But we cannot expect our society to do justice without enough judges to handle the rising number of cases in our courts. Despite the high qualifications of my nominees, there is a mounting vacancy crisis in the courts.

During the first 3 years of our administration, we made tremendous progress in reducing the number of judicial vacancies. But the progress came to a screeching halt in 1996, a presidential election year, when judges became grist for the

mill of partisan politics. In that year, only 17 judges were confirmed, and for the very first time in 40 years, not a single circuit court judge was confirmed by the Senate.

The result was a crisis so severe that last year, Supreme Court Chief Justice Rehnquist warned that vacancies in our court could actually undermine our legal system's ability to fairly administer justice. In response to this alarm, the Senate worked with us last year, and under the leadership of Senator Orrin Hatch, in a bipartisan fashion, we were able to fill 65 vacancies in our Federal courts. But no sooner had we begun to remedy the rising emergency then, once again, the politics of the Senate began to stop the confirmation process in its track.

Consider: this year alone I have nominated 61 judicial candidates; 16 of the 61 are due to fill vacancies in jurisdiction among the 21 that have been declared judicial emergencies because of the caseload backlog and the length of vacancy. I will nominate candidates for the other five positions this fall, when the Senate comes back.

Now, during this period in which I have nominated 61 candidates, the Senate has confirmed only 11, and only 13 more have been reported out of committee; 37 are still stuck there. There are only 16 vacancies on the Federal bench for which I have made no nominations, and I believe that is an historic low, because of the time it takes to do the FBI checks, the background checks, and run all the traps that modern life seems to require. Nine of the 13 candidates currently voted out of committee, but not voted on in the Senate, are women or minorities.

This year, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of President Truman's appointment of the first African-American to the Court of Appeals, the highly respected William H. Hastie; and the 65th anniversary of President Roosevelt's appointment of Florence Allen to be the first woman to serve on an appellate court. We should commemorate these occasions by building on them with qualified people. We should honor the tradition of service. We should not—not; I repeat, not—have another replay of 1996. The worst effects of the slowdown are making themselves felt across our country. Exploding civil and criminal court dockets affect the lives of tens of thousands of Americans. They strain our justice system to the breaking point.

For civil litigants, we know that justice delayed can be justice denied. For criminal cases,

we clearly need the most rapid possible action. The Attorney General was talking to me on the way in about how we had succeeded in getting the crime rate down. But we had to have enough judges on the bench to take time in each of these cases to make the right kind of sentencing decisions if we want the criminal justice system to continue to work in a way that is both fair and effective.

We simply cannot afford to allow political considerations to keep our courts vacant and to keep justice waiting. All of you know, I think, that I have worked very hard to avoid having major ideological fights of the kind we saw in previous years over judicial nominees. I have sought to find good people who believe in the Constitution and the law and equal justice, who reflected the diversity of America, but who were completely qualified, so that I could bring them to the Senate and get them through in an expeditious way.

So, again, I say, I'm going to go back after the August recess and try to do this. I'm also going to ask the Senate to do the right thing and confirm Acting Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Bill Lann Lee, who also deserves to be confirmed.

I want to thank you for using the power of your voice to encourage the Senate to address the mounting crisis in our courts by moving forward on the nominees as soon as possible. I want to thank the ABA's standing committee on Federal judiciary, especially the chairs, for the excellent job you've done evaluating my nominees for 6½ years.

I want to ask you, again, to reaffirm your conviction on this issue and think about it in the larger context of both our eternal quest for individual justice and our eternal quest to build one America and in terms of our obligations around the world. If we want to go from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to Kosovo and Bosnia to Central Africa and ask people to lay down their hatreds, to no longer fear the other, to see diversity as a source of interest and joy that makes life more exciting but in no way undermines our common humanity, if we want to be a force for good around the world, we must do good at home and always become better.

The ABA has been a force for that, and for that I am profoundly grateful.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. in the Sydney J. Marcus Auditorium at the Georgia World Congress Center. In his remarks, he referred to Philip S. Anderson, outgoing president, and William G. Paul, president-elect, American

Bar Association; Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor and Secretary of State Cathy Cox of Georgia; former United Nations Ambassador Andrew Young; and member of the Baseball Hall of Fame Hank Aaron.

Memorandum on the Interagency Group on Insular Areas

August 9, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Interagency Group on Insular Areas

Issues relating to American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the United States Virgin Islands sometimes vary from those relating to the States. Such issues frequently cut across agency lines. Since the insular jurisdictions lack the representation that a State has in the Federal process, the Federal Government has a special responsibility to consider their issues.

Except for matters that are specifically within the responsibility of another department or agency, generally, the Secretary of the Interior has responsibility for the matters concerning these territorial jurisdictions. With the continued development of the insular areas and the extension of most Federal programs to them, the need to improve the coordination of Federal programs and policies as they relate to these jurisdictions has increased. I, therefore, direct as follows:

1. There shall be established the "Interagency Group on Insular Areas" (IGIA) to give guidance on policy concerning these insular jurisdictions. The IGIA membership shall consist of senior officials selected by the heads of executive departments, agencies, and offices that receive a request for representation from the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary). The Secretary and the Director of the White House Office

of Intergovernmental Affairs (Director) shall select the Co-Chairs of the IGIA.

2. The IGIA shall work on a continuing basis with the Secretary to identify issues concerning these insular jurisdictions and make recommendations to the President or other officials as appropriate concerning Federal Government policies and programs that raise those issues.

3. The IGIA shall consult with the Governors, Delegates to the U.S. House of Representatives, other elected representatives of the insular areas, and other Members of Congress as appropriate, on issues of concern. In this regard, the Co-Chairs shall schedule a meeting at least annually in Washington, D.C., with insular officials and shall schedule other meetings in response to requests of the officials.

4. Executive departments and agencies should coordinate significant decisions or activities relating to the insular areas with the IGIA. This shall not, however, limit the responsibility of departments and agencies to directly fulfill their responsibilities in the insular jurisdictions, including their responsibility to respond directly to the insular jurisdictions and their representatives.

5. The Secretary shall periodically, but no less than annually, report to the President through the Director on the progress made in addressing insular area issues.

6. The Secretary shall provide administrative support for the IGIA.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Ceremony Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former President Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter in Atlanta

August 9, 1999

President and Mrs. Carter, members of the Carter family, including grandchild number 10, Hugo, who's right outside—[laughter]—members of the Cabinet who are here, friends of the Carters, Mr. Mayor, let me say to all of you what a great pleasure it is for me to be here today. I flew down on Air Force One today with a number of former Carter administration members who, many of them, are in our administration, many others are mutual friends; and we relived old stories.

I remember in 1974, Governor Jimmy Carter had a role in the Democratic Party, and he was trying to help us all win elections. And I was running for Congress, and he sent Jody Powell to northwest Arkansas to help me. I should have known something was up. [Laughter] Thank goodness he failed, and I lost that election. [Laughter]

In 1975, Jimmy Carter came to Arkansas to give a speech, met with me and my wife and others, and we signed on. In 1976, my home State was the only State besides Georgia where President Carter got more than 65 percent of the vote. So it's a great personal honor for me to be here today.

Over the past several years, the President and Mrs. Carter have received many awards, all of them well-deserved. Rosalynn has received more than a dozen just from children's organizations alone. President Carter has been knighted in Mali, made an honorary tribal chief in Nigeria and Ghana. There are at least three families in Africa he's met who have named their newborn child Jimmy Carter. [Laughter]

Now these are hard acts to follow. [Laughter] But today, it is my privilege, on behalf of a grateful nation, to confer America's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, on Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter.

Twenty-two years ago, when presenting this same award posthumously to Dr. Martin Luther King, President Carter said, "There are many Americans who do great things, who make us proud of them and their achievements, and who inspire us to do better ourselves. But there are some among those noble achievers who are ex-

emplary in every way, who reach a higher plateau of achievement."

It is in that spirit that we look back on two extraordinary lives today. In the past, this award has been presented to people who have helped America promote freedom by fighting for human rights or righting social wrongs or empowering others to achieve or extending peace around the world. But rarely do we honor two people who have devoted themselves so effectively to advancing freedom in all those ways. Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have done more good things for more people in more places than any other couple on the face of the Earth.

To be sure, there have been other Presidents who have continued to contribute to the public good once they left office: Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia; John Quincy Adams returned to Congress for eight terms and fought slavery; William Howard Taft became Chief Justice.

But the work President Carter has done through this extraordinary Carter Center to improve our Nation and our world is truly unparalleled in our Nation's history. We've all gotten used to seeing pictures of President Carter building homes for people through Habitat for Humanity. But the full story lies in pictures we don't see, of the 115 countries he's visited since leaving office, to end hunger and disease and to spread the cause of peace; by the more than 20 elections he's helped to monitor, where democracy is taking root, thanks in part to his efforts; of the millions in Africa who are living better lives thanks to his work to eradicate diseases like Guinea worm and river blindness; of the dozens of political prisoners who have been released, thanks in part to letters he has written away from the public spotlight.

I was proud to have his support when we worked together to bring democracy back to Haiti and to preserve stability on the Korean Peninsula. I am grateful for the many detailed, incisive reports he has sent to me from his trips to troubled nations all across the globe, always urging understanding of their problems and their points of view, always outlining practical steps to progress.

To call Jimmy Carter the greatest former President in history, as many have, however, does not do justice either to him or to his work. For, in a real sense, this Carter Center is not a new beginning, but a continuation of the Carter Presidency.

The work President Carter did in those 4 years not only broke important new ground, it is still playing a large role in shaping the world we live in today. One of the proudest moments of my life was the day in 1993 when Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat shook hands on the South Lawn of the White House. That day was made possible by the courage of the people of the Middle East and their leaders, but also by another handshake 20 years before and the persistence of President Carter as he brokered the Camp David accords. I know it is a great source of pride for him that, 21 years later, not a word of that agreement has been violated.

If you talk to any elected leader in Latin America today, they will tell you that the stand President Carter took for democracy and human rights put America on the right side of history in our hemisphere. He was the first President to put America's commitment to human rights squarely at the heart of our foreign policy. Today, more than half the world's people live in freedom, not least because he had the faith to lend America's support to brave dissidents like Sakharov, Havel, and Mandela. And there were thousands of less well-known political prisoners languishing in jails in the 1970's who were sustained by a smuggled news clipping of President Carter championing their cause. His role in saving the life of the present President of South Korea, President Kim, is well known.

His resolve on SALT II, even though it was never ratified, helped to constrain the arms race for a full decade and laid the groundwork for the dramatic reductions in nuclear weaponry we have seen today. By normalizing relations with China, he began a dialog which holds the promise of avoiding a new era of conflict and containment and, instead, building a future of cooperation with the world's most populous nation.

Here at home, his work on deregulation helped free up competitive forces that continue to strengthen our economy today. His work on conservation, particularly the Alaska Lands Act, accelerated a process that has created the cleanest air and water in a generation. His advocacy of energy conservation and clean energy will loom even larger in the years ahead as our Na-

tion and our world finally come to grips with the challenge of climate change. And by hiring and appointing more women and more minorities than any other administration to that point, he set a shining example of the one America we all long to live in.

During the Carter years, Rosalynn Carter also brought vision, compassion, tireless energy, and commitment to the causes she advanced. Just as Eleanor Roosevelt will be remembered for her work on human rights, Rosalynn Carter will always be remembered as a pioneer on mental health and a champion of our children.

For more than 30 years, she has made it her mission to erase the stigma surrounding mental health. As First Lady of Georgia, she used to travel dusty backroads to meet with people and volunteered her time at a State hospital. She took what she learned to the White House, where she chaired the President's Commission on Mental Health with style and grace. Afterwards, she initiated the Rosalynn Carter Symposium on Mental Health Policy and has worked to promote action on mental health worldwide.

We have made some progress in the last few years in extending health coverage and health insurance policies to mental health conditions, thanks in large measure to Tipper Gore's efforts, and in broadening public understanding and support for further action. It would not have happened if Rosalynn Carter hadn't done what she did first. Thanks to her work, I believe we will see the day not too long away when mental illnesses are treated just like any other illnesses and covered just like any other illnesses.

We also owe her our gratitude for her efforts to ensure that all our children are immunized. Two decades ago, she helped America see that while many vaccines were being discovered, too few children were being vaccinated. She traveled across our country and became so recognized as a leader on immunization that people used to joke that every time she showed up, the kids would start to cry, because they knew somebody was going to get a shot. *[Laughter]*

Her work inspired President Carter to launch a nationwide campaign to immunize all children by the time they enter school, an effort we have built on. I can tell you that in the last 2 years, we can say for the first time in history, 90 percent of America's children have been immunized against serious childhood diseases. That

would not have happened if Rosalynn Carter hadn't started this crusade more than two decades ago. We have seen this kind of commitment in all of her endeavors, from her work to organize relief for Cambodian refugees to her constant efforts to ensure that women get equal pay for equal work.

The extraordinary partnership between these two remarkable Americans has remained strong for more than 50 years now. To see it merely as a political journey tells only part of the story. At its heart, those of us who admire them see their journey as one of love and faith. In many ways, this Center has been their ministry.

In his book "Living Faith," President Carter recalls a sermon that says, when we die, the marker on our grave has two dates: the day we're born and the day we die, and a little dash in between, representing our whole life on Earth, the little dash. To God, the tiny dash is everything.

What a dash they have already made.

By doing justice, by loving mercy, by walking humbly with their God, Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter are still living their faith, still making the most of the dash in between the numbers.

It will be hard for any future historian to chronicle all the good work they have done. It will be quite impossible for anyone to chronicle all the good works they have inspired in the hearts and lives of others throughout the world. Today, we do all we can; a grateful nation says thank you.

Colonel, read the citation.

[At this point, Lt. Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:05 p.m. in the chapel at the Carter Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bill Campbell of Atlanta; former Presidential Press Secretary Jody Powell; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Václav Havel of the Czech Republic; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; and President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President and Mrs. Carter.

Remarks in a Discussion on the Partnership With BusinessLINC August 10, 1999

The President. Well, hello, everyone. I have a few remarks, but I want to be brief so we can get on to the business at hand. But first, I'd like to thank James Powell for making us feel welcome in his place of business, and his family and his co-workers and the instruction that he gave me on making a mop. I'm always looking for new skills since I have to acquire some pretty soon. [Laughter] And the Vice President appreciates the fact that he buys the cord from Tennessee.

The Vice President. Humboldt, Tennessee.

The President. And I want to thank the mayor and the two councilpersons and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton for making us feel welcome up here. We're always glad to be out in DC, but this is a special opportunity. And I know that the mayor and Councilwoman Charlene Drew Jarvis and Kevin Chavous—

Councilman Chavous are excited about what's going on here.

I want to thank Dana Mead; the president and CEO of Tenneco; the gentleman to my right who is the chair of the Business Roundtable; and Peter Bijur, the president and CEO of Texaco, who is going to chair our BusinessLINC national coalition, for their willingness to undertake this project with gusto; and all the others around here who are proving that this kind of thing works and who will be introduced as we go through, including the members of the administration who are here: Secretary Summers; Gene Sperling, my National Economic Counselor, who has done so much to develop the new markets initiative; Aida Alvarez of the SBA; and Jack Lew, Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

We all know why we're here. We have a record expansion in America, the longest peacetime expansion in history. It has finally, in the last 3 years, given us substantial increases in wages for ordinary workers, after 20 years of stagnation, and the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. Yet we know that there are still people in places that have not been touched by this recovery.

And it's very interesting to me that what many of us in the business community, as well as in the public sector, believe is a moral obligation we have to try to give all our people a chance to participate in this great economy is also an economic opportunity and perhaps an economic imperative. Every day, I promise you, the people here who run these big companies have got people scouring the press every day trying to divine the intention of the markets: Have we reached the limits of this expansion? Can we continue to grow the economy without inflation? How can we do it?

Well, obviously, if we expand economic opportunity and create businesses, employees, and consumers in areas where they didn't exist before, that is an inflation-free way to expand the economy. So we have reached a point in our country's economic development where I think we finally have a chance to do something for the places that have been left behind, from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Native American reservations to the inner-city neighborhoods, in ways that will benefit all Americans. That's the idea behind the new markets initiative and the tour I took of areas that have been left behind, a few weeks ago with a lot of CEO's and other people.

And the idea is simple, that we want a partnership between business and Government to make investments more attractive in areas where they haven't been made in the past but only on the basis of profit, that this has to be a profitable decision. This is not a social program. This is free enterprise economics. We are trying to create the conditions in which the economic expansion, which has so benefited so many millions of Americans, can reach people who have been left behind for decades.

Mr. Powell's exhibit A. He introduced me to someone who moved from welfare to work in his company. He introduced me to a man who has eight children that he feels he can now support. He introduced me to a man who immigrated to this country 10 years ago from

Central America, who's proud to be working here.

And this is a very, very important moment for our country, because for at least 30 years, Americans have wanted to do this, not just politicians; people in business have wished there was some way to bring free enterprise to the people and the places that have been left behind. And we believe we have found some ways to do it.

Now, I said, we have to do this in partnership. And just this last week, legislation based on our new markets initiative was introduced in both the House and Senate. It's pretty simple. It's basically designed to give American investors like those around this table, the same incentive to invest in developing markets in America that we give you to invest in developing markets in Central America or the Caribbean or Asia or Africa. I support those incentives for those countries, but they ought to exist in this country as well.

It builds on the successful approach that the Vice President and I have developed over the last 6½ years, and that he has so very ably headed, of our empowerment zones, our enterprise communities, a stronger Community Reinvestment Act, community financial institutions. This approach is working where we have applied it. What we want is a nationwide framework.

What we're here today to talk about is what I think is perhaps the single most important thing the business community can do to make this work: BusinessLINC. Let me tell you how BusinessLINC got started.

Nearly 2 years ago, Vice President Gore met Tom Lazo down there in Dallas, in south Dallas. He had a small company that built telecommunications equipment. It was doing well, but he told the Vice President that his company couldn't grow and thrive without technical assistance and better training, without tools and skills his larger competitors already had. He needed a corporate mentor. That's why we launched BusinessLINC last summer, under the leadership of the Vice President and with the support of Secretary Summers, Administrator Alvarez, and former Secretary Rubin.

Tom Lazo's idea has a lot of power: large companies helping small companies get access to capital, learn the best technology and the best management techniques. As many of you can attest and will attest this morning, partnerships like this are good for investment, good

for consumers, good for the bottom line. You see that at businesses like Powell's. And Mr. Powell and his big supporter will have a chance to talk here in just a moment.

Today I am very pleased that the Business Roundtable, a coalition of Fortune 500 companies, is stepping up to lead BusinessLINC. This means that we'll be able to go national with this idea. This means we'll be able to do it in a big way. And this means people who know what they're doing will have a stake and a commitment to its success. I cannot thank Dana enough. I cannot thank Peter enough. This is a very, very impressive commitment, and I'm very grateful to both of you.

Especially, I want to thank Texaco's Peter Bijur, because since he's going to lead the effort, Dana can look at him and ask for results. [Laughter] I've been on both ends of that; I'd rather be asking than answering. [Laughter] But this will help the corporate community to meet the challenge the Vice President issued a year ago to mentor more businesses, especially in the distressed communities.

Now, I know the Vice President has more to say about BusinessLINC, so I'd like to ask him to say a few things, and then we'll just start calling on the people around the table. And I think the press and those who read about this or see about it on the media will quickly understand the great power of this idea.

Mr. Vice President.

[At this point, Vice President Gore made brief remarks, and the roundtable discussion began.]

The President. I just want to make one very brief point here, because the last two presentations illustrate something that we really believe and that basically is the whole reason for the existence of the Small Business Administration, which is that, even in the best of times there are almost artificial barriers to the success of free markets. We are not trying to supplant them; we're trying to take away the barriers to them. That's what you're doing, and in so doing you're creating more. And this is very impressive to me.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. I think this has been wonderful. And let me say we are—I think we have a reasonably good chance to get a bipartisan big vote for the legislation that would provide some greater tax incentives and some eligibility for lower interest loans to go with the equity in some of these really distressed areas this year. But none of this is going to happen without the kind of partnerships that we've celebrated today. This is clearly something that is better done and can only be done, really, in the private sector with the Government sort of cheering on and then trying to provide the resources that SBA and others have.

So, again I want to thank Dana and Peter and all the rest of you, and those of you who are living and doing this every day, and I just can't thank you enough. I also would like to say that it means a lot to me personally, having been a resident of Washington, DC, the last 6½ years, that we could do this in Washington, highlight this project, and remind people that there is another Washington where not everybody does have a good job or a good opportunity, and that we believe our Nation's Capital is small enough that the economies of scale work in a way that with sustained vigorous leadership, we can actually bring economic opportunity to all the neighborhoods here.

So, Mr. Mayor and Congresswoman, and to all the rest of you, I want to thank you. And if you'd like to say anything in closing, we'd be glad to hear from you.

NOTE: The discussion began at 12:45 p.m. in the workroom at Powell's Manufacturing Industries, Inc. In his remarks, the President referred to James Powell, president, Powell's Manufacturing Industries, Inc.; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; and Tom Lazo, president and chief executive officer, Custom Programming Services, Inc. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Vice President Al Gore.

Remarks on the Shootings at the North Valley Jewish Community Center August 10, 1999

Before I leave tonight, I wanted to say just a word about the shootings at the Jewish community center in Los Angeles.

Once again our Nation has been shaken and our hearts torn by an act of gun violence. To the victims and their families, like all Americans, I offer our thoughts and prayers.

I have been briefed on the situation on the ground. The Federal Government has offered all appropriate assistance to the local law enforcement officials who are working on this case. I wish I could say more conclusive now; we don't know much more than has been reported.

I want you to know that I intend to continue to monitor the situation very closely tonight and tomorrow. But again, I say this is another senseless act of gun violence; a lot of shells were found on the scene. It calls on all of us not only to give our thoughts and prayers to the victims and their families but to intensify our resolve to make America a safer place.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:14 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception August 10, 1999

The President. I was back there deep in conversation. [Laughter] Let me, first of all, say to all of you how glad I am to see you, how pleased I am that you're here, and how much I appreciate your support for the Vice President. I will be very brief.

When it was apparent that I was going to become the nominee for the Democratic Party in 1992, I had Warren Christopher, the person I probably trusted most in the world, organize a Vice Presidential search for me. And we went through all the candidates, and I said, "Well, what do you think?" He said, "I don't think you have a choice." He said, "I think Al Gore is much better than all the others." And I said, "I agree." And I said, "You realize they'll all say we're crazy. I mean, we're the same age; we're from the same part of the country; we're more or less from the same wing of the Democratic Party."

The Vice President. Not quite the same wing. [Laughter]

The President. Not quite the same wing of the party, not quite the same. Yes, and I can't climb Mount Rainier. [Laughter] And if I could, I wouldn't. [Laughter]

So, anyway, we did it. It violated all the sort of conventional wisdom. And I made a lot of decisions in the last 8 years, some of them were

good and some of them weren't, but none were better than that one.

And I just want to say—basically say three things about it. Number one, in all the success this administration has had, from the economic renewal to the decline in welfare rolls, to the decline in crime, to the efforts to make our air and water cleaner and our food safer, to our search for peace around the world, and managing our big, difficult relations with Russia and China, reaching out to Africa in a comprehensive way, really, for the first time for any administration, right across the board, every single success we've had is a success that belongs not just to me but to the Vice President. If he hadn't cast the deciding vote on the economic plan, I'm not sure any of us would be here tonight having this conversation. So the first thing I want to say is, the record of this administration is his record.

The second point I want to make is that he has made it clear what he would do if he got the job to a greater degree and in greater detail than anyone else running. Even though, arguably, he should have to do less since people know more about him; that's not what he did.

The issue in this election will not be whether we should vote for change or not. The issue is what kind of change we'll vote for. We're

living in an inherently dynamic time. You know, each year, as all of you know who follow this, I try to lay out an agenda to the Congress and the American people in the State of the Union Address that continues to push the envelope, that continues to push the boundaries of change, that continues to challenge the people and public servants to do what needs to be done.

The first 4 years of this new millennium will be dramatically different from 5, 10 years ago. The way we work and live and relate to each other 20 years from now will be almost unrecognizable from what we were doing on the day I first took the oath of office. So the issue is not whether we will change, it is what kind of change. Are we going to build on what we've done that works? Are we going to take the evidence of success and then build on that and go beyond it? Are we going to revert to policies that we know don't work from hard experience?

I think one of the reasons that we've had some success in this last 6½ years is because I took the time to think through what I would do if I got the job, and I told the American people in greater detail than any American candidate had up to that point what I would do if I were hired. Then when Al joined the ticket, we sat down together and reissued our economic program and thought it all through again in great detail.

And a lot of people said, "These guys are crazy. They're being so specific. Why are they doing this? It violates all conventional wisdom."

But you'd be amazed how much it helps when you get a job if you've actually told people what you'd do if you got it. So I think the fact that he's laid out a program is profoundly important.

The third thing I want to tell you is that we have been together under all kinds of circumstances. You know some of them. Some of them were highly public and political. There were times of great elation, times of great triumph, times of defeat, times of frustration, times of intense difficulty. But we've also been together in personal ways. I've talked to him about everything. Both of us have lost a parent since we've been here in the White House. We've been through a lot of challenges. We've talked about our children and our hopes for them. And I can tell you that he is a good human being. He is a profoundly good man.

So if you've got a person with a stunning record, a great program, who's a good person, a proven leader, I think that's a pretty good decision. That's a decision that I hope for my daughter's sake and the next generation's sake, the American people will make this year. And you're helping them to make it, and I thank you very much.

The Vice President of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:57 p.m. at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of State Warren M. Christopher.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

August 10, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On August 19, 1994, in light of the expiration of the Export Administration Act of 1979, as amended (50 U.S.C. App. 2401 *et seq.*), I issued Executive Order 12924, declaring a national emergency and continuing the system of export regulation under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*). Under section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), the national emergency terminates on the anniversary date

of its declaration unless the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice of its continuation.

I am hereby advising the Congress that I have extended the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12924. Enclosed is a copy of the notice of extension.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This

letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 11. The notice of August 10 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom *August 11, 1999*

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the White House. A special welcome to Senator Robb, Congressman Scott, Congressman Sisisky, Secretary/Senator Bentsen's old colleagues in the Cabinet, and Mr. Rubin, welcome home. Secretary Kissinger, thank you for coming. Governor Rosselló, thank you for coming. Mrs. Ford, we're honored to have you here.

Shootings at the North Valley Jewish Community Center

Let me just say, before I begin the ceremony, Hillary has already said that like all Americans, we have prayed for the welfare of the children and their families and the entire community affected by the shootings in Los Angeles yesterday. Most of you probably know by now that the FBI received the gunman, who turned himself in, earlier today. I want to congratulate the law enforcement officials at all levels of government who quickly responded to the crime, identified the suspect, and kept the pressure on.

We are a long way from knowing all the facts about this case, and therefore, I think all of us have to be somewhat careful about commenting. But what we have heard about the suspect and his motives is deeply disturbing. Nothing could be further from the values we honor here today. Therefore, I would just say, again, I can only hope that this latest incident will intensify our resolve to make America a safer place and a place of healing across the lines that divide us.

Presidential Medal of Freedom

President Kennedy once said that a nation reveals itself not only by the people it produces but by the people it honors. Today we honor men and women who represent the best of America with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Our Nation's Founders believed, as do we, that freedom is a gift of God, not only to be defended but to be used to improve the

human condition, to deepen the reach of freedom, to widen the circle of opportunity, to strengthen the bonds of our national community.

By words and deeds, the Americans we honor today have done just that. And in honoring them, we honor also the values and principles of our Nation's founding and our Nation's future. Today I am proud to begin with a man who once held the office I am now privileged to occupy and one who has more than earned this honor.

From his earliest days as a student and athlete, President Gerald Ford was destined for leadership. He was an outstanding player on the Michigan football team in a segregated era. And his horror at the discrimination to which one of his teammates was subjected spawned in him a lifelong commitment to equal rights for all people, regardless of race.

He served with distinction on an aircraft carrier in the Pacific in World War II. Thirty years later, as Republican leader of the House, and with the strong support of his colleagues in Congress in both parties, he was chosen to fill the vacancy in the Vice Presidency, which imposed on him subsequently the awesome responsibility of piloting our Nation through the stormy seas of Watergate.

Steady, trustworthy, Gerald Ford ended a long, national nightmare. He also ended a long and bitter war. And he signed the Helsinki Treaty on Human Rights that sent a signal of hope to people throughout the world and hastened the fall of communism.

When he left the White House after 895 days, America was stronger, calmer, and more self-confident. America was, in other words, more like President Ford himself.

During 25 years in the House of Representatives, and as House Republican leader, he won respect from both sides of the aisle. It is not just his penchant for hard work or his acknowledged mastery of everything from budgets to

foreign policy to defense, but the way he conducted himself, arguing his position forcefully on the House floor but, at the end of the debate, always reaching over to shake the hand of his opponents. Gerald Ford knew when to put politics aside and when to put the interests of our Nation first.

The respect he commands has grown in the years since he left office, whether advising Presidents in the Oval Office or defending affirmative action or making the case for free trade on the editorial pages of our leading newspapers. His opinions are still very much sought after. I am immensely grateful for the wise counsel he has given me over the years.

And I think I can speak for Hillary and for all Americans when I also express my appreciation and thanks to Betty Ford, a tremendous First Lady who has demonstrated dignity, strength, and resolve, and inspired those qualities in millions of others in the way she has shared her life with us.

President Ford represents what is best in public service and what is best about America. Colonel, please read the citation.

[Lt. Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. A Texas farmhand by the age of 6, a bomber pilot by 21, a Congressman by 27, an immensely successful businessman by 35, Lloyd Bentsen saw and did more in his youth than most see and do in an entire lifetime.

During his second 35 years, he managed another whole lifetime of achievement and service as a distinguished United States Senator from Texas. He rose to become chairman of the Finance Committee, where he demonstrated his lifetime concern for the interest of business and labor and the poor and his conviction that America should advance all these together.

Then, at the tender age of 71, when he had every right to settle back and enjoy the comforts of retirement, Lloyd Bentsen answered my call to take on perhaps the toughest challenge of his public life, to become Secretary of the Treasury at a time of grave economic difficulty for our Nation.

He accepted that challenge with characteristic gusto. He became one of the strongest voices in America and in our administration for fiscal discipline and expanded international trade. He

became an acknowledged world leader in financial and economic affairs. His work with Chairman Greenspan and Mr. Rubin and others on our economic team earned respect around the world. Under his leadership in 1993, when some of the rest of us had our doubts, we passed the economic plan that paved the way for what is now the longest peacetime expansion in our history.

For a lifetime of exceptional service to his country, I am proud to bestow the Medal of Freedom on Lloyd Bentsen.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. Edgar Bronfman once said that, in forcing the world to face up to an ugly past, we help shape a more honorable future. That fairly describes his own personal mission over these last 20 years. As chairman of Seagram's, he's helped to build on his father's legacy and take the company to new heights. As President of the World Jewish Congress, he's traveled the world to expose the legacy of oppression of the Jewish people and to spur action on their behalf, winning freedom for Soviet Jews in the 1980's, demanding justice from financial institutions on behalf of Holocaust survivors in the 1990's, and, in between, supporting philanthropies that work to break down barriers between nations and lift the lives of disadvantaged young people. A life of remarkable citizen service.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. Evy Dubrow came to Washington more than 40 years ago, ready to do battle for America's garment workers, and do battle she did. When it came to the well-being of workers and their families, this tiny woman was larger than life. The Halls of Congress still echo with the sound of her voice, advocating a higher minimum wage, safer workplaces, better education for the children of working families. And in opposition to President Ford and me, she also was against NAFTA. [Laughter]

No matter how divisive the issue, however, Evy always seemed to find a way to bring people together, to find a solution. As she put it, there

are good people on both sides of each issue, and she had a knack for finding those people.

By the time she retired 2 years ago, at the age of 80, she had won a special chair in the House Chamber, a special spot at the poker table in the Filibuster Room—[laughter]—and a special place in the hearts of even the most hard-bitten politicians in Washington. Even more important, for decades and decades, she won victory after victory for social justice.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. Sister Isolina Ferre. For more than 20 years, in a poverty-stricken barrio in Puerto Rico, Sister Isolina Ferre started passing out cameras to children. She told them to photograph whatever they saw. The point of the project she later recalled, was not just to teach young people to take pictures but to teach them to take pride in themselves. That is what Sister Isolina does best, teaching people to see the best in themselves and in their communities and making sure they had the tools to make the most of the gifts God has given them.

Armed only with her faith, she taught warring gangs in New York City to solve their differences without violence. In Puerto Rico, her network of community service centers, the *Centro Sor Isolina Ferre*, have transformed ravaged neighborhoods by helping residents to advocate for themselves. Her passionate fight against poverty, violence, and despair have earned her many awards and countless tributes from all around the world. Sister Isolina once said that a community grows only when it rediscovers itself. On behalf of the many communities you have helped to make that wonderful discovery, a grateful nation says thank you to you today.

Colonel, please read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. I wonder whether any of the assembled parents, family, and friends in the audience at the law school graduation at Howard University in 1933 knew that they were watching history in the making?

Among the many talented people who graduated that day, two men stood side by side,

one the valedictorian, the other salutatorian. Separated in class rank by a mere point or two, they were united in their determination to hasten our Nation to a day when equal opportunity was the birthright of every American.

One of these men was the late Thurgood Marshall. We're honored to have his wife here with us today. The other was the man it is our privilege to honor today, Oliver White Hill. Together, these two struck a fatal blow against the injustice embedded in our Nation's law, the disgraceful doctrine of separate but equal, that kept Americans apart and held too many Americans back for far too long.

In the 45 years since the Supreme Court handed down its landmark decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, which both Thurgood Marshall and Oliver Hill were active in, Oliver Hill has barely had time to catch his breath. Throughout his long and rich life, he has challenged the laws of our land and the conscience of our country. He has stood up for equal pay, better schools, fair housing, for everything that is necessary to make America, truly, one, indivisible, and equal.

The presence in this audience today of so many people who have devoted their lives to the cause of civil rights is ample evidence to the absolutely irreplaceable role he has played over these many decades. Our Nation is in his debt.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. Max Kampelman was probably not the first young man to work his way through college who made ends meet by skipping meals. But surely he is one of the few people who ever served his country in World War II by agreeing to stop eating altogether. [Laughter] He volunteered to participate in a military experiment on the effects of starvation, hoping to help doctors find new ways to treat returning POW's and concentration camp survivors, bespeaking a lifelong passion to alleviate the suffering of the victims of human rights abuses.

Forty years later, after a career spent advising public officials at the highest level, he would again help his country to fight oppression in Europe. As head of the United States delegation overseeing the Helsinki Act, his unflinching words kept human rights at the center of East-

West relations. An uncommonly gifted negotiator, he won crucial arms control agreements.

Together, these efforts helped to set in motion the collapse of communism and the beginning of a new era of democracy. He has excelled as a diplomat, a philanthropist, a humanitarian. He has served both Republican and Democratic Presidents well. In so doing, he has been a quintessential American citizen.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. I wish we all had been there with Edgar Wayburn when he first laid eyes on the spectacular vistas of the land north of San Francisco, for then we could have experienced the wilderness from his unique and wonderful perspective. As it is, millions of Americans and visitors from other lands have been able to experience our great American wilderness because of Edgar Wayburn.

From the broad shores of Point Reyes, where we spent our second anniversary, to the sharp peaks of the Alaska range, to the majestic heights of the California redwoods, Edgar Wayburn has helped to preserve the most breathtaking examples of the American landscape. In fact, over the course of the more than half a century, both as president of the Sierra Club and as a private citizen, he has saved more of our wilderness than any other person alive. And I might add, his wife, who is here with us today, has been his colleague every step of the way in that endeavor. Those who have been involved in these struggles with him credit his success to his persistence and to his profound conviction as a physician and a conservationist that our physical health depends upon the health of our environment.

As we look toward a 21st century in which the world and the United States must combat

new challenges to our environment, and especially the challenge of climate change, we will need Edgar Wayburn as a model and a guide. And we should be very grateful that we have him.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President and the First Lady presented the medal.]

The President. The ancient Greeks used to bestow various honors upon citizens who performed outstanding service, everything from laurel crowns, the equivalent of our Medal of Freedom, to a lifetime of free dinners at state expense. *[Laughter]* I have not yet won bipartisan agreement in the Congress for that to be attached to the Medal of Freedom, but I can invite you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception.

Ladies and gentlemen, if hearing these life stories doesn't make us all prouder to be Americans, I don't know what would. I thank these people for the lives they have lived and the light they have shined.

Again, we welcome them and all of you to the White House and ask you to join us in the State Dining Room.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger; Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico; former First Lady Betty Ford; alleged gunman Buford O. Furrow; Cecilia A. Suyat, widow of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood A. Marshall; and Mr. Wayburn's wife, Peggy. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Tornado Damage in Salt Lake City, Utah

August 11, 1999

I want to express my concern for the people of Salt Lake City, who are suffering the effects of a devastating tornado that tore through their city this afternoon. I was particularly saddened

to learn that the tornado left at least one person dead and dozens injured. Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) are already on the ground; more officials are

en route; and FEMA Director James Lee Witt has talked by phone with Governor Leavitt. The burden of recovery will be heavy, but it is a burden that the people of Salt Lake City need

not carry alone. As they begin the difficult process of mourning, healing, and rebuilding, our Nation stands steadfastly behind them.

Interview With Susie Gharib of the "Nightly Business Report"

August 11, 1999

Wages and Inflation

Ms. Gharib. It looks like wages are really starting to pick up now, and this is benefiting even people on the bottom rung of the economic ladder. But this is something that's worrying Wall Street because you saw the reaction to the employment report that the worry is that as wages rise, that this could create inflation. Do you think that wages are rising so fast that you could create an inflation problem?

The President. I don't think there's any evidence of that now for a couple of reasons. One is, you know, we had about 20 years when, in effect, there was no real rise in wages for people in the middle and the lower income groups, and they have had a good rise. It's been going on for about 3 years now. But we have seen enough experience, at least so far, that we don't see the signs of inflation.

I also believe the fact that we have open markets and, therefore, lots of competition and a lot of productivity increases fueled by technology should give us some encouragement there. It's something obviously we have to be vigilant about. But based on the present evidence, I think people are—they're earning their pay increases, and they've worked hard for them, and so far, I don't think there is evidence of inflation.

Stock Market

Ms. Gharib. Mr. President, on Wall Street, they say that the direction of the stock market is a good predictor of where the economy is headed 6 to 9 months into the future. We've seen some rallies recently, but still stocks are down 10 percent or more from their recent highs. Do you think that the stock market is telling us that rough times are ahead?

The President. Not necessarily. No, I don't, because, keep in mind, the stock market was 3,200 when I took office. It was 6,500 in 1996,

late in '96. So it's still perking along pretty well. And I think it's unrealistic to think that it's going to more than triple every 5 years. You're just not going to have that every 5 years. But I think that the most important thing I can say is that from my point of view, is that, as Secretary Rubin used to say, "Markets go up. Markets go down."

What the Government should focus on is keeping the fundamentals right. And it seems to me that if we can keep paying down the debt, practice fiscal responsibility, keep pushing to open markets, and keep making the kind of long-term investments that we know are good for the American economy, then the people in the private sector will take care of the rest.

I think you really get in trouble trying to predict what's going to happen in the global economy where already we've defied all the predictions. You know, when I became President, the consensus was that if we had two or more quarters of unemployment below 6 percent, we'd have inflation. And we know that the rules are being rewritten.

Now, that doesn't mean that the laws of economics have been repealed; it must mean that our ability to predict is not as great as it would have been in a more stable time. So I'm basically quite optimistic about the American economy as long as we keep the fundamentals right.

Monetary Policy

Ms. Gharib. You mentioned Robert Rubin, and there are some people who believe that since Robert Rubin left his post as Treasury Secretary, that the administration has modified its policy on the dollar. Can you clarify this for us? And we have seen the dollar under pressure recently. Do you no longer support a strong dollar policy?

The President. No, we haven't modified our policy. I think that what you've seen with the

dollar is partly a function of an expected recovery in Asia, and I think that on balance, that's good. And the European economy may be growing a little more; on balance, that's good. And so I think that that is a predictable thing.

Plus, you know, to try to help our friends in Asia and Russia get through this crisis—and the Chinese particularly have had—even they've had a little bit of problems—we've run quite a large trade deficit here because we haven't wanted to close our markets since they were in trouble. Those things happen—that tends to weaken the currency too, after a certain amount of time.

So I haven't been particularly alarmed by it, but neither am I for a weak dollar. I think the United States has to be for a strong dollar. And again, I say the way for us to do that is to not abandon our budgetary discipline and our long-term policies on expanded trade and investments and technology.

Tax Cuts and Federal Spending

Ms. Gharib. Mr. President, let's talk a little bit about taxes. You have been quite adamant, and so has your administration, that any kind of tax cut above \$300 billion is no deal. And yet now we're hearing that you may be open to discussion and some negotiation on this. Are you signaling that you're more flexible?

The President. No. What I'm flexible about is what is in the tax cut. It's interesting—if you look at my tax bill of \$250 billion and the Republicans with \$800 billion, we have almost exactly the same benefits for middle class people, they're just differently configured. But the size of the middle class tax cut in both packages is about the same.

What I have said—I don't even think they ought to adopt my tax cut first. I would be opposed if they said—if they call me tomorrow, and they said, "You know, we slept on it last night, and we decided you were right, and we like not only the size of your tax cut, but what's in it, and we'd like to send it to you next week." I would say don't do that, for the following reason: I think it is wrong, on principle, to pass a tax cut before you figure out what your obligations are.

And Senator Breaux and Mr. Thomas had this Medicare condition. I thought there were some good things in it; there were some things I didn't agree with. So I gave Congress a Medicare plan that would lengthen the life of the

Trust Fund and pay for a modest prescription drug benefit. I also gave them a budget which would, over time, not only save the Social Security surplus taxes for Social Security but would lengthen the life of the Trust Fund. And I gave them a budget which said, here's what I would spend for defense, for education, for other things, and here's what I would spend for a tax cut.

What I think they ought to do is give me a Medicare proposal. Then let's get together and work out what we're going to do with that. Then let's figure out what we have to spend. Already this Congress, even under the Republican leadership, has decided to spend more for veterans, for agriculture, and for defense. And they say they want to spend more for education. But their tax cut makes it clear, specifically in the tax bill, that they had to cut all these things drastically that they're voting to spend more money on.

So my position is, send me a Medicare proposal; let's figure out what we have to spend on other things and what we've got to do to pay the debt down, and let's give the rest back to the taxpayers. And I will be very flexible about how we do it.

Ms. Gharib. All right. Let's talk about where you might be flexible. We had Pete Domenici, chairman of the Budget Committee, on our program recently, and he was saying that when you look at the whole surplus, only a quarter of it would be devoted to these tax cut proposals, things like an income tax cut, estate tax cut, cut in the marriage penalty tax. And even your Vice President, Mr. Gore, was on our program recently—he said he would support a cut in the marriage penalty tax. Is there anything here among these tax cuts that you might support?

The President. Sure. But the question is—let me just say, in all respect to Senator Domenici, they say it that way because it sounds so reasonable, but that's not quite right, and here's why. The Republicans have agreed with me—and I applaud them for this—they've agreed that we should take that portion of the surplus—projected surplus—it's not here yet—that portion of projected surplus attributable to Social Security taxes and not spend it. Okay? That leaves a third left.

When you take their tax cut, plus the extra interest payments we have to make—because when you cut taxes, you don't pay the debt

off as fast—it takes up everything that's left, which means that they have no money to spend whatever on defense, on education, on lengthening the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, and yet they're voting to do these things.

So they either want to get into the Social Security surplus, at which case we're not going to pay the debt down and we're going to make a big mistake, I think, or they're pursuing the course which will require drastic cuts in the very things they say they're trying to increase. So, on any specific, I'm happy to talk to them. I think it would be great to get rid of the marriage penalty. There are a lot of things that they proposed that—in the Senate bill, in the original Senate bill, had a lot of great policy in it. We can't afford to do that and take care of the American economy.

Federal Reserve Board Chairman

Ms. Gharib. Sir, we're running out of time, so I want to ask you a few more quick questions, okay? Mr. President, I wouldn't be a good business reporter unless I asked you a question about Alan Greenspan. The last time this came up you said you don't even know if Mr. Greenspan would be interested in another term as Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Now, I'm sure you have a lot of contact with Mr. Greenspan, and your Treasury Secretary meets with him from time to time. Do you now know if Mr. Greenspan would be interested?

The President. Well, I saw him just today, actually, when we gave President Ford the Medal of Freedom, but I didn't have a chance to talk to him about it. You know, I think he's done a great job. I did reappoint him once. And I think that we've had an appropriate relationship. I don't comment on the Fed's actions, but I think we've both pursued complementary policies, and I think he's done a good job. But I think it is not useful for me to feed speculation one way or the other until I've at least had a chance to talk to him. I have no earthly idea what his intentions are, and we haven't had a chance to talk.

Ms. Gharib. Well, obviously, you've put some focus on the Federal Reserve recently, you recently named Carol Parry to fill one of the boards—he's on the Fed. You've named Roger Ferguson to fill the Vice Chair post. And you've told us that you will deal with the whole Fed Chairman job in a timely manner. Are we getting close to that time?

The President. Well, his time—term runs out at some point, and at some point it will be appropriate for the two of us to talk. But I think until the two of us talk, it would be just foolish for me to say anything. It would only cause—whatever I say might be rendered moot by the conversation we have. So I just don't think I should.

But I think the important thing is for the American people to know that I support the direction he's taken, and I think he's done a good job. And I've tried not to meddle, and I'm not supposed to.

Since you brought him up, though, I think I ought to mention that he, along with others, have pointed out that if we don't pay the debt down and we still have a tax cut that's too big, it will increase the chances of inflation, which will increase the likelihood of interest rate increases. And all the benefits the American people could get in a tax cut, including upper income people, could be taken away by higher interest rates, which not only take more money out of people's pockets directly but will slow economic growth.

So I think that that's another thing that ought to be hammered home about this tax cut. Why should we do something on the one hand if we're going to lose the benefit of it from higher interest rates and lower growth?

New Markets Initiative

Ms. Gharib. I don't want to tackle with you on that, but I do want to talk to you more about economic growth. I'd like to talk to you about your new markets initiatives. The economy has had this wonderful run and it's been growing for so long, and it's even benefited a lot of the people who are living in economically distressed areas.

The President. It has.

Ms. Gharib. Is the goal of your new markets plan to speed up this process?

The President. Well, to speed it up where it's underway and to kick it off where it's not. We still have, believe it or not, we still have got a lot of counties in this country where the unemployment rate is over 10 percent, and a lot more where the unemployment rate is over 7.5 percent. So what I try to do, first of all, is to vigorously support the Community Investment Act, setting up more community financial institutions, expanding enterprise zones, which

the Vice President has run for us so well over the last 6 years.

But what I want to do now is try to mobilize the business community and set up a legal framework that would give an incentive in every area of the country which has not felt the prosperity to grow more quickly. So I've sent this legislation up last week which would essentially give business people the same incentives to invest in developing communities in America that they get to invest in developing communities in Central America or the Caribbean or Africa or Asia. I don't want to take those away; I just want to have the same incentives in America in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in the Indian reservations, the inner cities.

And we have this terrific interest in the business community now, I think partly because they feel they're prosperous and they can do it and they ought to do it. But I want to emphasize, this is not a social program. This is a conviction of mine that there is profit to be made in these areas where unemployment is too high and underemployment is too high and there is too little investment.

Ms. Gharib. But I'm sure you've heard this before, where people will say, "Look, we've tried this before. We've tried tax credits. It's difficult."

The President. But it's never been tried. First of all, it's never been tried in the comprehensive way we're doing it, where we're going to work with these communities and help them. Secondly, it has never been tried when the economy was this prosperous and when everybody is asking the very question that we've been talking about—all the business community, you ask them—we started with the stock market, how long can the stock market stay; is inflation—if we have inflation, will that bring the stock market down? Everybody is worried—we've already got the longest peacetime expansion in history; how much longer can it go on without inflation?

Now, my argument is that every American ought to be interested in this new markets initiative because one sure way to grow the economy without inflation is to invest in a place where you have both more businesses and more consumers—more business, more employees, more consumers. There is no inflationary impact to that growth. And it's right there at our feet.

And every American who believes in free trade ought to believe in the new markets initiative because it's closer to home with the same

direct benefits and no inflation. And so there is—if I can use a little jargon, there is a macro-economic benefit as well as the human benefit of doing this. I think we've got the best chance in my lifetime to get this done, the best chance since the early sixties. We lost control of the economy in the late sixties. We had inflation with guns and butter, and we've never had a chance since then to do this. We've got it now.

Ms. Gharib. I'm getting notices that my time is up. But would you give me permission to ask you one last question?

The President. Sure.

Ms. Gharib. I think it's a good question, and I think you'd like to answer it.

The President. Sure.

Future of the National Economy

Ms. Gharib. Mr. President, your term is drawing to a close, and you have presided over one of the most fruitful economic times in this century, but let's fast-forward to the next generation, Chelsea's generation. What do we have to do to guarantee in the future this kind of prosperity and more?

The President. We have to make the most of this prosperity if we want to guarantee the next generation. We can't guarantee our children anything. We can't perceive the challenges they'll face. Their lives will have its own rhythm. But we do know this—what do we know about our kids' generation? We know they're going to have to deal with the aging of the baby boomers. We're going to get old, and there are more of us than any other generation before to reach this age.

We know they're going to live in a world that is increasingly more competitive, where financial markets are global and interest rates are set in that environment. We know that the children who are in the schools now are the most diverse group in history, and they are the first generation larger than the baby boom, and they will grow up in an era where education is more important than ever before.

We know those three things. Therefore, what should we do? We should make sure that our kids don't have to pay for us in our retirement by taking care of Social Security and Medicare now, so that when we're 75 and 80 years old, our children won't have to take care of us, and they can take care of our grandchildren.

Second, we should make America debt-free for the first time since 1835, so we keep interest

rates down and more money can be borrowed by people in their private lives and business and personal lives. And when our trading partners get in trouble, like Asia has in the last 2 years, they can get the money they need at lower cost because we won't be taking it out of the system.

And the third thing we ought to do is give every kid in this country a world-class education. Now, if we can do those three things, we can

maximize the chances that our children's generation will have greater prosperity than we do.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 5:04 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 12. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on Developing and Promoting Biobased Products and Bioenergy August 12, 1999

Thank you. Well, if Amal Mansour gets tired of alternative energy, she might consider politics for a career. [Laughter] She gave quite a speech, and I thank her.

Shootings at the North Valley Jewish Community Center

Let me just say, before I begin, I would like to say just a few words about the latest developments in the shootings in Los Angeles. It now appears that they were motivated by racial and ethnic hatred. If so, that's the second such incident we've had in the last couple of weeks, along with the killings that occurred in the Midwest, which you all remember very well, and another compelling argument, in my judgment, for this country to renew its commitment to our common community, our common humanity; and another compelling argument for the passage of the hate crimes legislation and the commonsense gun legislation we have recommended.

I know the Attorney General spoke about this earlier today, but I wanted to strongly support and associate myself with her comments on this.

Biobased Products and Bioenergy

Now, let me tell you, I may be the happiest person here today because I have been a supporter of bioenergy for more than 20 years now. When I was Governor, I tried to promote the use of wood waste. We opened a little ethanol factory in my home State. We worked on whether rice hulls could be used as energy. I've sort of been tapping my foot, waiting for 20 years for the moment to come when both the tech-

nology and the economics and the social awareness, all this stuff would kind of fit together.

I want to thank Secretary Glickman, Secretary Richardson, Administrator Browner for their support of this. I want to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Dick Lugar, the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. He wrote a brilliant article with Jim Woolsey in the January-February edition of *Foreign Affairs*, called "The New Petroleum." And I see some of you nodding your heads, and if you had read it, you had all read it, you would all be nodding your heads. It's not only brilliant, but a guy who is scientifically challenged like me can understand it, which is very important.

I want to thank Senator Tom Harkin, who is not here today, couldn't be here today, but who has worked passionately on this issue. We have been talking about it for more than a decade now. And I want to thank Dr. Dale for your work and Amal Mansour for your work and your success, and all of the panelists who are here.

This is one of those speeches that Presidents have to give, you know, where you're preaching to the choir, because you all agree with this. And you see this fine family over here. They were introduced earlier in a way that is bitter-sweet. The present, terrible crisis we have on our farms heightens all of our awareness that we can do this. And as many have said, as Senator Lugar and Mr. Woolsey argued in their piece, even in good agricultural times, when farm prices are high and the land is in use, there is more than enough land available at sound conservation practices for us to develop

this if we can develop the biocatalyst and the advance processing technologies necessary to make bioenergy work.

So I am very, very pleased about this. I think we have to see this in a context of where we've come from and where we're going. One of the most important technological advances of this century came 90 years ago in a old farmhouse overlooking Lake Michigan, where William Meriam Burton, who was a chemist for Standard Oil, figured out how to launch the modern petrochemical industry. He understood that this new contraption called the automobile was about to create this huge demand for petroleum products, and he understood that he had to squeeze more power from every molecule of petroleum. And because he did that, we had the prosperity we enjoyed, and we have many of the challenges we face today, because of what he did in that small place, so long ago.

This paved the way for the automobile era. It showed us the power of science to change the paradigms which govern our world. And on the verge of the 21st century, we may be nearing a similar breakthrough, a technological fix that can help us to meet our economic challenges, maintain our security, sustain our prosperity, and ease the threat of global warming. Science will be the key to our progress.

If we can make the raw material of tomorrow's economy living, renewable resources instead of fossil fuels, which pollute the atmosphere and warm the planet, the future of our children and our grandchildren, the likelihood that there will be more prosperity and peace, the likelihood that all these sort of sci-fi, "Road Warrior" movies about the 21st century will be nothing more than a figment of someone's imagination, all that will be far greater. One hundred years from now people will look back on this time and compare it to the time when Mr. Burton figured out how to get more out of every petroleum molecule, if we do our jobs.

Now, if you look at what's going on with trees and plants today, it's very impressive. And it's already been discussed here at the podium, but once we used only a seed or a kernel, tossed away the rest. Now we're learning how to use entire plants. Microscopic cells are being put to work as tiny factories. They convert crops and even waste into a vast array of fuel and material, everything from paints to pharmaceuticals to new fibers. And our ability to use

waste in these ways will also be critical to our future.

We are best served by new technology when we ask what we hope to achieve. And again, at the risk of preaching to the choir, because this is an important—there's not a lot of controversy here; I don't know, therefore, if we can generate any news. [Laughter] But I can tell you, 20, 30, 40 years from now people will look back on this meeting as an historic meeting if we do our job. Why? There are four reasons.

First, the potential economic benefits are staggering, not only for farmers—they are obvious, because they can raise raw material—but for the timber industry, chemical manufacturers, power companies, and small entrepreneurs like Amal. And the Vice President is in Iowa today discussing how these technologies can help close the opportunity gap between urban and suburban and rural America by bringing new high-tech jobs to rural areas which have not yet participated fully in our prosperity.

Second, by substituting domestic renewable resources for fossil fuels we ease our growing dependence on foreign oil, and because inflation has been low and growth has been high, no one is paying attention to this. But we are going to have—with the growth of population here and growth of population around the world, the increasing economic activity around the world—you're going to have enormous competition for oil which will make its supply more problematical and its price much higher within a relatively short time unless we do something to ease our dependence. It's important for our economy, for our security, for our environment.

Third, as the Council of Advisers on Science and Technology concluded in a recent report, we can help developing countries meet their own soaring needs for energy in ways that, again, improve the global environment and stabilize economies and societies.

And fourth, as I've already said, this will help us to meet the challenge of climate change, which I am convinced will be the most formidable environmental challenge the world faces over the next 20 to 30 years.

Scientists tell us this decade is probably the warmest in a thousand years, but the heat and drought of this summer, the natural disasters of the last few years are probably only a taste of what is to come, unless we act now to deal with this challenge. Bioenergy is a means to achieve all of these objectives, to heat our

homes, to fuel our vehicles, to power our factories, while producing virtually no greenhouse gas pollution.

To make the most of these opportunities, Government and industry must work together, as partners. In industry I include agriculture and small and big business, government and everyone in the private sector who is involved in this. The Government provided critical leadership in developing the semiconductor and the Internet. And we must also nurture these fledgling bio-industries in the same way.

In a few moments, I will sign an Executive order to accelerate development of these 21st century technologies, to strengthen our economy, and protect our environment. I'm establishing a Cabinet-level council to develop strategic plans to help to bring bio-based technologies from farms, forests, and labs to the marketplace.

In addition, I am setting a goal of tripling America's use of bioenergy and biobased products by 2010. That would generate as much as \$20 billion a year in new income for farmers and rural communities, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions by as much as 100 million tons a year, the equivalent of taking more than 70 million cars off the road. And believe me, if the technology develops fast enough, it would be easy to beat this goal. In this way, we plant the seeds of a new technology for a new century, to sustain both our prosperity and our environment.

In addition to exploring the further use of bioenergy, I just want to say there are other things we need to do as well. I'm sure you all would agree. We need to do more to accelerate the development of flexible-fuel vehicles. If we develop these energy sources, there must be something to receive them. So we need to do more of that, and we've got a couple of them outside that everybody ought to see.

We also must recognize that there are available today, at prices which are attractive today and will grow increasingly attractive tomorrow as oil prices go up, elemental technologies that promote conservation and cut costs so you save energy and money, in homes, in farms, in factories today, elemental technologies that are still not being maximized.

We just had a big announcement a couple days ago on a new light bulb that I believe will be much more attractive than the lighting systems, the conservation lighting systems that

have been developed so far, and will save people millions and millions of dollars and an awful lot of energy. So we have to be sensitive to all these things if we expect to have the world we want for our children.

Last year—I am very grateful that the Congress voted for another billion dollars to research and develop clean, energy-efficient technologies, including bioenergy. In my present balanced budget, I have proposed further investments in these technologies, as well as tax credits for businesses and consumers who choose energy-efficient cars, homes, and appliances. I know that Senator Lugar has a specific piece of legislation which would dramatically increase our investment in bioenergy research.

Anything we can do in this area, in my judgment, will have huge paybacks. And so, to all of you, I ask that you do what you can during this August period and when the Congress comes back to put this issue beyond partisan politics, to put it beyond the debate. We're talking about a tiny fraction of the budget for the combined recommendations we have made that can change the whole future of this country and this world, in the way that the automobile and the perfection of the petroleum processing did at the beginning of this century.

I can hardly tell you how strongly I believe that this can happen. And when it does happen, we will look back and be amazed, number one, that we took as long as we did to do it and, number two, how cheap it was to do it for the benefits we got out of it. We will all be amazed.

So anything any of you can do to make sure that 100 years from now somebody can talk about people like these two fine people who just spoke in the same way we talk about the people that perfected petroleum and developed the automobile: to ensure that more of our farm families get to stay on the farm and people can make a decent living in rural America in an environmentally sustainable way; to liberate America and other countries from their dependence on unstable sources of petroleum; to break the mindset that exists among too many both here and around the world that you cannot have economic development without burning more fossil fuel and, therefore, burning up the planet is just the inevitable consequence of getting ahead; anything you can do to roll back those problems and to create opportunities will be profoundly important to the kind of world our

children live in and what people say about you and our generation 100 years from now. It's hard to think of a greater gift we could give at the turn of the century or a new millennium than a clean energy future.

Thank you all, and God bless you for your work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:26 p.m. on the Whitten Patio at the Department of Agriculture. In his remarks, he referred to Amal Mansour, chair of the board of directors and chief executive officer, Manufacturing and Technology Conversion International, Inc.; R. James Woolsey, former Director, Central Intelligence Agency; and Professor Bruce E. Dale, chair, Department of Chemical Engineering, Michigan State University.

Memorandum on Biobased Products and Bioenergy

August 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

Subject: Biobased Products and Bioenergy

Today I issued an Executive Order, "Developing and Promoting Biobased Products and Bioenergy," to further the development of a comprehensive national strategy that includes research, development, and private sector incentives to stimulate the creation and early adoption of technologies needed to make biobased products and bioenergy cost-competitive in national and international markets.

Consistent with the objectives and activities in that order and to ensure that the Nation moves efficiently to exploit the benefits of expanded use of biobased products and bioenergy, I hereby direct as follows:

- (1) The Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy, in consultation with other appropriate agencies, shall, within 120 days of this memorandum, prepare a report outlining and assessing options for modifying existing respective agency programs in fiscal year 2001 to promote biobased products and bioenergy with a goal of tripling U.S. use of biobased products and bioenergy by 2010. Programs include, among others, conservation and utility programs within the Department of Agriculture (including the Conservation Reserve Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program); technology assistance and other small business programs; and education and extension programs. The report also

shall include an assessment of: (a) the evidence to determine whether modifications to the tax code are a cost-effective policy option for review by the Department of the Treasury; and (b) the potential to expand use of biobased products and bioenergy by Federal agencies including co-firing with biomass at Federal facilities, use of biofuels in Federal vehicles, and Federal procurement of biobased products and bioenergy. Such expanded use shall be consistent with agency opportunities and the President's budget.

- (2) In preparing this report, the agencies shall:
 - (a) work closely with the Environmental Protection Agency to ensure that actions recommended reflect a careful review of the environmental benefits, concerns, and net environmental consequences created by expanded use of biobased products and bioenergy. The factors considered should include:

- (i) impact on net emissions of greenhouse gases including carbon sequestered by biomass crops, and substituting low net-carbon, biobased products, and bioenergy for products manufactured from fossil fuels; and

- (ii) emissions of criteria pollutants and air toxics and other environmental consequences of production of biobased products and bioenergy; and

- (iii) changes in water quality, soil erosion, pesticide and fertilizer use, and wildlife habitat as a consequence of changes in land use associated with biomass production; and,

(b) consider the findings and recommendations of the recently released National Academy of Sciences report "Biobased Industrial Products;" the recommendations contained in "Technology Vision 2020: The U.S. Chemical Industry" by the American Chemical Society, American Institute of Chemical Engineers, Chemical Manufacturers Association, Council for Chemical Research, and the Synthetic Organic Chemical Manufacturers Association; the recommendations by the U.S. agricultural, forestry, and chemical communities from the "Plant/Crop-based Renewable Resources 2020: A Vision to Enhance U.S. Economic Security Through Renewable Plant/Crop-Based Resource Use;" and, "Agenda 2020" by the U.S. Forest Products Industry; and (c) consider input from other sources, including public-private strategic plans developed by the Departments of Agriculture and Energy,

the Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, Department of the Interior, and other agencies bioenergy (power, fuels, and heat), commercial and industrial chemicals, and other products and materials.

- (3) The Secretaries of Agriculture and Energy shall, within 120 days of this memorandum, report on outreach efforts to raise the Nation's awareness of the useful applications, benefits, and costs of producing biobased products and bioenergy and adopting biobased technologies including workshops on new biomass crops and technologies for producing and marketing biobased products and bioenergy.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum. The Executive order of August 12 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Videotaped Remarks to the "Safe Schools, Safe Students: What Parents Can Do" Teleconference

August 12, 1999

Hello, and welcome to the many parents, students, educators, and community leaders meeting in schools all across our Nation tonight. I want to thank you for taking part in this vital discussion about safe schools and safe students.

Several months ago, after the tragedy in Littleton, I called on the American people to wage a national campaign to keep our schools and our children safe. I am pleased that you and so many other Americans in so many communities are doing just that, stepping up to your responsibility, joining hands in the search for common ground and concrete solutions.

The tragic incidents of gun violence in recent months underscore the importance of your efforts. The shooting just this week at the Jewish community center in Los Angeles, like the recent shootings in Illinois and Indiana, appears to have been motivated by racial and ethnic hatred. If so, it's just another reason for us to rededicate ourselves to our common community and our common humanity and another compel-

ling argument for the passage of hate crimes legislation and commonsense gun laws.

Acts of hate against individuals are acts of hate against our values and our entire Nation. So let us all speak clearly and with one voice: Our Nation will not stand for such acts. Acts of hate must strengthen our resolve and deepen our determination that Americans will come together and stand together and work together against violence, intolerance, and hatred.

In all these efforts, we must all first assume responsibility: at home and at school, in Hollywood and the heartland, and here in Washington. Parents play an especially crucial role, for no influence on a child is more important. I am very pleased that Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno will focus this national conversation on the concerns and responsibilities of parents. You'll hear from experts who have some good and helpful ideas. But I know they, like the rest of us, are eager to hear from all

of you who already are making a difference in young lives every day.

In spite of the tragedies of the last few weeks, the crime rate in America is at a 26-year low. Though it's still far too high, this shows that we can make progress. With your ideas and your hard work, America can meet this challenge. Together, we can make America the safest big nation in the world; we can put an end to the culture of violence and build in its

place a culture of values we'll all be proud to pass along to our children.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 3:35 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later transmission to the teleconference, which was sponsored by the Department of Education. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Memorandum on FY 2000 Refugee Admissions Consultations

August 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: FY 2000 Refugee Admissions Consultations

In accordance with section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), you are authorized to consult with the appropriate committees of the Congress concerning refugee admissions as follows:

1. The authorization of 90,000 refugee admissions during FY 2000, which would be allocated by specific region as follows: 18,000 for Africa; 8,000 for East Asia (including Amerasians); 3,000 for Latin America and the Caribbean; 8,000 for the Near East and South Asia; 47,000 for Europe; (including 27,000 for the former Yugoslavia and 20,000 for the Newly Independent and Baltic states); and 6,000 for the Unallocated Reserve. The recommended level of funded admissions is equal to the level as-

sumed in the FY 2000 budget request (80,000) plus those covered by the Kosovo supplemental (10,000).

2. The authorization of an additional 10,000 refugee admission numbers to be made available for the adjustment to permanent resident status of persons who have been granted asylum in the United States.

3. The designation, pursuant to section 101(a)(42)(B) of the INA, of persons in Cuba, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union, who, if they otherwise qualify for admission as refugees, may be considered refugees under the INA even though they are still within their country of nationality or habitual residence.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

cc: The Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

August 12, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with

the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Statement on Funding for Reading Programs

August 13, 1999

Today I am pleased to announce that the Department of Education is awarding \$231 million in grants to help States, school districts, and communities help all of our children learn to read well. Reading is the building block for all learning. Nearly 40 percent of America's fourth graders, however, cannot read on their own. That is why my administration is working to ensure that every child can read independently by the end of the third grade. From work-

ing to reduce class size in the early grades to launching our American Reads program, this is an investment in our children and our future. Unfortunately, the Republican tax plan could force us to slash funding for this important initiative by as much as half in the years to come. Every one of us should do our part to help our children learn to read, and I call on Congress to put politics aside and put our children's future first.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Death of Mickey Leland

August 13, 1999

Hillary and I would like to mark a sad occasion in our Nation's history, the death of Representative Mickey Leland (D-TX). Ten years ago this week, while on a hunger mission to Gambela, Ethiopia, Representative Leland died in a plane crash. A six-term Member of Congress, former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and cofounder and chair of the House Select Committee on Hunger, he was instrumental in bringing the issues of poverty and hunger to our Nation's consciousness. Because of his work, the plight of poverty was eased around the world, in Africa, the countries of the former Soviet Union, and within the United States.

Representative Leland's hallmark legislation, the Africa Famine Relief and Recovery Act of 1985, provided \$800 million in food aid and humanitarian relief supplies to the poverty-stricken continent. One of his quotes effectively

illustrates the human rights and moral aspects of the hunger fight: "I cannot get used to hunger and desperate poverty in our plentiful land. There is no reason for it. There is no excuse for it, and it is time that we as a nation put an end to it." This struggle to make economic prosperity inclusive of more of our population has become a focus of the work of my administration. In another example of his foresight, Leland was an outspoken critic of violence on television long before it became the national issue that it is today.

The work of Mickey Leland must go on, and I would like to thank those individuals and organizations working to carry out his legacy. We must never forget Mickey Leland, the pressing issues for which he worked, the voiceless poor for whom he spoke, and the global principles for which he lived.

The President's Radio Address

August 14, 1999

Good morning. Throughout our history, American families have spent the summer enjoying the natural beauty of our Nation's waterways. Today, more Americans than ever are spending their vacations by our beaches, our lakes, our rivers. And it's important to ensure that the water our families swim and fish in is as clean and safe as we can possibly make it.

Clean water is the most simple necessity of our lives, and we almost take it for granted. But 25 years ago, many of our waterways were so dirty they actually posed a serious threat to public health. Then Congress passed the Clean Water Act, and we began the long process of reclaiming our waterways and preserving them for the future.

For more than 6½ years now, Vice President Gore and I have worked to continue that legacy. We've strengthened the Safe Drinking Water Act, helping communities upgrade water treatment plants. We demanded more industries publicly disclose the chemicals they release into the air and water. We required water systems across the country to give customers regular reports on the safety of the water flowing from their taps. We strengthened protections for vital wetlands. And last year we launched a new clean water action plan to help finish the job the Clean Water Act started 25 years ago. We can all be proud of the progress we've made so far, but when 40 percent of our Nation's surveyed waterways are still too polluted for swimming or fishing, we know we have to do more.

Like many Americans, I was shocked to learn that several young children became gravely ill last week after swimming in a lake that may have been contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria. That is simply unacceptable. Parents have a right to expect that our recreational waters are safe for their children to swim in. All Americans have a right to expect we're doing all we can to clean up our waterways.

So today I'm pleased to announce that we're taking new action to ensure that every river, lake, and bay in America is clean and safe. The EPA will work in partnership with States to assess the state of all our waterways, to identify the most polluted waters, and to develop strong,

enforceable plans to restore them to health. These steps will chart a course to clean up 20,000 waterways and ensure that they remain safe for generations to come. But just as we're taking new action to preserve our environment for future generations, the Republican leadership in Congress is laying plans to roll back more than a quarter century of bipartisan progress in public health and environmental protection.

Without explanation or excuse, the Republicans' spending bills slash important environmental initiatives, like our lands legacy program to preserve natural treasures, farms, urban parks, wetlands, and other green spaces. They short-change vital research and development programs that address the threat of global warming, that help us to develop alternative fuels in vehicles that pollute less and to make the maximum use of available energy conservation technologies. And their spending bills are also loaded with unrelated provisions that would sacrifice crucial environmental protections for the sake of special interests. I vetoed bills before because they contain such antienvironmental riders, and if necessary, I'm prepared to do it again.

The budget of the Republican leadership isn't simply turning back the clock on environmental protection. It's also turning its back on 6 years of fiscal responsibility and prudent investment, a policy that's produced the strongest economy in a generation, the longest peacetime expansion in our history, the largest surplus in our history.

Their budget plan, because it contains such a large tax cut, would actually threaten our environment because it would require big cuts in environmental enforcement, letting toxic waste dumps fester, even shutting down national parks. In addition to that, we'd have across-the-board cuts in everything from education to medical research to defense, and they wouldn't add a day to the life of the Social Security or Medicare Trust Fund, nor would they pay off the debt.

Our budget continues to invest in the environment and education and medical research and defense. It pays off the debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835, and it lengthens the life of the Social Security and Medicare Trust

Funds. It's a good budget, and it also provides for a modest tax cut.

We have proved time and again that we don't have to choose between growing our economy or preserving our environment. We can do both with discipline. So again I ask Congress, let's put politics aside and continue the common-sense course that is already leading us toward a cleaner environment, a stronger economy, and a stronger America for the 21st century. Let's

work together to give our children the gift of a better, healthier world.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:04 p.m. on August 12 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Death of Lane Kirkland

August 14, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the passing of Lane Kirkland, one of the towering figures in the American labor movement. For nearly five decades, he was a guiding force for workplace fairness, dignity, and innovation, and a catalyst for international democracy.

Lane led the AFL-CIO during 15 of the most challenging years in labor's history. With skill, determination, and unparalleled intellect, he reunited the major unions and reaffirmed labor's place at the table of American democracy. With his unflagging support of free trade unionism internationally, especially in Poland, he helped

hasten the fall of the Iron Curtain while showing America that it is possible to stand up to communism abroad while standing up for working men and women here at home. From his days as a merchant marine during World War II to his work on the Board of Directors of the Institute of Peace, he was always ready and willing to serve his country. I valued his friendship, strong support, and keen advice. He was a great American, and he will be greatly missed.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Irena, and his family in this time of mourning.

Remarks at the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States 100th National Convention in Kansas City, Missouri

August 16, 1999

Thank you very much, Commander Pouliot; distinguished officers of the VFW; Congressman Skelton; Congressman Moore; Congresswoman Kaptur; Secretary West and Deputy Secretary Gober; ladies and gentlemen. It is a great honor for me to be here in Kansas City today to help to celebrate a hundred proud years for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. You should clap for yourselves. *[Applause]* That's good.

I'd like to begin with just a few reflections of what these 100 years mean for you and for the United States. We are less than 150 days now from the beginning of one century and the end of another, which many have called the American Century. Lately, there have been

a number of looks back at the people and personalities and events that made this 20th century: the leaders who led freedom's triumph over tyranny, like Roosevelt, Eisenhower, Marshall; inventors like the Wright brothers, whose ideas changed the way we lived; moral forces like Martin Luther King and Eleanor Roosevelt, whose ideas and examples changed the world; scientists like Dr. Jonas Salk, whose discoveries liberated a generation of parents from the mortal fear that their children would have polio and be crippled. But if you ask who has been most responsible for making this the American Century, one answer would be at the top of anyone's list after two World Wars and a long

cold war. That answer would be America's service men and women.

Today, as we celebrate your centennial anniversary, we must never forget that tens, even hundreds of millions of people, in the United States and all around the world sleep in peace because hundreds of thousands of Americans rest in peace in graves, marked and unmarked, all across the world, fallen veterans of foreign wars.

It is no accident, therefore, that the American Century also marks the VFW century. For over the last 100 years, America's men and women have sacrificed whatever was necessary, not for territorial gain, nor for the domination of others, but to secure the rights and freedoms of others so that Americans might have their freedom secure. You have made our Nation proud.

Thanks to you, we will begin a new century with a truly historic achievement, for in the last few years, for the first time in all of human history, more than half the world's people live under free governments freely elected. Still, you and I know this is not a world free from danger. There is the potential for major wars, rooted in ethnic and religious hatred. There is the chance that former adversaries will not succeed in their transition to democracy and could become adversaries again. There is the risk that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons will fall into the wrong hands. There is the risk of terrorist groups with increasing access to money, to technology, to sophisticated weaponry. There is the possibility that global financial vulnerabilities could overwhelm free societies. Therefore, we cannot assume that, because we are today secure and at peace, we don't need military strength or alliances or that, because we are today prosperous, we are immune from turmoil half a world away.

America must still be engaged in the world, working with others to advance peace and prosperity, freedom and security, and America must remain strong. That is what our most recent conflict in Kosovo was all about. I want to thank you profoundly for the support the VFW gave us during the conflict there. I know it wasn't easy for you to do. We were still in the early stages of the longest and most difficult military campaign in the 50-year history of NATO. Critics were convinced from the beginning that we could not succeed. But you stood with us, and more importantly, you stood with our men and women in uniform. NATO and the United

States prevailed. We are all grateful for your support.

Many of you in this room today fought in World War II against the tyrants who preached racial and religious superiority. In Kosovo, innocent men, women, and children were systematically targeted for killing and mass expulsion by their governments simply because of their ethnic heritage or the way they chose to worship God. After World War II, after ending the 4-year war of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, NATO could not accept that kind of behavior on its own borders. It could not stand by, once again, and see people driven from their homes, loaded on railcars, having their history erased.

So, instead, the century ends with a powerful statement by NATO's 19 democracies, reaffirming human life and human dignity, giving us the chance after two World Wars, the cold war, and the Balkan conflicts, for the first time ever to have an undivided, democratic, and peaceful Europe. It shares our values, strengthens our economy, helps us meet our common aspirations, and will not call young Americans to go there to fight and die in the 21st century.

We prevailed in Kosovo because our cause was just, our goals were clear, our Alliance were strong, and our strategy worked, thanks to the performance of our men and women in uniform. In 78 days, they flew more than 37,000 support and strike sorties in the face of constant danger, including surface-to-air missiles. Many times our pilots risked their lives because they would not fire back at the Serb gunners who were positioned in heavily populated areas and they didn't want to kill innocent civilians.

In the end, thank God we had zero combat fatalities and only two planes shot down. That is an astonishing record and a tribute to the professionalism we see every day from our military forces the world over. They are good people. They are good people who are well-trained, well-led, and well-equipped. Rigorous training is critical and, as all of you know, dangerous in and of itself. Indeed, we must always remember our two Army airmen who died in training exercises in Albania during the Kosovo conflict. And we thank God there weren't more casualties in Kosovo, in part because the men and women trained so hard with the world's best equipment. As long as I am President, I intend to keep the commitment I made from the first day of our administration that our men and women in uniform will remain the best trained, the

best equipped, the best prepared military in the entire world.

All of you know we have challenges in keeping that commitment. Thanks to the strength of our economy, in part, we're having a harder time recruiting and keeping some of our best people. And we have a lot of tough decisions to make to maintain the readiness of our equipment and to keep ahead of the latest generation in military developments. I have asked Congress for the support necessary to deal with these challenges. I believe it will be forthcoming, and I ask for your support in making sure that it is.

We also recognize another simple truth here, on your centennial: The troops of tomorrow will only be as good as our commitment to veterans today. Way back in 1903, Theodore Roosevelt said, "A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards."

One of the great privileges I have had in being President is to work for and with our country's veterans and their organizations. The White House doors have been open to veterans, to help to shape policy affecting veterans, especially when it comes to critical matters like health care. Early in our administration, Hershel Gober recommended that we look for ways to bring health care closer to veterans who needed it. Since then we have opened more than 600 outpatient clinics all across America and have more planned over the next 2 years. We expect to treat 400,000 more veterans this year than last year.

We've also confronted some long-neglected problems head on. We've reached out to more than 40,000 veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange, to tell them about the expanded benefits available to them. I pressed hard for answers to the Gulf war syndrome and proper care for those who suffer from it. We are in the process of building five new national cemeteries, the most since the Civil War. And we are making a special effort to end something I know is unacceptable to all of us here today, homeless veterans. They should be brought back into the society they did so much to defend.

In all these efforts, I want to thank Secretary West, his predecessor, Secretary Brown, and Deputy Secretary Gober and all those at the Department of Veterans Affairs that have worked so hard to reach out to you and to work with you. We know there is more to do.

As Vice President Gore announced last month, we will continue to work with the VFW and others to make sure that all veterans receive the high-quality care they deserve next year and every year, and we expect this year's budget to reflect that commitment.

I would like to make another point today. Standing by our military and standing by our veterans means more than simply preparing people to fight wars and taking care of them after they wear our Nation's uniform. We must also work with equal determination to prevent wars. That means paying attention not only to military readiness but to diplomatic readiness as well. We know that if diplomacy is not backed by real, credible threats of force, it can be empty, indeed, dangerous. But if we don't use diplomacy first to promote our interests, if we rely on our military as the only line of defense, it almost certainly will become our only line of defense.

Of course, international engagement costs money, but the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war. Ever since I became President, I've been trying hard to convince Congress of that basic truth. It has been a considerable challenge. Our international affairs programs, which fund everything from resolving conflicts to strengthening young democracies, to combating terrorism, to fighting dangerous drugs, to promoting our exports, to maintaining our Embassies all around the world, amount to less than one percent of the Federal budget and less than one-fifteenth of our defense budget. But I regret to say that since 1985 these programs have been cut significantly. This year the House and Senate have passed spending bills that would cut our request for international affairs by more than \$2 billion. In other words, we're cutting the very programs designed to keep our soldiers out of war in the first place.

Underfunding our arsenal of peace is as risky as underfunding our arsenal for war. For if we continue to underfund diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises that we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. If this trend continues, there will be real consequences for important American interests.

Let me mention just a few, beginning with our interest in peace and stability across the Atlantic. Today, after the victory in Kosovo and in Bosnia, we have an opportunity to invest in

peace so that future wars do not occur there. The people of the Balkans have been crippled by conflict, really, since the end of the cold war. Today, we have a chance to integrate them with each other and into the mainstream of Europe, where they will have strong incentives to maintain democracy and good behavior and avoid conflicts.

To do this, we don't need anything as ambitious as the Marshall plan. And whatever is done, we must insist that our European partners carry most of the load and that Balkan leaders themselves take responsibility for changing their policies. Still, the United States should be a part of this process. If we don't and the effort fails, make no mistake, there will be another bloody war that starts in the Balkans and spreads throughout southeastern Europe. And some day, more young Americans may be asked to risk their lives at far greater cost than our part of the rebuilding of the region.

If we are to succeed in winning the peace, we may see a 21st century—I'll say again—in which we do not have to send the young people of America to fight in another European war. That is a worthy objective. We have seen enough wars in Europe, claiming the lives of their children and America's young people. Now we have a chance to avoid it, and we ought to take the chance.

We also have a responsibility to protect American people from the dangers most likely to surface in the 21st century. The gravest of those may not be another country launching a nuclear weapon but that weapons of mass destruction will fall into the hands of terrorists and their rogue-state sponsors. We have worked to reduce that doomsday scenario. Since 1992, our support has helped to deactivate almost 5,000 nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union; to eliminate nuclear weapons from three former Soviet republics; to strengthen the security of weapons and materials at over 100 sites; to tighten export controls in Russia and to purchase hundreds of tons, literally hundreds of tons, of highly enriched uranium that otherwise could be used for nuclear weapons that end up in the wrong hands.

This effort has received strong bipartisan support in the Congress for which I am very grateful. Today, the Russian economy is struggling, as we all know. The average salary of a highly trained weapons scientist in Russia—listen to this—the average salary of a highly trained

weapons scientist in Russia is less than \$100 a month.

Now, for a small investment, we can help them turn that expertise to peaceful projects that help the world and draw a living wage doing it. Or we can do nothing and pray that each and every one of those thousands of scientists will somehow resist the temptation to market their expertise to those who wish to do us and the cause of freedom harm. Common sense says to me that we ought to give them something useful and good to do and let them make a decent living.

That's why, in my State of the Union Address, I proposed increasing funding for threat reduction by two-thirds over the next 5 years. I want to work with Congress to make these investments to make the world a safer place.

Another challenge is to create a durable and comprehensive peace in the region that every President since Richard Nixon has considered among the most dangerous in the world, the Middle East. Today, we have a real opportunity to do that. The new Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, formerly the commander of all Israel's military forces, has set forth an ambitious agenda to reach agreement within the next 15 months and to move the process beyond the setbacks of recent years.

Both Israelis and Palestinians now are determined to move forward. But the enemies of peace stand ready to strike to undercut this path. That is why last fall, when the two sides made a commitment to peace at the Wye River talks, we made a commitment to them, as well. As the United States has done ever since the Camp David accords in the late 1970's, we told the Israelis that we would help them minimize the risks of peace and lift the lives of the Palestinian people. We told the Jordanians that we would help promote their safety and their well-being.

Now, I know that's a long way away. But you know if there's a full-scale war in the Middle East, it will affect our interests and our values. The Middle East is home to all three of the world's great religions that hold we are created by one God. We have a chance to see it become a place of peace. If it becomes again a place of war, it will cost us far more than investing in a common, shared, peaceful future. The conflict has gone on for too long. We have a historic opportunity to end it. If the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Jordanians—ultimately, the

Syrians and the Lebanese—if they all are willing to do their part, we must do ours, and we ought to begin by keeping our word to fund the Wye River peace process.

We also have an opportunity, believe it or not, to move beyond a series of cruel conflicts in Africa. In the last 3 weeks, in efforts led not by the United States, although we supported them, but by the African countries themselves, we have seen signs for hope in the resolution of devastating conflicts, especially in the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, which has claimed more than 70,000 lives already. We have seen the most populous country in Africa, Nigeria, hold a democratic election and bring to an end 15 years of misrule. All this is very good news. It means that the largest untapped market for our products in the world, a continent of over 700 million people, that provides nearly as much oil to us as we get from the Middle East, will now have a chance to develop in freedom and peace and shared prosperity with us and other freedom-loving people.

Now, the African countries don't want the United States to solve their problems or to deploy our military. All they've asked us to do, at a small cost, is to support their efforts to resolve conflicts on their own, to keep the peace, to build better lives for their people, and to develop competent militaries. These efforts don't make a lot of headlines. I'll bet most of you don't know much about them. That's good, because the point is to avoid headlines, headlines about famine and refugee crisis and genocide, and to replace them, instead, with stories of partnership and shared prosperity. These are the stories we can write now, again, if Congress will invest only a tiny portion of what we spend on defense on avoiding war in the first place.

Finally, there is the question of the United Nations. One of the great legacies of our victory in World War II is an institution where nations seek to resolve differences with words instead of weapons. Paying our dues to that organization is a legal and a moral responsibility. It ought to be reason enough to do so. If we fail to do so soon, the United States will actually lose its vote in the General Assembly.

But obligation is not the only reason for doing this; so is opportunity. The U.N. helps us to mobilize the support of other nations for goals Americans cherish, from keeping the peace to immunizing children, to caring for refugees, to

combating the spread of deadly weapons. We've been working with growing success to make sure that the U.N. operates better, at lower cost.

But we have to do our part. Unless we want America to pay all the costs and take all the risks to solve the world's big problems, we have to work with others, and that means paying our fair share of dues, like every other country does, to the United Nations.

The bottom line is this: Today, we have a unique opportunity and a real responsibility to advance the values in the world won in the 20th century over the last 100 years by America's veterans. But if we have only one arrow in our quiver, our military, we sacrifice the work of peace and increase the risk of war. We have to do our part to keep the world on a stable path toward democracy, the democracy that every single one of you put your lives on the line to defend.

That's how President Truman felt. Fifty years ago this week he spoke to you at the VFW's Golden Jubilee Convention. Listen to what he said, and you can feel it here, because we're not very far from his hometown. Harry Truman said, "Peace with freedom and justice cannot be bought cheaply. It can only be assured by the combined efforts of the multitudes of people throughout the world who want a secure peace. We must keep them our friends if the world is to be a decent place for our children and their grandchildren to live." Harry Truman was a pretty smart fellow.

Just 2 months ago I visited a refugee camp full of Kosovar Albanians in Macedonia. I wish every one of you could have been there. As I walked through the camp, these young children started chanting spontaneously, "U.S.A., U.S.A., U.S.A.," thanking Americans for giving them a chance to reclaim their lives in their native land. They've all gone home now, by the way; over 90 percent of the refugees from Kosovo are home.

But it reminded me of my trip to Normandy for the 50th anniversary of D-day in 1994. In Normandy, we all heard stories, from our veterans, of French citizens who came up to them, took their hands, and told them that they were very young, 50 years ago, but they would always remember what Americans did for them and what it meant to them. I hope that in 50 years, some of our veterans from the conflict in Kosovo will go back there, and the children from that refugee camp, who will then be in

their middle years, will take their hands and say, "Fifty years ago I was chanting, 'U.S.A., U.S.A.,' with my voice, but I still chant with my heart." We are very grateful to you, all of you.

So on this centennial anniversary, on behalf of a grateful nation and grateful people throughout the world, I say to every soldier, sailor, airman, marine, and coastguardsman, to every man and woman who fought bravely for our Nation and brought dignity to the world, thank you for a job well done. May we look forward

to a century in which all your sacrifice and all your service is honored and redeemed with the greatest peace and prosperity the world has ever known.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in Hall E at the H. Roe Bartle Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas A. Pouliot, commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States; and former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Elections in Haiti August 16, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 561(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999 (FOAA), as enacted in Public Law 105-277, I hereby report to the Congress that the central Government of Haiti: (1) has achieved a transparent settlement of the contested April 1997 elections, and (2) has made concrete progress on the constitution of a credible and competent provisional electoral council that is acceptable to a broad spectrum of political parties and civic groups in Haiti. Section 561(b) states that funds appropriated by the FOAA and made available to support elections in Haiti shall not be restricted if I report to the Congress that the central Government of Haiti has met the two aforementioned criteria.

The first criterion in section 561(b) of the FOAA, a transparent settlement of the contested April 1997 elections, was cumulatively met by a public declaration by the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) on June 11 and the promulgation of the Electoral Law, which was published in the national gazette *Le Moniteur* July 19, and republished with corrections July 22. Taken together, these two acts establish that 19 Senate seats will be run in the legislative and local elections projected for late 1999. Included in this number are the two still-contested Senate seats from April 1997. Article 63 of the Electoral Law specifically states "the number of Senators

to be elected in the upcoming elections shall be determined by the CEP." This authority is also provided in Article 16. Article 130 states that the elections are to fill Senate seats vacant by "fact or law."

Pursuant to its authority to determine which seats will be competed, the CEP declared publicly on June 11 that it "has decided to call elections to fill all Senate positions currently vacant, whether *de facto* or *de jure*, without distinction." In a number of subsequent public statements, as well as in private assurances to the Embassy and others in the international community, CEP officials explicitly and unanimously reiterated that because there are presently eight sitting Senators and the Constitution calls for a Senate of 27 Senators, a total of 19 Senate seats will be competed, including the two still-contested positions.

The second criterion, concrete progress on constituting a competent, credible, and broadly acceptable CEP, was achieved March 16 when President Preval announced that nine-member body's composition after consultations with the five-party *Espace de Concertation*. Since that time, the CEP has performed in a competent, even-handed, and credible manner and has been deemed acceptable even by parties and movements who stand in staunch opposition to the government.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks on Public Service Announcements on School Violence

August 17, 1999

Leilani, most people twice your age couldn't do that. [*Laughter*]

Earthquake in Turkey

Ladies and gentlemen, because this is my first chance of the week to speak to the press, before we get on to showing the spot, I have to say just a couple of words about the awful earthquake that occurred in Turkey, which I'm sure a lot of you have heard about. It has claimed hundreds of lives and many injuries.

So let me begin by saying on behalf of all Americans, our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families. Most of you know that Turkey has been our friend and ally for a long time now. We must stand with them and do whatever we can to help them get through this terrible crisis.

We've already released aid for the Turkish Red Crescent. We're sending a team to Turkey to help with search and rescue today. Our Energy Secretary, Bill Richardson, and General Hugh Shelton, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, are actually in Turkey, and they have personally conveyed our willingness to provide additional assistance. General Shelton has met with his Turkish counterpart to offer the military's help with disaster relief. And we will continue to determine what further help is needed. But you can only imagine how difficult this is for them, and we will do what we can to help.

School Violence

Now, let me thank Leilani again and Wyatt Keusch and Harrison Boatwright, who are the young people here with us, who are also in the PSA. I want to thank Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno, who have really done a wonderful job of trying to have a coordinated and balanced approach to keeping our children safe. Governor Romer, thank you. I want to thank all the people here from the entertainment industry, Jack and Richard and Eddie, Sheila and all the others who stood up. Thank

you so much for your generosity and your far-sightedness. Thank you, Peggy Conlon; you're a great spokesperson for the people you represent, and you've been great in helping us to get this far. And I want to thank my long-time friend Drew Altman and the Kaiser Foundation for their support in this endeavor. I'd also like to thank the young AmeriCorps members who are here today, who spent a lot of time working with our young people and trying to help them stay safe. This is a very important issue to Hillary, to me, to our entire administration.

In 2 weeks Leilani's going to start at a brand new school. That's probably more scary than introducing the President to a bunch of strangers. [*Laughter*] And you know, there are always a lot of worries associated with going to a new school: All these strange people—are they going to like me? Am I going to like them? You've got to get to know the teachers; you've just got to find your way around; got to remember the combination to a new locker. [*Laughter*] Those are the things that our kids ought to be worried about.

They shouldn't be worried about whether what they saw in Littleton or Conyers or what that young madman in Illinois and Indiana or at the Jewish community center in L.A. could possibly happen to them. That's what they shouldn't worry about. But they do because they've seen the press reports, and so has our entire Nation.

We're still grieving for the young children, the teacher, the counselor, the receptionist, at the Jewish community center, or the family of that young Filipino-American, Joseph Iletto, who was killed only because he was an Asian-American who worked for his country's government.

Secretary Riley has gone across the country trying to make sure that all of us can put this in some kind of context. The Attorney General has, as well. The crime rate in this country's at a 26-year low; juvenile crime is going down;

the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Education show that overall violence has actually decreased in our schools. It's important to tell these children here with us today, and others, that the chances of a tragedy happening are small, less than they used to be, less than one in a million.

But that's not good enough when you see how horrible it is when it occurs. Schools ought to be right next to our houses of worship as sanctuaries in America. They ought to be places where young people are completely safe and absolutely certain that they are. And each of us bears a responsibility. If Hillary is right that it takes a village to raise a child, it will take our whole national village to keep the Nation's children safe in their schools.

A big part of that responsibility lies with parents and giving parents and their children the capacity and courage to communicate with one another. And that's a big part of why we're here to launch this public service campaign.

As you will see in a moment, the PSA sponsored by the Kaiser Family Foundation, by Children Now, and the Ad Council sends out a powerful call to action: If you're a child and you see someone committing violence or even just talking about it—that's very important, given the evidence we now have about the situation in Colorado and others—if you see someone just talking about it, the best thing you can do is to first tell your parents. And if you're a parent, you have to take it seriously. You have to sit down and talk and listen, to draw your children out, to give them a chance to express their fears, to give you early warning, and then to share that early warning with your children's teachers and principal.

This is an important message, so I'd like to, again, with thanks to all concerned, turn the lights out and watch the ad.

[The public service announcement video was shown.]

The President. Thanks to the commitment of America's broadcast and cable networks and cable channels, this ad and others like it will be seen by just about every single person in America who turns on the television tomorrow night during the family hour of prime time.

This so-called television roadblock is really unprecedented. The networks are donating a million and a half dollars of free air time in one night alone. That's more blanket coverage than

I get for the State of the Union. *[Laughter]* Many of the networks have already pledged to continue airing these PSA's during different timeslots for the remainder of this year.

So let me say once again, I am very, very grateful to all the people involved who have fulfilled the commitment that they made at our youth violence summit in May, to use the power of your medium to send out positive messages to our children. This is a kind of thing we can do when we work together, and we need to continue to do so and to include all parts of our society.

You remember that when we had the national summit, the First Lady and I said we wanted to organize a national campaign against youth violence, to have the same sort of galvanizing impact on our people that Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Students Against—I think it's now called—Destructive Decisions, the campaign to promote seatbelt use. These grassroots campaigns can have a profound effect on the way Americans think and the way they behave. It will be much, much easier now, because of the work that all of you involved in the media have done to bring these public service spots to the people of the United States. But we also need our organized campaign.

So today I have the honor of announcing and introducing the person who will be the executive director of this campaign. His name is Jeff Bleich, and he's here with us on stage. He's been recognized by the American Bar Association as one of our country's leading young attorneys. He's also one of San Francisco's leading civic-minded citizens. He is the father of three beautiful children he desperately wants to have a safe childhood. He has received several prestigious awards for his pro bono legal service. He's built strong connections in Silicon Valley and in Hollywood, both of whom can be of immense help to us in this endeavor. And perhaps most important, he has written a very fine book on youth violence. So I'd like to ask Jeff to stand up, and to thank him for his service. And thank you for taking on this challenge to protect our children.

Today the Department of Justice is also releasing \$15 million to fund innovative partnerships between local police and school and community groups, something the Attorney General has been pushing since the first day she came here. These partnerships will help schools do

everything from training students in conflict resolution techniques to combating drug dealing and use on school grounds.

But as every police officer in America knows, we're kidding ourselves if we think we can conquer youth violence without addressing one of its undeniable catalysts, the appalling ease with which young people gain access to guns. Hillary has already said, and you know that I strongly agree, it is long past time for Congress to step up to its responsibility and restore some common sense, sanity, and strength to our Nation's gun laws.

Today I ask the Republican majority: When you come back to work, our children will be going back to school; think about them; let's not wait until the next senseless tragedy to pass commonsense gun safety measures to protect them.

Now, I know in a country of 270 million people and tens of millions of guns, no law can stop every disturbed person from committing a violent act with a gun. But we would never do anything, as a people, if we gave in to the objection that all of our actions would have less than 100 percent impact. The Brady bill has kept over 400,000 gun sales, which should not have occurred, from happening. It has saved countless lives. Closing the gun show loophole will have the same impact. Closing the loopholes in the assault weapons ban will have the same impact.

Doing these other things—will they solve every problem? No. Will they stop every act of violence? No. Will they prevent every madman? No. If we used that kind of excuse, we would all stay in bed every day. We would never get out of bed. We would never get out of bed. We would never hit a lick. So we need all the tools at our disposal. Look what these media people have done. Will this public service ad get every parent in America and every child to talk about every dangerous thing that happens at every school? No. But it will have a huge impact.

And so if the media people are doing their part and the school people are doing their part and the law enforcement people are doing their part, it is time to pass the reasonable and entirely modest measures before the Congress. For those who want to do more, I say, so do I. But that is no reason not to do this. This will make a difference. And it is certainly not an argument not to do it, that it won't solve every problem. It will save some lives, and we ought to do it.

We have got to work together. That's what our national campaign is about; that is the message that the Ad Council is putting out in these ads; and down deep inside, that's what all of us know we need to do, so that when we see children like Leilani—don't you wish all you ever had to worry about was that the kid you're pulling for can get through the speech in front of the strangers—[laughter]—can make it through the athletic event, can play the solo or sing the song that is so excruciatingly difficult the first time you did it? These are the things that our children ought to be worried about. We ought to give our kids back their childhood. And we can do it, if we do it together.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to students Leilani Tassillio, who introduced the President, Wyatt Keusch, and Harrison Boatwright; Jack Valenti, president and chief executive officer, Motion Pictures Association of America, Inc.; Richard Masur, president, Screen Actors Guild; Edward O. Fritts, president and chief executive officer, National Association of Broadcasters; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, board member, and Peggy Conlon, president and chief executive officer, Ad Council; and Drew E. Altman, president and chief executive officer, Henry J. Kaiser Foundation.

Statement on the Death of Ignaz Bubis

August 17, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Ignaz Bubis, the President of Germany's Central Council of Jews. We extend our deepest condolences to his family, the Jewish community in Germany, and the many non-Jews in Germany for whom he was a beacon.

Imprisoned in Nazi labor camps while still a boy, Ignaz Bubis lost virtually his entire family in the Holocaust. After the war, he settled in Frankfurt and became a successful businessman and a key figure in the small community that sought to reestablish Jewish life in Germany. He was elected early in this decade to lead Germany's Jewish community, and he used his position to engage his fellow citizens on issues regarding their nation's past and the need for vigilance to uphold the values at the heart of contemporary Germany. Because of the clarity

of his vision and the persuasiveness of his message, he became one of his nation's foremost champions of tolerance and openness. He was a friend and valued counselor to many of Germany's leaders. I was greatly impressed by his wisdom and determination to build a more tolerant world.

Ignaz Bubis never ceased to bear witness to history and the consuming evil that was perpetrated earlier in this century. But he also demonstrated that the demands of conscience and the goal of reconciliation are not at odds but instead must be pursued together. At a time when conflicts in the Balkans have confronted Europe and the world with seemingly intractable hatred, the example of Ignaz Bubis is one we must all heed.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999

August 17, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1568, the "Veterans Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development Act of 1999." This bill will provide assistance to veterans who are entrepreneurs and especially to service-disabled veteran entrepreneurs, men and women who have sacrificed so much in the service of our country. By helping these American heroes to establish, maintain, and grow their own small businesses, we help to sustain our strong economy and express our gratitude for their service to America.

This bill also includes several measures designed to cushion the impact on small businesses when their owners or essential employees who are reservists are ordered to active duty during military conflicts. By providing loans, loan payment deferrals, and technical and managerial assistance for these citizen soldiers, we can help

ensure that they do not have to risk their livelihoods while they risk their lives.

I do have a constitutional concern regarding the section of the bill that addresses the composition of the government corporation that will provide assistance to veterans in the formation and expansion of small businesses. This provision unjustifiably intrudes upon the President's constitutional authority and discretion to appoint executive officials, and, therefore, I will treat this provision as precatory.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 17, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1568, approved August 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-50.

Statement on Signing the Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2000 *August 17, 1999*

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2465, the "Military Construction Appropriations Act, 2000," which provides funding for military construction and family housing programs of the Department of Defense (DOD).

The Act funds the vast majority of my request for military construction projects, the military housing program, and other quality-of-life projects for our military personnel and their families. The requested projects are critical to supporting military readiness and the quality of life of our soldiers and their families. However, I have several concerns with the bill:

- For the second consecutive year, the Congress has not provided the requested level of construction funding for the Chemical Weapons Demilitarization program. This year's reduction of \$93 million to my request substantially increases the risk that the United States will not meet the 2007 Chemical Weapons Convention deadline for the destruction of these chemical weapons. The sooner these weapons are destroyed, the safer we will all be.
- The Congress has chosen to add funds for projects that DOD has not identified as priorities. In particular, \$301 million is provided for 40 projects that are not in DOD's Future Years Defense Program (FYDP).
- The Congress has again included a provision (section 113) that requires the Secretary of Defense to give 30 days advance notice to certain congressional committees of any proposed military exercise involving construction costs anticipated to exceed \$100,000. In approving H.R. 2465, I wish

to reiterate an understanding, expressed by Presidents Reagan and Bush when they signed Military Construction Appropriations Acts containing a similar provision, that this section encompasses only exercises for which providing 30 days advance notice is feasible and consistent with my constitutional authority and duty to protect the national security.

I urge the Congress to pass all of the FY 2000 appropriations bills as quickly as possible and send them to me in an acceptable form. As of today, the Congress has finished its work on only two of the thirteen appropriations bills. Moreover, many of the remaining bills would require deep cuts in essential government programs, including education, law enforcement, science and technology, the environment, and programs to advance global security through the peaceful use of diplomacy, helping minimize our chances of needing to use military force to the same ends.

When it returns in September, the Congress still has a great deal of work to do. I urge the Congress to approach this work responsibly in order to pass funding bills which are sufficient to meet our Nation's needs in the year 2000.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 17, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2465, approved August 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-52.

Statement on Signing the Water Resources Development Act of 1999 *August 17, 1999*

Today I have signed into law S. 507, the "Water Resources Development Act of 1999," a multibillion dollar omnibus bill to authorize water projects and programs of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. I am pleased that the Act includes some program reforms,

as well as a number of authorizations for projects and programs that are important to the Nation, but I also have serious reservations about this bill.

I am pleased that the bill increases flood protection for Sacramento, California, and that the

Congress accepted a reform proposed by my Administration to optimize the use of Folsom Dam, a Federal facility protecting the city. However, I am disappointed that the Congress did not authorize other features needed to provide the higher level of flood protection sought by my Administration. I am committed to working with the Congress to reduce further the risk of flood damage facing this community.

In 1998, I proposed an innovative approach to integrate Federal flood protection and environmental restoration efforts: the "Challenge 21" program. I am pleased that the Congress has embraced this proposal and has included a \$200 million authorization for it in this bill. The bill also removes impediments to better flood plain management and broadens the tools available to communities that seek to reduce their risk of flood damage. The bill will promote the use of effective, nonstructural means to address flooding concerns and complement efforts across the Nation to restore the environmental value of flood plains and aquatic ecosystems.

I support the bill's authorization to develop and implement a comprehensive fish and wildlife habitat restoration plan for the Missouri River and to increase the amount of land along the river corridor authorized for acquisition from willing sellers. These authorizations will allow us to recreate a string of natural areas along the length of this great American river once traveled by Lewis and Clark. The legislation also includes an important authorization to study the effects of bank stabilization on the Yellowstone River, the Nation's last major freely meandering river.

On July 1, 1999, my Administration transmitted to the Congress its comprehensive long-term plan to restore the Florida Everglades, which is one of our national treasures. I am pleased that S. 507 continues the authority for related Federal water resources projects in South Florida and look forward to working with the Congress over the next year to authorize the first steps in this important restoration effort.

I also support several of the bill's provisions that authorize improvements to our Nation's ports and harbors. I urge the Congress to enact my proposed Harbor Services Fund legislation, which will ensure a stable source of funding to improve our national port infrastructure and meet the demands of the global economy.

I am disappointed, however, in many of the provisions of S. 507. The amount of construction spending authorized in S. 507—over \$4 billion in new Federal spending—far exceeds a reasonable assessment of the available future Federal budgetary resources for the Corps of Engineers program. With an existing construction backlog of more than \$27 billion of Army Corps of Engineers water resources projects, it would require nearly 20 years at current funding levels just to complete all of the ongoing projects that the Congress previously has authorized. This legislation will place significant further stress on the funding capabilities of this program and create expectations for future funding that are not likely to be forthcoming.

Roughly three-quarters of the significant new projects in this Act and many of its project modifications are still in the planning stage or undergoing review and, therefore, simply are not ready for authorization at this time. Until the completion of the review required for proposed Federal water resources projects under Executive Order 12322, neither the Executive branch nor the Congress is likely to know which of these projects will raise significant concerns regarding their scope, economic and technical feasibility, environmental acceptability, or the ability of local sponsors to provide the required cost-share.

This legislation authorizes nearly \$900 million for local environmental infrastructure and other projects that may be worthwhile, but most of which should not become a responsibility of the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, although S. 507 would reduce Federal costs for future shore protection projects and is a first step towards establishing a more equitable sharing of their substantial long-term costs, it does not go far enough.

My Administration will work with the Congress on the next water projects authorization bill for the Army Corps of Engineers to address these problems.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
August 17, 1999.

NOTE: S. 507, approved August 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-53.

Remarks to the NCAA Football Champion University of Tennessee Volunteers

August 17, 1999

The President. Well, chancellor and Coach Fulmer, Tee, Mercedes—this is the most disgusting pander I've ever seen. [Laughter] You know, Coach Fulmer came up 48 hours ago, and he and Al practiced all this 15 times. [Laughter] We're going to be cited by the Federal Election Commission for this event. [Laughter]

Let me tell you—you know, I'm not running for anything. I can tell you the whole story about this—[laughter]—this Tennessee-Arkansas deal. Everything he said is true. And for all of you who are covering this who aren't from one of the two States, let me—the game was an unbelievable game, and Arkansas was ahead at the end.

And there was only a minute and a half to go, and we seemed to have an insurmountable lead. And our quarterback was trying to kill the clock, a little of the clock. And the Tennessee line broke through the Arkansas offensive line and tackled him behind the line. And he fell, not with his free hand but with the hand on the ball, which squirted out into the arms of Tennessee. And the rest is history.

Who's responsible for that over there? [Laughter] Raise your hand, there. Give him a hand over there. [Applause] Bring that guy up here. Get him up here. Come on.

And what you really don't—what Al couldn't tell you, because he's not like me; I'm not running for anything—[laughter]—is that I was actually watching this game as this foreign policy crisis was unfolding. [Laughter] And I was talking on the phone, injecting things, and they thought, you know, I was being tougher on what was happening on the phone, and I was really just reacting to the ballgame. [Laughter]

But to be fair, to be perfectly fair to Tennessee, I think that you had over 40 yards still to go—

Coach Fulmer. Forty-six.

The President. —for a touchdown, right? Forty-six. [Laughter] So it wasn't like he fumbled on the goal line. And they rolled down there like there was nobody there. And they won the game, and they went on to the national championship.

And I paid off my bet, and—

The Vice President. I'll get you some ribs. [Laughter]

The President. —and we've had a lot of laughs about it.

But I do want to say, you know, I was the first President from my home State ever elected. I owe a lot to Tennessee; if it hadn't been for the Vice President joining the ticket, I might not have won the first time, almost certainly wouldn't have won the second time, because we made all the record we made together. And so I feel deeply indebted.

And all I can say is, we're even now. [Laughter]

Actually, I was very impressed. I like teams, and people, who don't quit, who never say die, and who stick together.

I like the fact that this team had a lot of stars, at different times during the year, but won as a team. You had—Peerless Price caught a, what, a 76- and a 79-yard touchdown pass in the Fiesta Bowl, but he wouldn't have been there to catch those passes if this guy—[laughter]—hadn't broken through the line, somebody else hadn't kicked a field goal, and if all the guys in the line who never get their names called on television didn't show up for every play and play like crazy.

And I think it's important. And I think it's a real tribute to these young men, and to their fine coach. And I think it should be obvious to anybody who knows anything about college football, and anything about this coach, anything about this program, that this is a program, and a team, founded not just on strength and speed and talent but also on thinking and effort and courage and good values.

And in that sense, in winning the national championship and in winning it the way they did, in a highly competitive season, they reflected credit on the entire United States of America.

And every—every—person in America should be proud of them. I certainly am, and I wish you well in getting back next year.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to University of Tennessee President J. Wade Gilley, Coach Phillip Fulmer, and Volun-

teers team members Tee Martin, Mercedes Hamilton, Travis Henry, and Peerless Price; and University of Arkansas quarterback Clint Stoerner.

Statement on the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse *August 18, 1999*

Today's 1998 national household survey on drug abuse reveals that we have turned an important corner on youth drug use. Last year youth drug use declined significantly, and fewer young people tried marijuana for the first time. This encouraging news shows that more young people are getting the message that drugs are wrong and illegal and can kill you, and today's report contains even more good news: Current cigarette use dropped to the lowest rate ever recorded by the survey.

While these results give us reason to be optimistic, we cannot let up on our efforts. We must continue our unprecedented media campaign to reach our children with powerful anti-drug messages, not cut it back just as it is making an impact. We must expand our partnerships with community antidrug coalitions and work to enact our long-term drug strategy. Together, we can steer our children away from drugs and toward a brighter future.

Remarks on the Baby Boom Echo Education Initiative *August 19, 1999*

Thank you very much, and welcome to the announcement of the administration's program to save the future for Secretary Riley's grandchildren. [*Laughter*]

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your passionate dedication and leadership. Thank you, Wendell Greer. I also want to acknowledge here people who will be involved in, I think, briefing later: Dan Galloway, who is the principal of Adlai Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire, Illinois; Dr. Daniel Domenech, the superintendent of the Fairfax County schools; and Dr. Iris Metts, the superintendent of the Prince George's County schools, who was here at the White House with us when I signed the ed-flex bill last April.

This is a busy time for educators, and I appreciate them for taking the time to join us. It's a busy time for parents and students, too, thinking about the back-to-school season. In so many ways it represents a new beginning. People get used to new teachers, new classmates, new schoolbooks, new jeans and clothes. It reminds

us of the vital role that education plays in our children's lives and in the life of our Nation.

Today I want to talk about what the previous speakers have said in terms of what it means for America, not just in a new school year but in a new century. In our lifetimes we have never had a better chance to prepare America's children and America's schools for the demands of the 21st century. We can do it because of the longest peacetime expansion in our history, the highest homeownership, over 19 million new jobs, welfare at a 32 year low, crime a 26-year low, teen smoking, teen pregnancy, and as our annual survey showed just yesterday, teen drug abuse all down. We have a record surplus of \$99 billion, and it's projected to grow and to sustain itself over the next 10 years.

Now, there's a great debate in Washington about what we should do with this surplus and, in a larger sense, how to fulfill the promise and the obligation of preparing our schools and our children for the 21st century. How will we seize this chance to shape the future?

The big challenge, as Secretary Riley said, is that we're going to have young people in record numbers. They are also more diverse than ever before, and therefore, educating them represents more interesting and diverse challenges than ever before. But it's also important to recognize that, ironically, as we have young people in record numbers, we will also have senior citizens in record numbers. The number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years.

So the question is, how are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America, the challenge of the swelling ranks of our school-children, when education is more important not only to them but to our Nation than ever before, and how are we going to keep this economy going and spread its opportunities to the people who have not yet felt them?

I believe, as all of you know, that we should make a commitment to invest in our future and to do it in a way that enables us to save Social Security, to save and strengthen Medicare, to invest in education, and to pay off the publicly held debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835, which will guarantee us long-term lower interest rates for everything from business investment to home mortgages to college loans to car payments.

We can do all this and still have sensible tax cuts. We cannot do it unless we make the commitments to do first things first. Today we are releasing a report by the Department of Education that makes it clear that any part of a long-term successful strategy for America requires us to do more, not less, to meet our children's growing educational needs. Every year the halls of our schools resound more loudly with what has been called, as Secretary Riley said, the baby boom echo.

The children of the baby boom generation are breaking enrollment records for the fourth year in a row now. This academic year, 53.2 million students will fill our elementary and secondary schools. That's nearly half a million more than last year. All the details are in this report, and they will be released later today. But think about it, over 53 million students, more diverse than ever before, from more backgrounds, giving us a chance to be the best prepared country in the world for the global society of the 21st century if, but only if, we educate them well.

There's another thing I want to emphasize about it that this report said that I just hadn't

thought about until I was briefed on it. The pattern of enrollment is changing. As the children grow older, it is the high schools and colleges, even more than the elementary and middle schools, that will carry the burden. During the next decade, our high schools are projected to swell with the ranks of 1.3 million new students. This report gives our Nation an important assignment, to make the investments necessary to meet the demands of the future and our obligations to these children.

We've worked hard for 6½ years to invest in education and to bring real change to our schools. Secretary Riley's leadership has helped us to make historic investments. We've opened the doors to college to virtually every American with the HOPE scholarship and increased Pell grants and other loans and grants and credits. We have worked hard—and I think we're going to make it—to connect every classroom to the Internet by the year 2000. We have worked to strengthen performance and accountability in our schools and to help them meet the Nation's educational goals.

But Principal Greer described the conditions that exist in an awful lot of our schools, far too many—overcrowded classes held in trailers, the shortage of individual attention by trained teachers. The challenges are going to increase as enrollment rises and a projected 2 million of our teachers retire in the next few years.

The baby boom echo is another reason why I feel so strongly that we have to act now, to build new schools and fix old ones, to hire trained teachers, especially in math and science, especially for our high schools. I have proposed, as part of our balanced budget, to build or renovate up to 6,000 schools nationwide; and to fulfill the commitment I made to Congress to hire 100,000 new teachers for our Nation's schools, to lower class size in the early grades, coincidentally freeing up resources for our schools to hire the other teachers they need in other areas.

Unfortunately, the congressional majority wants to back off from our commitment to more teachers and smaller classes, and the tax plan they have proposed would do further damage to those priorities. It would not do anything approaching what we've proposed to build or modernize schools—about a tenth of what we recommended. It would not allow us to pay off the debt. It would not add a day to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund or the

Medicare Trust Fund. It would also lead, if the present budget discipline holds, to substantial, even drastic cuts in education and other national priorities, like national defense, medical research, and fighting crime and protecting the environment.

Now, I have said that I will veto this plan, and I know that there's a lot of hoopla going on around the country, from town meetings to paid political ads, to try to change the opinion of the American people. But no matter how much advertising is done or how much argument is made—since we're talking about education today, I think one of the central achievements of this administration has been to restore arithmetic to the budgeting of the Government. [Laughter] You know, this is not trigonometry. This is not algebra. This is not calculus, and it is not supply side economics. It's basic arithmetic.

We got from a \$290 billion deficit to a \$99 billion surplus while almost doubling our investment in education and training by going back to arithmetic in Washington. And no amount of argument will change the arithmetic of the population of the kids going into our schools. No amount of argument will change the arithmetic of the doubling of our seniors. No amount of argument will change the arithmetic that there are going to be relatively fewer people working while more people draw Social Security and Medicare. No amount of argument will change the arithmetic of the number of teachers who are going to retire. And the truth is that the American people deep down inside sort of sense this.

So yes, I'll veto the tax plan. But let's don't stop with a negative. Let's make something good happen here. This is about something positive. This can be a great thing for America, having all these kids in the schools from all these different backgrounds. They can make us a bigger, stronger, more diverse, richer, more successful country.

But we have to do right by them. We've got to give them a good economy. We've got to make sure that when the baby boomers retire, the parents of these children don't have to spend money that they would otherwise spend educating their children and helping them grow, taking care of their parents because we haven't done right by Social Security and Medicare. And we've got to give them a decent, world-class

education. And if we could just go back to arithmetic, we can figure it out.

Now let me tell you what the alternative is. If this tax bill that's just passed, if I said, "Oh, well, they had all these town meetings, and they had all these ads," and, "Oh, the polls have changed," and, "Oh, I better sign it," and "Oh, we had a big celebration here," within fairly short order, we would find the following: Today, we help 12 million kids in poor communities to make more of their education. If the tax plan passes, over the new few years, we'd have to tell 6 million of them we couldn't do it anymore. Today, we help a million children learn to read independently by the third grade. If the plan passes, we'd have to tell more than half of them we couldn't help them anymore. Today, we're nearing our goal of enrolling a million preschoolers in Head Start. If the plan were to pass, we'd have to turn over 400,000 away.

Compared to our proposal, this tax plan would mean to those already in school—never mind the ones that are coming, already in school—larger classes, fewer teachers, more trailers. That's what it means. Sounds like a country song, doesn't it? [Laughter] Larger classes, fewer teachers, more trailers. [Laughter] I like country music, but we can do better than that. [Laughter]

So again I say, let's put first things first. Let's decide—before we do the tax cut, let's decide what we have to do as a nation to be a great nation. Let's decide what it takes to take care of the aging of America, so the children of the baby boomers don't have to take funds away from raising their grandchildren; to save Social Security and Medicare. Let's decide what it takes, in addition to the surplus generated by Social Security taxes, to just get us out of debt in the next several years, to guarantee a whole generation of lower interest rates and higher economic growth. Let's decide what we have to do to give our children a world-class education.

Then let's put that against the projected surplus—and I emphasize the word "projected"—and string all those numbers out for 10 years, along with whatever we think we have to do for our farmers, who are getting killed out there in this very difficult international market; what we have to do for medical research; what it takes to protect the environment; and subtract from the projected surplus those things, after

which there will be a number. Let's give that number back to the American people in a tax cut. And you know, since it's 10 years and it's projected, maybe there's some little play one way or the other but not a lot.

Now, ironically, the tax cut I proposed gives about the same dollar benefits to the middle class as the one that the Congress passed. People in my income group wouldn't get anything out of it, but people in my income group, by and large, and higher, have done pretty well in this economy, in this stock market, and care far more about keeping interest rates down and economic growth going, because they know they'll do well.

The only other thing that I think is very important is, I think that my new markets tax cuts ought to pass, because I think we ought to give investors the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas around the world now, from the Caribbean to Latin America to Africa to Asia, so that we can keep economic growth going by bringing economic opportunity to the communities that haven't had it yet and to the people who haven't had it yet.

We can do this if we go back to priorities and arithmetic. What's the most important

thing? A time like this comes along once in a generation. People my age, to 10 or 15 years older than me, to 20 years younger than me, they've never known anything like this. Never have we had an opportunity like this.

And with our children going back to school, with more of them than ever, with the educational needs crying out there—and, I might add, one thing that Secretary Riley didn't say, to toot his own horn and the horn of these educators back here and all the rest of you, is that we now know what works. The test scores are going up. We're learning how to educate this incredibly diverse group of kids. And if we make the right investments in the right way, we can get the right results.

So again I say, let's have the right priorities. Let's make an "A" in arithmetic. Let's think about the 21st century and all these children. We'll make the right decisions.

Thank you very much

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Wendell Greer, principal, Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, CA, who introduced the President.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

August 19, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period April 1, 1999, to May 31, 1999. The previous submission covered events during February 1999 and March 1999.

NATO's 50th Anniversary Summit in Washington this past April brought an opportunity to engage with Greek and Turkish leaders on the Cyprus problem. I met there with Turkish President Demirel and Greek Prime Minister Simitis to underscore the importance of a just and lasting solution for all Cypriots. Secretary

of State Madeleine K. Albright delivered a similar message to her Greek and Turkish counterparts in discussions on the possibilities for resuming negotiations in the fall. My Administration will continue efforts to bring about a settlement based on a bizonal, bicomunal federation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 20.

Statement on the Federal Budget Surplus

August 20, 1999

Today I am pleased to announce that we are on track to reach the largest annual budget surplus ever. Thanks to solid fiscal discipline, the surplus at this point in the fiscal year is \$69.1 billion, the largest in history over a comparable period and more than \$20 billion over last year's level.

When I came into office just over 6 years ago, our Nation was burdened by a staggering \$290 billion deficit that was projected to reach over \$400 billion by this fiscal year. The Vice President and I, working with Congress, set this country on a new course of fiscal discipline, enacting two strong budget packages in 1993 and 1997. As a result, we have begun to pay down the Nation's debt. By the end of this fiscal year we expect to have achieved a \$142 billion reduction in publicly held debt over the last 2 years. The debt is now \$1.7 trillion less

than was projected in 1993 when President Clinton took office.

Fiscal responsibility and resulting debt reduction lowers long-term interest rates for home mortgages, autos, and student loans. It also lowers borrowing costs for businesses, fueling private sector investments for continued economic growth. Despite the continuing good news, this is not a time for complacency. The tax bill passed by Congress would reverse the achievement of fiscal discipline that has been so critical in making the American economy the strongest it has been in generations. We need to continue our progress and remain committed to our successful economic strategy of making responsible investments in our people and maintaining fiscal discipline. We now have an historic opportunity to work together in a responsible way to pay off the national debt and strengthen Social Security and Medicare.

Remarks at an American Ireland Fund Dinner in Nantucket, Massachusetts

August 20, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me begin by joining others in thanking Bob and Mia for having us in their beautiful, beautiful home and making us all feel at home. I thank Jack and Lyle for their work on the fundraisers and for all the many things they've done for me over many, many years. I thank all the board members of the American Ireland Fund who are here.

And I congratulate you on honoring Tim Russert. You know, most of us who have tried to be professionally Irish—[laughter]—you know, we get our Irish shtick down, you know. This is about the best I've ever seen. [Laughter] And I say it because—it is because it's genuine. You could feel it. You could feel it. His heart was in his remarks. You could see it was yesterday that he was a young man writing that statement for Senator Moynihan.

For the American Irish, which is probably the largest diaspora in the world, the last 30 years of the Troubles have been a source of enormous heartbreak and frustration and some-

times downright disgust, but always, always, love. And I want to thank Tim for his continuing passionate commitment to the principles of peace and equality in Ireland. And I thank you for honoring him.

I also want to thank you more than I can say for honoring Hillary with the proceeds of this fundraiser to Vital Voices. In so many ways in Ireland, we have moved almost in two different worlds in the last 6½ years. And sometimes, I think her world will have more to do with whether peace really takes hold than the one that I have moved in.

The first big decision I had to make was whether to give a visa to Gerry Adams. Remember? And I was told—here I was, this ardent Anglophile who had spent 2 years in college in England and knew most of the Kings of England in order and all of that sort of stuff, and the Queen—and they said, "Well, if you do this, you will just destroy the special relationship between the United States and Britain." And I

said, "Well, if I don't do it, we're never going to get anybody off the dime over there."

And so we made it absolutely clear that we would not tolerate terrorism, that this trip could not be used to raise money to buy guns or ammunition, that this was to be a gesture of peace. Well, the rest is history, good, bad, and indifferent, but at least it got us off the dime. And the Irish people have pretty well done the rest. They voted for the Good Friday accords in overwhelming numbers. We had the parliamentary elections following on them. We've had a lot of institutions start.

But let me say that I think one of the things that made all this possible is the American Ireland Fund for the last 20 years. Why? Because all that money you raised and put in there created opportunity after opportunity after opportunity for people, and so they saw there could be a different future.

You know, one of the problems you have if you go into a place like Kosovo now, to get people to quit killing each other and staying in the same old rut—hating people because they're not in their tribe and the way they worship God or their ethnic group—is that they cannot imagine a tomorrow that is different from yesterday and today.

The American Ireland Fund, by just being there, in Ireland and in Northern Ireland for 20 years, you know, the place is booming now, but for most of the last 20 years it was about the poorest country in Europe. And you were there, day-in and day-out, month-in and month-out, year-in and year-out, and I am telling you it made a difference. I know. I've been there. I've been on the streets. I've been in those neighborhoods. I've seen your projects. I've seen the people you've helped.

And so as we move forward, you ought to remember that one of the reasons that the Good Friday accords were overwhelmingly embraced by the people in the Republic and in Northern Ireland is that they could visualize a different tomorrow. And the American Ireland Fund helped them to do that, and you should be very proud of yourself.

But one of the things that I have learned from the Middle East, from Northern Ireland, from Kosovo and Bosnia, from the tribal wars in Africa I've tried to help deal with, is that in addition to people being able to visualize a different tomorrow, you have to have leaders who can let go.

There was reconciliation in South Africa because Nelson Mandela could let go; and he had a whole lot more to let go of than most of the Irish do. I mean, let's fess up here. [Laughter] He had a lot more to let go of than most of the Irish do. But because he could let go, we were able to make peace. And that's why I said what I did about Hillary and the Vital Voices.

We've had some of these women in the White House in the Oval Office. They're very practical. I mean, people that have buried their children. They still get up in the morning, and they have to go to the store and buy food, and they have to do this, that, and the other thing, do practical things. And they are enormously practical people, and they have no vested interest in the continuation of the conflict.

And so I say to you that helping these people in Vital Voices will make more than the park that Hillary talked about; there will be lots of parks like that and lots of things that people will do together. And you've got to get these kids out here. You see—if you see kids in Ireland, if you see kids in the Middle East, if you see kids anywhere who get to each other soon enough before they're taught how to hate, they change the whole future.

And the last thing I want to say is this: You all—those of you who are really interested in this, you know what the deal is now. We had a big election, and the Good Friday accord was approved. Then we had elections for Parliament, and they worked. They were honest, and they were full, and everybody got into the Parliament at Stormont. And I went there and shook hands with them all.

But the agreement that said anybody that got over a certain percentage of vote in the election would also be in the executive branch—and Sinn Fein got enough to get in—the agreement also said that there would be decommissioning that would be finished within 18 months according to a schedule to be set up by the Commission, which now is headed by General de Chastelain, the former Canadian Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

So we're back to that old trust issue because the Unionists don't want Sinn Fein in the executive until they have a symbolic act of decommissioning, and the IRA say, "Well, we don't want to do that until we know we're not going to get snookered." Well, obviously, this is at some

level, it almost looks like two kids daring each other to go first.

But if you look beneath that, the IRA say, "Well, it's our people that voted for the peace. We wanted to render our arms to them, not to the other side and have them claim that they got some victory over us; this is a victory that the people together voted for." So this argument goes on endlessly.

Now, let me tell you, the good news is that everybody on all sides agrees to all parts of the Good Friday accords; everybody on all sides agrees that it all has to be done by next May. Nobody wants to get rid of anything else about the agreement, and the only problem we've got left is the sequencing of standing up the executive branch and decommissioning. That is all that will be discussed when Senator Mitchell reconvenes the group on September 6th. And when the Good Friday agreements were reached, it was anticipated that roadblocks might develop, and so they set this up.

So all I would say to all of you is that part of this problem is trust, and at some point, they're going to have to figure out a way that they're both trusting each other at the same time. So you get out of this "you go first." You know, it's like two kids standing on a big old diving board holding hands and looking down into a deep pool.

Part of it is that, unlike the women that Hillary deals with in Vital Voices, some of these folks have been doing this for so long that their whole identity is caught up in the continuation of the conflict. I say this in all respect. I'm not attacking them, but it's true.

So what we have to do is to find ways to help them let go. And that's why the work of

the American Ireland Fund is still important. Even though the economy is going like crazy—I've talked to Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern about this repeatedly—we have got to target those critical decisionmakers and give them an image of a life they can have that will be meaningful and rich. I don't mean materially rich; I mean it'll have a lot of texture and meaning and standing in the community if they let go.

So thank you for what you've done. Thank you for supporting Vital Voices. The women are doing better than the men now in promoting peace, for the reasons I've said. *[Laughter]* But this deal in September may be our last chance for a generation, and we cannot blow it. It's too late to turn back now, as Mr. Morrison sang. *[Laughter]* It is too late. And so we need the voices. I can look at people in this room that—I know I've been working on this now with many of you for a long time. We have got to help them let go. And you can do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Bob and Mia Matthews; event cochair Jack Manning and Lyle Howland; Tim Russert, Washington bureau chief, NBC News; Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces, member and chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Ireland; and the late Jim Morrison, singer of The Doors.

The President's Radio Address

August 21, 1999

Good morning. Like many Americans, Hillary and I are fortunate to be spending part of our summer vacation enjoying the splendors of nature—strolling clean, beautiful beaches, breathing the fresh ocean air, watching the stunning sunset—reminding us that we must do everything we can to preserve this glorious land of ours for generations yet to come.

President Theodore Roosevelt once committed our Nation to leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us. Vice President Gore and I have tried hard to fulfill his vision. We protected the Yellowstone Park from the threat of mining, preserved the red rock canyons of Utah, saved age-old redwoods in California's Headwaters Forest. We

launched the most ambitious restoration effort ever in the magnificent Florida Everglades. And we're acting to restore healthy air and pristine skies to our national parks so that future generations can see and enjoy them, just as the first explorers did.

Last year, at my request, Congress approved new funding to protect other precious lands. Today I'm pleased to announce our latest efforts. We've just reach a landmark agreement to protect more than 9,000 acres of critical land next to Yellowstone, another milestone in our effort to preserve the matchless wonders of America's first national park.

Permanently protecting these lands will help to ensure the survival of the bison and other herds that roam the wilds of Yellowstone. And by removing a threat to the underground springs that feed Yellowstone's geysers, we'll ensure that Old Faithful remains faithful for years to come. A hundred years from now, families still will be able to experience the magnificent glory of Yellowstone.

We're also protecting several other natural and historic sites across our country, from ancient ruins in Bandelier National Monument, to the birthplace of Martin Luther King, Jr., to California's spectacular Big Sur coast. We can all be proud of these latest additions to our Nation's endowment. Yet, with more Americans visiting our national parks and forests than ever before, we must do more. Every child deserves a chance to hike in an old-growth forest or wade in a clear, cool stream. And our land is more than a haven for wildlife or a vacation spot; it embodies our very history and our culture.

In too many places, vital pieces of this heritage are disappearing. Once lost, they can't be replaced. That is why I proposed an historic lands legacy initiative to open the new century with an unprecedented commitment to preserving our most precious lands for all time. First, as part of our balanced budget for the

coming year, I proposed a record \$1 billion to protect natural treasures and provide new resources to States and communities to preserve farms, urban parks, wetlands, coastlands, and working forests.

Second, I asked for permanent funding of at least a billion dollars a year to continue these efforts through the coming century. My priorities for the new year include new protections for Civil War battlefields, the Lewis and Clark trail, the Cape Cod National Seashore, and the Pelican Island refuge in Florida, America's first wildlife refuge.

But these priorities are at risk because Congress has approved only a fraction of my request. And while we're taking action to protect our environment and the public health, the Republican leadership's risky tax plan would actually roll back our progress. It would cut funding to our national parks, even threaten to shut some of them down.

Now, throughout this century the stewardship of our lands has not been a partisan issue; it's been a bipartisan cause. In that spirit, I urge Congress to approve my full request for the coming year for the lands legacy initiative, to work with me to create a permanent fund to preserving our lands.

We're indebted to those who safeguarded our natural treasures so that we might enjoy them today, and we owe that same debt to the future. It is our sacred obligation to leave this land a better land for our children and for generations yet to come. Theodore Roosevelt was right, and it's time we all heeded him.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:50 p.m. on August 20 at a private residence in Nantucket, MA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Earthquake in Turkey

August 21, 1999

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to the loved ones of

those who have lost their lives in this week's devastating earthquake in Turkey. Our thoughts

and prayers are with all of those affected by this tragedy.

Turkey is our long-time ally, and the people of Turkey are our friends. Now, with many of them in desperate need, we must do all we can to help. And we will. Working with the Turkish Government and other partners, we are already engaged in a broad-ranging assistance effort. Our civilian and military personnel are participating in search and rescue efforts; assessing emergency humanitarian needs; providing

medical services; delivering medicines, blankets, and shelter materials; and helping to coordinate overall international aid.

The task ahead is immense. Approximately one million people are sleeping outdoors; clean water is scarce; and the risk of disease is rapidly increasing. I know many Americans will want to help relieve the suffering and restore hope to the people. So I encourage my fellow citizens to give generously to responsible charitable organizations that are supporting relief efforts.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Nantucket August 21, 1999

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

The President. We met in 1971. I noticed her in a class we were in in law school. And I had just broken up with this girl I was going with. [Laughter] And I noticed her in this class, and the reason I noticed her in this class, to be honest, is that she attended it less frequently than I had. [Laughter] And she was an interesting, compelling looking woman, so I followed her out of this class. And I got right behind her, and I said, "No, this is nothing but trouble." And I turned around, and I walked off, didn't say a word to her.

And then I kind of stalked her around the law school for 2 or 3 weeks, and I'd get up, and I'd say, "No, this is nothing but trouble," and I would walk off. [Laughter] So one night I was in the Yale Law School library. Now, any of you who have ever seen it, it's a big sort of long, gothic room. It's a skinny, long room. I'm at one end; Hillary is at the other. And there was a guy—I still remember this guy's name; his name was Jeff Glekel—trying to talk me into joining the law journal.

And I said—and it was one of these affirmative action things; he wanted a token guy with an accent. [Laughter] And so he wanted some redneck on the law journal at Yale. You know, it seemed like it would be a good thing. And I kept telling him I didn't want to be on the law journal because I was going home to Arkansas to live and what the hell did I need to be on the law journal. [Laughter] And all the time I'm staring at Hillary who is at the other end of the room, with a book.

So in the middle of this guy's passionate entreaty for me to join the law journal, Hillary slams down the book, and she walks across the library, and she looks at me and says, "Look, you have been staring at me for weeks, and I've been staring back. So at least we ought to know each other's name. I'm Hillary Rodham. What's your name?" I couldn't remember my name. [Laughter]

Now, question number one, this woman has initiative—good in a Senator.

The second thing I want to tell you is this: In 1973, after we had gone together for 2 years and we were very much in love, I was very ambivalent about Hillary coming home to Arkansas. She actually moved to Massachusetts for a while to work for the Children's Defense Fund. And I wanted her to go to New York or go home to Chicago because I thought she had such enormous potential for public service. I didn't want her to, of course; I wanted her to go with me. But I was so afraid I was, in effect, taking away from her life and from this country the most gifted person I had ever known up to that time.

Well, over 25 years later, I still haven't met anybody I thought was as gifted. And in 1993, when we moved to the White House, I said, "I want you to decide where you want to go and what you want to do when we get out of here. For 20 years we've gone where I wanted to go and done what I wanted to do, and I'll give you the next 20 years. And if I'm still alive after that, we'll fight over the rest." [Laughter]

And so all she is really doing today is what I thought for the benefit of the country and for the development of her own potential for service maybe she should have been able to do in 1973. I'm very glad she didn't do it then, and very glad she is doing it today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10:10 p.m. at a private residence. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

August 23, 1999

Protecting the health of America's families is not and should never be a partisan issue. Demonstrating this fact, the American Medical Association, the largest organization of physicians in the Nation, has just endorsed the bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights sponsored by Congressman Norwood and Congressman Dingell.

The AMA's action sends a strong message to Congress that it is time to put politics aside and pass a Patients' Bill of Rights that provides meaningful protections for all Americans in all health plans and holds plans accountable when their actions cause harm to patients. With over 20 House Republicans cosponsoring the Norwood-Dingell bill, it is clear that a bipartisan

majority in the House of Representatives is ready to vote for a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

The bipartisan Norwood-Dingell coalition has placed the needs of patients over the desires of special interests. It is long past time for the entire Congress to follow suit. I reiterate my call to Speaker Hastert to schedule a vote on this important legislation immediately upon return from the congressional recess in September.

NOTE: A portion of the President's statement was also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Remarks at Martha's Vineyard Hospital in Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts

August 23, 1999

Thank you very much, Dr. Sullivan and Mike. I feel like I was in pretty distinguished company tonight with them up here. I admire them both very much. Lou Sullivan was an outstanding Secretary of Health and Human Services, a great advocate in our Nation's struggle against AIDS, and one thing I particularly appreciated, one of the early strong voices in our efforts to protect our children from the dangers of teen smoking. And I thank you for all you did there and for what you're doing here.

I have always admired Mike Wallace. I like him more when he's boring in on someone besides me. *[Laughter]* But I want to tell you that he made a profoundly moving presentation recently at Tipper Gore's National Conference

on Mental Health, which we helped to put together and which is something Hillary and I care a lot about. And I think we are moving to the point in our country where we see mental health problems like other health problems. And when that day arrives, it will be in no small measure because Mike Wallace had the courage to speak out about it. And I thank him for that as well.

Now, I want to say again, although Mike already alluded to it, I'm sorry Hillary is not here, but she is a little under the weather. And I want her to get well because she has a rigorous schedule ahead of her. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank Congressman Delahunt for being here, and the other elected officials, and

all the members of the hospital board and the people here at Farm Neck who have been so kind to me over the years.

I would like to say a few things in a very straightforward way about this issue before you tonight. I spent a lot of my life trying to keep hospitals open that serve small populations. And this hospital is an interesting situation because, as Dr. Sullivan said, there are 14,000 year-round residents here and then up to 10 times that many here on any given day in the summertime. So, for most of the year, it's a small rural hospital in a county in Massachusetts that doesn't have a particularly high per capita income, where, according to the information I've been given, 20 percent of the people have no health insurance. And then there's the summer and all the rest of us who are reasonably blessed in life, or we wouldn't be able to afford to come to Martha's Vineyard in the summertime. [Laughter] And we all want it to stay open and to do well.

And most of us, when we come here, come here because we don't want to think about anything except maybe walking on the beach or taking a sail or fighting our limitations out on this golf course, or whatever. [Laughter] We don't want to think about anything else—unless, like Mike, we get kidney stones or something else happens to us. But the people who run the hospital and the people who work at the hospital, they have to deal with the economics of modern health care, with the dilemma of the population base, and with the fact that—you know, they're there all the time. They deliver babies; they perform emergency surgery; they take care of the elderly people year round. They do things that need doing.

And there's not a person under this tent tonight that might not need this hospital sometime. Now, the plain fact is that, given the economics of modern medical care, I know there's—I don't want to get into all the things that have been in the paper about this; I'm not sure George Soros, Bob Rubin, and Alan Greenspan together could make this thing pay every month, every year, unless people like you are willing to help keep it open.

Now, of course, everything should be run as well as possible. But I'm telling you, I've been dealing with this for 20 years now, and I've kept some hospitals open when I was a Governor of a rural State, and I've seen some close.

I've won some, and I've lost some. And let me just give you a couple of things to think about.

First of all, this hospital serves a county here on Martha's Vineyard that has 20 percent uninsured. I'll bet you anything, and I know that there is a health access coalition working on this, but I'll bet you anything that there are children on this island who are eligible for the CHIP program—the Children's Health Insurance Program—that was one of the signal accomplishments of the bipartisan Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which provided funds for up to 5 million of the 10 million uninsured children in this country to have health insurance, which means payments to the hospital when they go there. And so far, even though the enrollments have really picked up, this is the first full year when all the States have had their programs in place. Only about one and a half million of those children have been enrolled, a little over one and a half million. And I'll bet anything some of them who haven't are here.

The second thing I'd like to say is, I bet a lot of the working families here, who work for very modest wages, especially in the off-season, or the farmers who have very limited incomes, their children, and maybe even the adults who are working, could be eligible for Medicaid, depending on what the Massachusetts rules are.

The third thing I would like to suggest is that—in Tennessee, the legislature provided an opportunity for working people who had no health insurance to actually buy into the Medicaid program. I'm embarrassed to tell you I don't know what options exist in Massachusetts for that, but we gave them permission to do it in Tennessee because they devised a way to show that they could do it on the allocation of Federal money they had, and we could do it here as well if it's not being done.

So we need to look to see what kinds of other ways we can infuse cash into the situation. But, as Mike said when we started, one of the things we need to remember is that we all need health care. And when you show up at the hospital, they don't ask for your party registration. That's why we're trying so hard to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights down in Washington. Everybody from the AMA to the nurses groups to virtually every health provider in the country is for it, because we recognize this is something that ought to unite us as a people.

Now, it is a challenge when you have small populations and you want high quality care and you want it there 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year, whether there are 100,000 or 14,000 people here. But I'd like to say there are a lot of people who aren't here tonight on this island who make all of our lives better. There are a lot of wonderful people who live here and work here year round, and who would never be able, themselves, to afford the kind of vacations that all of us take every year and take for granted. And they deserve good health care, too.

So I am very, very grateful to you. If there is anything else I can do, Dr. Sullivan, and anybody else here on the board, to try to explore what else we can do to enroll more people in covered programs that we maybe affect the income stream here, I'd be happy to do it. I will do what I can to help. I'm proud of you for being here. But what I'd like to say to you is, I think you ought to be prepared to come next year, too. *[Laughter]*

You know, folks, I've raised a lot of money in my life, and I'm not running for anything.

[Laughter] So I can spend the rest of my life raising money for causes like this, which I like very well. But I say that because—based on 20 years of hard work.

Again, I hope the island and the community and all of you can unite behind this hospital. But I know—and I will do everything I can to help explore what else can be done here. But you need to make a long-term commitment, if this community wants this hospital, that it is something worth paying for, because you never know when you'll need it, and you certainly know that good people need it and access it every single day.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. at the Farm Neck Golf Club. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Health and Human Services Louis W. Sullivan, member, Martha's Vineyard Hospital Board of Trustees; journalist Mike Wallace; philanthropist George Soros; and former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin. The President also referred to AMA, the American Medical Association.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

August 24, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs

August 24, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 585(c) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, as contained in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 1999 (Public Law 105-277) (the "Act"), I hereby transmit a report concerning Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programs.

The report is comprised of three sections that provide the information required by section 585(c) of the Act, to the extent that such information is available: assessment of Iraq's nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction programs and its efforts to move toward procurement of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver weap-

ons of mass destruction; assessment of the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) action team reports, and other IAEA efforts to monitor the extent and nature of Iraq's nuclear program; and an opinion on the value of maintaining the ongoing inspection regime rather than replacing it with a passive monitoring system.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 25.

Statement on Counterdrug Operations at Miami International Airport

August 25, 1999

I want to congratulate law enforcement officials for the successful counterdrug operations that resulted today in numerous indictments for violations of our Federal drug laws. This joint initiative required the hard work of the DEA, U.S. Customs Service, ATF, and local law enforcement agencies. It is a product of our shared determination to shield American borders from the drug threat. The efforts of this team show

that by working together, we can reduce the flow of drugs into our Nation and fight drug-related crime and violence. From the recent decline in youth drug use, to the law enforcement success of today's investigations, our balanced and comprehensive national antidrug strategy is producing real results for the American people.

The President's Radio Address

August 28, 1999

Good morning. This week students all over the country are getting ready for the first day of school. Like every year, parents will send their children off to school with new backpacks and fresh hopes that they'll get the world-class education they need and deserve. Today I want to talk about our continuing efforts to strengthen and renew our Nation's public schools by en-

couraging more choice, competition, and creativity.

For more than 6½ years now, Secretary Riley and I and our whole administration have worked hard to raise standards, raise expectations, and raise accountability in every public school in America. I have advanced a comprehensive plan to strengthen and renew our Nation's schools and education agenda for the 21st century—

from reducing class size to improving teacher quality, from modernizing and rebuilding thousands of schools to finishing the job of connecting every library and classroom to the Internet, from putting an end to social promotion to expanding after-school and summer school programs.

We've also worked hard to promote the creativity, competition, and accountability that can turn around failing schools and make our good schools even better. That's the big reason I've encouraged States to pass charter school laws and urge communities all across our country to give charter schools a chance.

Charter schools are innovative public schools started by educators, parents, and communities, open to students of every background or ability. But they're freer of redtape and top-down management than most of our schools are, and in return for greater flexibility, charter schools must set and meet the highest standards, and stay open only as long as they do.

Also, charter schools don't divert taxpayer dollars from our public school system; instead, they use those dollars to promote excellence and competition within the system. And in so doing, they spur all our public schools to improve.

I am proud of the progress we've made so far. When I was first elected President, there was only one charter school in the entire country. This year there will be more than 1,700 of them. We're well on our way to meeting my goal of establishing 3,000 charter schools nationwide in the first year of the new century.

For an increasing number of families, charter schools are the right choice. In fact, there are now waiting lists at 7 out of 10 existing charter schools, as more parents realize that more innovation and creativity can produce good results for their children.

Let me give you just one example. When Bowling Green Elementary School in Sacramento ranked third from the bottom in its

district, parents and teachers decided they had to do something to take control and turn the situation around. So they set up a charter school there. Since becoming a charter school, Bowling Green has seen student performance soar, with greater gains in test scores than any other school in the school district.

The charter school movement is a real grass-roots revolution in education. We must do everything we can to support it. Today I am pleased to announce nearly \$100 million in funding for charter schools all around America. These funds will help teachers and parents open new charter schools in 32 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

They will help existing charter schools hire more well-trained teachers; buy more books, computers, and educational software; and ensure that classrooms are safe and accessible for all students. Finally, these funds will help charter schools develop accountability systems to measure whether they are meeting or exceeding State standards.

Charter schools are living proof of what parents and teachers can do to reinvigorate public education. Investing in them means investing in accountability and excellence and a much better future for our children.

But just as our children are returning to class, the Republican leadership's risky tax cut plan would undermine these investments by forcing deep and irresponsible cuts in education and other important national priorities. So, as Congress comes back to Washington, let's remind them what the creators and the students of America's charter schools already know: We're all accountable for our children's future, and an investment in it is our best investment in all our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Edgartown School in Martha's Vineyard, MA.

Remarks at a Victory 2000 Dinner in East Hampton, New York August 28, 1999

Thank you. Let me thank all of you for the wonderful welcome you have given to Hillary and to me, and to the cause that we come

here to advance tonight for the Democratic

Committee and for the Senate Campaign Committee and for our prospective candidate from New York over here. *[Laughter]*

This is a very special night for me for many reasons. Most of you—and perhaps some of you know this, but Liz Robbins has been a friend of Hillary's and mine for about 20 years now. And she and Doug have brought a lot of light into our lives, and I want to thank them for opening their home to us. You know, this is kind of a—if you've ever hosted one of these deals—*[laughter]*—you know, the nice wears off after about 10 minutes, and you start thinking about it. And you think, "If it's a bust, I'll be humiliated; and if it's successful, they'll destroy all the hedges." *[Laughter]* So I think we ought to give them a hand and thank them for doing this. *[Applause]*

I also want to thank all the people who—starting with the folks—the singer—and the Turtle Crossing restaurant for donating the food, and all the people who served us here tonight. Thank you all very much for what you've done. I appreciate it very much.

We have mentioned our New York State chair, Judith Hope, and Governor Romer and Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz and Andy Tobias, all the people from the DNC, I thank them.

I'm very grateful to the Members of Congress who are here—to Senator Torricelli and Senator Lautenberg and Congressman Forbes; and Congresswoman McCarthy, who had to leave. I'd also like to acknowledge a presence that you won't be hard to find in the former Congressman, Tom McMillan from Maryland, and the former Chairman of the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Thank you, Tom, for being here. And Mark Green, the New York City comptroller, thank you very much, Mark, for being here—the consumer advocate.

And I love Phoebe Snow. And she has been so good to me, and so good to the Democratic Party, and she has sung a lot of different songs. Those of you who know a lot about American gospel and music may know that "His Eye is on the Sparrow" was perhaps Martin Luther King's favorite hymn.

But if you think about it, it's a pretty good reason for being a Democrat, because our eye is on the sparrow, and all the other people around, and we figure—most of us who can afford to be under this tent tonight—that if they do well, God has given us enough gifts that

we're going to do just fine. If ordinary folks do well and the conditions of the country are good, then those of us who have the resources and have been gifted with certain talents and certain training, we're going to do very well. And so the hymn was a good setting for our meeting here tonight.

I will be very brief. I want to make a case for our party in the coming election. I think that the First Lady made a pretty good case for herself—*[laughter]*—but I'd like to say a word or two about that. And I want to talk about you and what you're going to do between now and November of 2000. And I'll do it quickly.

When I was elected in 1992, the people of New York and the people of the United States took a chance on me and Al Gore, because they were worried about the direction of the economy and the direction of the society and the fact that we were becoming more divided when we should become more united. And we made an argument and said we would challenge the country to change. And the country took a chance.

And when we moved to Washington, we challenged the Democrats to take the lead in restoring fiscal responsibility. I didn't think you could ever be the progressive party in the country if the wheels were running off the economy. And we quadrupled the debt in 10 years, 12 years. And interest rates were too high. And so we challenged our Democratic Party.

We challenged the Democratic Party to take the lead in ending a welfare system that was dysfunctional. We challenged the Democratic Party to put a human face on the global environment, but not to walk away from global trade. And we asked the Republicans to discard their hatred of government, and their blind faith that the only thing that would ever matter was having more tax cuts. And we asked them to abandon wedge politics.

I think it is very interesting—when the history of this era is written and people write the history of New York politics, it will be very interesting that New York gave us two party switches based on principle: Carolyn McCarthy switched from the Republican to the Democratic Party and ran for Congress—and ran for Congress when she paid the highest price a human being could pay, and she realized she had to do more to ask her country to be a community and to adopt responsible, commonsense legislation to

protect people from the kind of madness that she and her family suffered. And Michael Forbes, under even more difficult political circumstances, changed parties because he couldn't believe that the majority party in Congress, in the face of the American Medical Association and 200 consumer groups, would continue to walk away from a Patients' Bill of Rights, and walk away from its responsibility to educate all of our children for the 21st century. I thank them both, and I think they represent the future of America.

Now, the reason I say that is, you took us on faith. And then in 1996 New York was very good to Bill Clinton and Al Gore again, because you had a little more evidence. *[Laughter]* Now it's not even open to doubt. It's our record against their arguments. And we now have over 19 million new jobs and the highest homeownership in history and the fastest business growth in history and the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded and the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years.

And even when they have fought us along the way, we've continued to stand up for peace and freedom and justice all around the world. And the politics of inclusion works. America has not been hurt or weakened because we've asked for every law-abiding American, without regard to their race or their gender or their sexual orientation, to be treated like decent human beings in this country, to end hate crimes, to end abuse, to end bigotry. This is a stronger country because of it.

So there is no argument anymore. That's the first thing I want to say. If people ask you why you showed up here tonight, say, "Well, I took a chance in '92, but there's no argument anymore—it works. Why weren't you there? That's why I was." If anybody asks you why you were here, you ask them why weren't they here? Because there is no argument about that.

The second thing I would like to say is, all elections are about tomorrow, and they should be. I remember one time when I was trying to run for a fifth term as Governor. I went out to the State Fair in Arkansas, and this old boy in overalls came to me, and he said, "Bill, are you going to run again?" *[Laughter]* I said, "I don't know, but if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I guess so. I always have." *[Laughter]* And I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me after all these years?" He said, "No, I'm

not, but everybody else I know is." *[Laughter]* And I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Sure, but that's what we hired you to do." He said, "You drew a check every 2 weeks, didn't you?" Interesting point. All elections are about tomorrow, and they should be.

Now, we have a record. You don't have to guess about us. But every one of us, starting with Vice President Gore, all the other Democrats as far as I know running for any office—certainly including Hillary—are dealing with what I think are the most important big questions of the future. And I'll tell you what I think they are—and I'm not running for anything—but I don't want to see all this work we've done derailed. And I don't want to see all the progress my country has made sacrificed. And believe me, there is still a war going out there for the conscience, the soul, and the future of this country.

You know, the country is working now. So what are we going to do with this prosperity? I think we have an obligation as Americans, those of us who are of age, to think about the children who are here and the long-term challenges facing America. We have never had a chance like this in my lifetime. And we've still got some big, long-term challenges. I'll just mention three or four: the aging of America—twice as many people over 65 in 30 years; under present circumstances, Medicare goes broke in 15 years, Social Security in 34 years—the children of America—over 53 million children in our schools this year, the most diverse student population ever, the highest percentage whose first language is not English. It is a godsend of opportunity in a global economy if we give them all a good education. Keeping the economy going, and that means two things, one of which Hillary already mentioned—bringing opportunity to people and places that haven't had it yet.

Do you know that upstate New York, if it were a separate State, would rank in the bottom five in this country in job growth in the last 6 years? And I'm not proud of that; I've worked hard to drive unemployment down everywhere. But there are small towns in New York; there are inner-city neighborhoods in every big urban area in the country; there are Indian reservations; there's the Mississippi Delta; there are places that have not felt this prosperity. If we

get investment there and growth there, we will have more growth without inflation.

The other thing we have to do is to keep paying this debt down instead of driving interest rates up with that tax cut that they have proposed. You know, people say, "Oh, they never have any big ideas." Here's a big idea: We can be out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835, and our grandchildren will have lower interest rates and more prosperity and a more harmonious society as a result of it. That is a big idea, and it is worth hanging on to.

So I say this to you because, yes, we have done a good job the last 6½ years and, no, you don't have to guess anymore. But we need to focus on the future. So when you leave here, and they ask you why you came, tell them, "I took a chance on those rascals, and it worked out just fine." [Laughter] Tell them that they don't have to guess anymore. And tell them you care about your children's and your grandchildren's future.

The last thing I want to tell you is, when I met Hillary in 1971, we started a conversation about this stuff that was going on at 1:30 last night, 28 years later. [Laughter] And we were walking yesterday; we took a walk, and I said, "You know, I hope you're not tired of this after all these years." She said, "No, I still—it's very interesting to me." She said, "You may be a lot of things, but you're not boring, which I appreciate." [Laughter]

So, I want to tell you something. Here's what I want to tell you: I have known thousands

of people in public life, literally. I probably know more people in public life than anybody else here. I have known—I've served with over 150 Governors. I have known lots of Senators. I've known lots of House Members. I've known State representatives and mayors. I still believe it is a noble calling, being in public service. And you should not even judge all Republicans—I'll say this for Michael Forbes' benefit—by the tone set by the leadership of their party in the Congress. Most people I've known in public life were honest, hardworking people who got up every day and did what they thought was right, to the best of their abilities.

But there is a genuine big debate. If you want somebody that's thought about this stuff and worked hard and always tried to do it for other people for 30 years, who has more heart, more intelligence, more ability, and more commitment than any person I have every known, of all the thousands I have known, then you ought to send her to the Senate and give her a chance to serve.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:45 p.m. in a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Liz Robbins and Doug Johnson; singer Phoebe Snow; and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general cochair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and Andy Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Committee.

Remarks at a Saxophone Club Reception in East Hampton August 28, 1999

Thank you. First of all, I would like to thank Wyclef and the band; they were magnificent. Weren't they unbelievable? Let's give them another hand. [Applause]

You were up there doing your thing, and I was sitting here thinking about what I was going to say. And I couldn't concentrate for wishing I was 25 and out there again. [Laughter] You were terrific! Thank you so much.

I want to thank all the leaders of the Democratic Party who are here. I want to thank Judith

Hope. You know, people always say, "Well, you know, Hillary, is she going to run, is she not going to run?" Well, she spent all these years in Arkansas. Judith Hope was 20 years old before she ever left Arkansas; we're just following her lead. [Laughter]

I want to say, also, how very grateful I am to all the Members of Congress—Senator Lautenberg, Senator Torricelli, Congresswoman McCarthy, and Congressman Forbes—for being here. I think it says a lot about Long Island

and the State of New York that the two most prominent people to switch from the Republican to the Democratic Party in the last couple of years are Carolyn McCarthy and Michael Forbes from Long Island.

One switched—you know, we're having a good time tonight, so nobody wants to talk too much about issues, but Michael Forbes switched because the Republicans are killing the Patients' Bill of Rights, and patients are getting the shaft out there in the health care system all across America; and because they have a budget and tax plan which will cut education spending when we should be investing more in the education of our children.

And Carolyn McCarthy quit because after her intense personal agony, she just got sick and tired of their leadership killing commonsense things like closing the loophole that stops us from doing background checks when criminals buy guns at gun shows and flea markets, and it's wrong.

And I say that to make this point. I am so profoundly grateful to the people of New York for being so good to me and Hillary and to Al and Tipper Gore and two Presidential elections and one magnificent convention and one very bracing primary in 1992. The people of New York have been good to me and have made it possible for us to do what we have worked hard to do in the last 6½ years.

And I want you to think about just a couple of things, especially the younger people here. I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] Kind of hate it, actually. I wish I still could, but I can't. [Laughter] But I have worked all my life to try to bring people together and move people forward and bring out the best in people. And when New York took a chance on me and Al Gore in 1992, that's exactly what it was. We said, "Vote for us. We'll take the country in a different direction. We'll ask the Democrats to be for fiscal responsibility and bringing the crime rate down and changing the welfare culture and having a humane trade policy. And we'll ask the Republicans to stop badmouthing the Government and dividing people by race and gender and sexual orientation and other things. And we'll try to bring this country together and move it forward."

But you couldn't know. You took a chance. And we've been down there working for 6½ years now. And the first point I want to make is, you're not taking a chance anymore. You

know we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest minority unemployment in history, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years. This country is moving in the right direction. You took a chance, and you were right. And the Democratic Party has moved this country forward.

The second thing I want to say is—even more important—is that we just made the country work again. But there are huge questions facing the 21st century. The number of people over 65 will double in 30 years. We already have the largest number of children in school in history—for the first time, a group bigger than the baby boomers, and they are far, far more diverse; many more of their first languages are not English. And that is a godsend in this great, rich, textured global economy.

But it means we have no business, at this point of maximum prosperity and confidence, walking away from the big challenges. How are we going to save Medicare and Social Security so that the children of the baby boomers don't have to support their parents, and can support their kids instead? How are we going to give every child in this country a world-class education? How are we going to bring the economic opportunity that so many of you have enjoyed to all the little towns in upstate New York and all the neighborhoods in the inner cities and the Mississippi Delta and the Indian reservations, to people who haven't had it?

And before we go back to the failed economic policies of the past and pass a tax cut that will force us to cut education and cut the environment and cut our investment in the future and put us right back in the hole we were in and raise your interest rates and take your tax cut away from you, let's get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835 and give the children here a generation of economic prosperity.

Now, these are big issues. But it's not like 1992. We're not asking you to take us on faith anymore. We're asking you to go with what you know works, in your mind and in your heart.

And the last point I want to make is this. If I could wave a magic wand and get America just to do one thing—just one—it wouldn't even be all the things I just said. I would have the American people lay down their hatreds and their division, their anger and their pettiness, their legitimate grievances and their phoned-

up gripes. I would have this country no longer divided by race, by religion, by sexual orientation, by politics, by region.

You know, most of the people I've known in public service over 25 years, now, have been honest, decent, hardworking people who tried to do what they thought was right. And this is crazy, what the leadership of the Congress has tried to do in Washington these last few years—trying to keep the country in a turmoil all the time, all torn up and upset, telling everybody how terrible their enemies are, trying to make sure you could divide the population up, first one way and then another, and then being in the grip of these interest groups that are keeping us from becoming one community, by doing things we know we ought to do in education, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, on sensible gun control measures. This is wrong.

You think of all the time I have spent trying to make peace in the Middle East, end tribal wars in Africa, stop the slaughter in Bosnia and Kosovo, bring peace to Northern Ireland—all these things. What is at the root of all this? People believing that the only way they can get and keep power is to turn people against one another, to harden their hearts.

And I'm telling you, the Democratic Party stands for opportunity, for facing the big challenges of the future, and for one American community where we are united by our common humanity.

So I am grateful for all those who have joined our cause, because they share our values and our ideas, and they know the record is incontestable. Congressman Forbes took a big chance doing what he did. I wish he had done it a year or 2 earlier. *[Laughter]* But I was raised

a Southern Baptist; we believe in deathbed conversions, and he is a long way from the deathbed. So you all give him another hand for doing the right thing. *[Applause]* Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy has changed this country for the better and immeasurably enriched our party in the Congress because of what she did.

And I will say, as I've said many times, of all the hundreds, indeed, all the thousands of the people I have known, the woman I have shared the last—well, since we met—27 years with is the most passionate, the most committed, the most able, the most consistent public citizen I have ever known, and New York would do well to send her to the United States Senate.

So I thank you. I'm not running for anything. *[Laughter]* I'm going to work hard for you for another year and a half. I am grateful that this country is in the shape it's in. I am proud of the friendship and partnership I've shared with Al Gore, the friendship and partnerships I've shared with the Members of Congress. But most important, I am humble and grateful for the kind of support that the people of New York have given. And all I ask you in return is to keep on going in this direction. You were right when you took a chance on us in 1992. You were right when you ratified what we were doing in 1996. You were right to send Chuck Schumer to the Senate in 1998. Just stay on; keep leading America into a new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 p.m. in a hangar at the Executive Terminal at East Hampton Airport. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Wyclef Jean; and New York State Democratic Party Chair Judith Hope.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Bridgehampton, New York

August 29, 1999

Well, thank you very much. *[Laughter]* I must say, I thought Hillary was going to say, "If you think it's windy now, wait until Bill gets up to talk." *[Laughter]* I feel badly about this wind. It came up about the time I was explaining the finer points of voodoo around our table—*[laughter]*—and the conviction that Haitians and

others have that the spirits of light and darkness are more or less in equal balance, and they manifest themselves in all kinds of physical ways. And all of a sudden the lights started moving and—*[laughter]*—so we'll just have to hope the good guys win tonight.

Let me just say first to Craig and Jane, I'm very, very grateful to be in their home here. I've also been in their home in New York City. Thank you, Brian; thank you, Robert. They're quite wonderful people. Among other things, when I came to see them in New York they provided me, since I had a little down time, with a tenor saxophone, and so I played a tune for them. So I got here tonight, and the horn was here again. But I didn't put them through it again. [Laughter] But it was very touching, and I thank you for that.

I also want to thank all of those who are here. Jon, thank you and Richie for entertaining. Jon Bon Jovi has been very good to me. He has played for me a number of times over these last 6½ years, and I thought they were terrific tonight, and I thank them for being here. I want to thank the people who prepared the wonderful dinner and all those who served it and all the volunteers who have been part of this tonight. And I would like to just make a couple of brief points.

Somebody will ask you tomorrow why you came here tonight. And I wonder what you will say: "I wanted to see their house; it looked kind of interesting." [Laughter] "I wanted to hear the music. I hear the food was going to be great. The restaurant was closed tonight."

I'd just like to offer a few things that I hope you'll think about. First of all, New York has been very, very good to me and to Hillary, to Al and Tipper Gore, to our whole administration. We had a wonderful convention here in '92. I had a very interesting, eventful primary here in '92, but it came out okay. And then the State voted for us big in '92 and then, breathtakingly in '96, and I'm very grateful.

But in 1992 I asked the country and I asked the people of this State to take a chance on me, on my family, my Vice President, my administration, and on a whole new direction for the country. I saw a survey the other day which said that things had been going so well in our country for so many years now, nobody could—people have no memory of what it was like in '91 and '92. They've forgotten entirely.

But the economy was in the tank, and the country was divided, and the social problems were worsening. And we had a lot of challenges around the world that weren't being addressed. And, you know, I lived a long way from Washington, DC, but it seemed to me that we were working on the wrong things and not working

on the right things. And I asked the American people to give me a chance to create a country in which there was opportunity for all who were responsible, in which we could build a community of all Americans, in which we could be a force for peace and freedom and justice around the world. And so you took a chance.

The first thing I hope you'll say—and one of you said this to me tonight—when you go home and they ask you why you came, is that it was a good chance to take and it worked out all right; that we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history and the lowest crime rate in 26 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years and the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded and the highest homeownership in history; that our country has been a force for peace and freedom, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans; that we have tried to include all Americans in our future.

The second thing I hope you'll say—because, as Joe Andrew said earlier, politics is always about tomorrow—is that you think we're right about the things we're talking about for today and tomorrow. You know, I'm not running for anything anymore. Joe Andrew used to have a great line in his speeches: "Bill Clinton doesn't have to be here; he's not running for anything anymore." That's where Hillary started running for something. Now I do have to be here—[laughter]—in a different role.

But I believe this anyway, and I want you to think about this. Once in a lifetime—once in a lifetime—if you get real lucky, maybe twice—a country, like a person, has a moment that is either seized or squandered. You may have a lot of wonderful moments, but some will be greater than others. Mr. DeNiro has made a lot of great movies, but some were greater than others. Steven Spielberg and Kate and I, we were talking with Hillary and Chelsea on the way over about the greatest moments of his movie career. Countries are like that, just like in your personal life.

A time like this comes along once in a lifetime, where we went from having—we quadrupled our debt in 12 years, and now we've got the biggest surplus we ever had. And we project for 15 years or more we'll have it. Oh, there will be ups and downs in the economy but, on average, it will be there. Now, what are we going to do with it?

Our friends in the other party, they say that all that's not attributable to Social Security taxes; we ought to give it back to you in a tax cut. And that's very popular, especially in this crowd. Some of you will say you ought to have your head examined, because every one of you should be over there with them tonight.

We say we ought to face the challenges facing our children. And I'll just give you three real quick. The aging of America: there will be twice as many people over 65 in 2030 as there are now. I hope to be one of them, so do most of you. If we don't save Social Security and Medicare and do it in a way so that the children of the baby boomers don't have to support them so they'll be free to support their children, we're going to have an enormous amount of heartache and difficulty in this country. But if we do it, you'll have people living longer and better than ever before. The children of the baby boomers will be free to pursue their own destiny, and they'll be free to raise their grandchildren in the best possible way.

The second thing we ought to do is face the fact that we've got more kids in this country in school than ever before, over 53 million of them. More of them come from families whose first language is not English than ever before. But it's a godsend in a global society if we can give every single one of them a world-class education.

The third thing we ought to do is figure out how we can keep this economy going and how we can bring it to people who haven't felt it yet. Because I can tell you, in spite of all the prosperity the last 6½ years, there are inner-city communities, there's the Mississippi Delta, there are places in Appalachia, there are all these Indian reservations in America, there are small towns in upstate New York—which, if it were a separate State, would rank 49th in job creation in the last 5 years—where the sunshine of all this prosperity has not reached. We all hope there won't be other interest rate increases. We say, "Gosh, let's keep interest rates down and keep growth going." You want to expand the economy with no inflation, invest in the places that haven't had any growth. These are big deals.

Now, my view is we ought to take most of this surplus in the next 15 years and reform and save Medicare, run Social Security's life out to about 2053—that ought to take care of all the baby boomers; I'm the oldest of the baby

boomers. I don't think I'll be alive in 2053; I'd like it awfully well if I was. But most of us will be gone by then, and we'll return to some more normal population distribution. And meanwhile, our children will not have to worry about taking care of us in our dotage, and our grandchildren will have a better future.

We ought to invest in education, in the things we know that work, and recognize that the poorest children in this country need the richest education if we're going to have the kind of future we want.

We ought to pay this country's debt down. You know, we could get out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835. And we'd have low interest rates for a generation, and people like us would do just fine if we did that.

Now, we also ought to do things that bring our community together. Congressman Forbes changed parties because he got sick and tired of the leadership of his party turning a deaf ear when he said we're going to have more and more people in managed care, and we may have to do it. It may not be a bad thing. But you've got all these hospitals going broke. You've got doctors wanting to quit or join unions. And you've got people who are tearing their hair out. We've got to have a Patients' Bill of Rights so that we have quality care as well as properly managed care. Because he thought we ought to be investing in education, not cutting it.

Carolyn McCarthy, another Congresswoman from Long Island, was a Republican, became a member of our party because she lost her husband, had her son subject to grievous injury—because this is the only big country in the world that has no sensible restrictions on firearms, until we passed the Brady bill, which was vetoed in the previous administration, which kept 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds from getting guns and saved God knows how many people. But we still have serious problems in the law. That's important to me.

I supported an increase in the minimum wage, because I don't think anybody that works for a living and has kids at home ought to be in poverty. And I believe those people should get big tax increases—tax cuts, I mean—people who have modest wages and have children at home. They got the biggest tax cuts, percentage-wise, of anybody in this administration in the last 7½ years, because I don't think anybody who works full-time and has a child

at home should be in poverty. And I don't think you do, either.

Now, these are major issues. What kind of a community are we? Look, can you believe this? With all the good fortune we've had and just a couple of weeks ago, some guy listens to some racist kook and goes out and murders an African-American former basketball coach, shoots Asian students in the street. This guy the other day in Illinois and Indiana, going on that shooting spree. Then we had another shooting, of the children at the Jewish child center in Los Angeles. And the same guy murdered a Filipino-American because he was Filipino and because he worked for the United States Government and the Post Office. We had that young Matthew Shepard being killed in Wyoming. The Democratic Party wants to pass hate crimes legislation. We want to pass employment non-discrimination legislation. We want to have people in our future without regard to their race, their sexual orientation, their politics, or anything else.

Now, why? Because we need all those people. Because we—if you believe in free markets and free societies, you have to believe that everyone should freely have the chance to live their dreams, and that there ought to be a framework which makes it possible for them to do it.

I want to close—before we get blown away—[laughter]—with one story. I went to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota the other day—some of you may have seen it—on this new markets tour, organized by a man, Gene Sperling, my National Economic Counselor, who also happens to be in the audience here.

Before I did that, I had the 19 tribal leaders from the northern high plains come to see me, from North and South Dakota and Montana. They are probably the poorest of all of our Indian tribes. And they had this meeting with the President—and I had five and six Cabinet members there. And they went through their little presentation, you know, and everybody said what they had to say about what their needs were.

And at the end, Harold Salway stood up, who is the president—they now call them presidents—of the Oglala Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse, in South Dakota. And he was standing there, and he said that the chiefs wanted to tell me that they supported what I had done in Kosovo, in saving the Kosovar Albanians.

And he started talking. He's not very tall, but he's very dignified, and you could have heard a pin drop. And he said, "Mr. President," he said, "my great-great-grandfather was massacred at Wounded Knee. We know something about ethnic cleansing. But," he said, "I had two uncles. One was on the beach at Normandy. The other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the history of the United States military." He said, "And now I am here in the White House meeting with the President. I have only one son, and he means more to me than anything in the world, but I would be proud to have him wear a uniform and go fight for the freedom of the people of Kosovo, to be free from being slaughtered because of their ethnic background or the way they worship God. This is America, and I'm proud of what we're doing here."

I hope tomorrow, if somebody asks you why you were here, you'll say, "Because we took a chance, and it worked out; because we've got the chance of a lifetime to do the right things for the future; and because more than anything else." Believe me, if I could leave office with one wish for America, it would be that somehow we would find a way to lay down all these idiotic ways of looking down on one another, and find some way to lift each other up.

And the last thing I want to say is this. I have been privileged in my life to work with thousands of people in public service. And notwithstanding the intense partisan rancor of the last few years, my experience is that what you have been subject to is atypical. Most of the people I have known in public life, Republicans and Democrats, were honest, hard-working, decent people who had honest differences of opinion, and got up every day and tried to make this country a better place.

But I'm telling you, of all the people I have ever known in public life, the ablest, the smartest, the most passionately dedicated, is the person who wants to be the next United States Senator from New York.

Thank you, and goodbye. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Craig Hatkoff, Jane Rosenthal, Brian Ward, and actor Robert DeNiro; musicians Jon Bon Jovi and Richie Sambora; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; movie producer/director Steven Spielberg and his wife,

actress Kate Capshaw; and Congresswoman McCarthy's son, Kevin.

Remarks at the State Comptroller's Luncheon in Skaneateles, New York August 30, 1999

Thank you very much. I've enjoyed the program. *[Laughter]* You know, it's pretty nice to go to a lunch like this when you're the only one that's not running for anything. Just have a good time. *[Laughter]*

I watched Mike do his thing and Carl do his thing. Joyce and I were over there hand-capping the whole deal. It was great. *[Laughter]* Watched Hillary do her thing. It was great.

But let me say to all of you, I want to begin with a series of genuine thank-you's. I thank the people of New York for being so good to me and Al Gore, in two elections and a lot of times in between. I thank you for being so welcoming and open with Hillary. I thank you for setting so many good examples.

I want to thank Mike Bragman for his leadership. And I want to thank Carl McCall for his leadership. You know, the comptroller's lunch—I read up on this lunch. *[Laughter]* And the first thing I read in my notes was, they're not going to give you any food. *[Laughter]*

But anyway, among other things I learned that this luncheon was started by Arthur Levitt, Sr., when he was comptroller of New York. His son is now, by my appointment, the head of the Securities and Exchange Commission and doing a very fine job.

I say that because Carl McCall is in that tradition of people who have been trusted to manage the collective wealth of the people of New York. That's what the comptroller does. And in a way, we're here at the State Fair, and it's sort of like being the State's chief farmer. You give him the seeds, and you trust him to plant them. You trust him to bring in the crop, and you trust him not to waste any of it.

And it's kind of like farming; you've got to be conservative, but you have to take a risk. If you don't take a risk, nothing ever sprouts; and if you're not basically conservative, it all burns up in the ground and is otherwise lost. And I think Carl McCall has husbanded the resources of the people of New York and taken

advantage of this great economy our country has enjoyed and used that to try to find ways, as Mike said, to help you educate your children and do a lot of other things that need to be done. And I respect that very, very much, and I thank him for letting us crash his lunch. *[Laughter]*

Now, it is true that Teddy Roosevelt and William Howard Taft might have beaten me here, but I'll guarantee you, I've been to a lot more fairs than both of them put together. *[Laughter]* I never met a fair I didn't like. *[Laughter]*

When I was a young man starting out in Arkansas, you had to go to all the county fairs. That's always the biggest crowd, and you'd go out in all these rural areas and go to the county fairs. I remember, I showed up at a county fair one time; I hadn't ridden a horse in years. I wanted to look like I was not taking these rural people for granted, so I wore a pinstriped suit, wingtip shoes. *[Laughter]* I had this young man, even younger than me, helping me. And he said, "I'm going to take you to the sheriff. If he's for you, we'll win the county. If he's against you, we'll lose, and we can go home." *[Laughter]* "You don't need to shake any hands; you don't need to do anything. If he's for you, we win; if he's against you"—*[laughter]*.

So he takes me to see the sheriff on the night the rodeo opens at the county fair. Sheriff's jaw is full of tobacco, holding a horse. He said, "Son, if you ride this horse into the ring when they open the rodeo, I'll be for you. If you don't, leave town right now." *[Laughter]* I said, "Give me the reins." I got on the horse in my wingtip shoes and my pinstriped suit. *[Laughter]* They played the music. You know how they open the rodeo; you know, all you've got to do is kind of get behind the horse in front of you, and they'll lope along together. Not my horse! We get out in the middle; it stops dead still, rears straight up—*[laughter]*. I'm holding on for dear life. I got out of there in one piece. I didn't fall off. The sheriff looked

at me and said, "You didn't fall off; that's worth another 5 percent." [Laughter] So I've had a lot of experience.

We used to have senior day at the State Fair, and I always had Governor's day, so I always did it on the day we had senior day. And what Hillary said is true; that lady had 14 children, and they had 40-something children, and they had nearly 100 children, those 40, already. So she had 150 in her family.

I also used to hold my own listening sessions at the State Fair on Governor's day. I'd just go into one of the exhibition halls and set up a little stand, like everybody else, and people would come by.

And I remember, in 1990 at the State Fair, I was thinking about running for a fifth term—this is what's great about the fair; I can't wait to get out there and see some of the exhibits—this old boy in overalls came up to me and said, "Are you going to run again?" [Laughter] I said, "Well, if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yes, I guess so, always have." I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me after all these years?" He said, "No, I'm not, but everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And so I said—you know, that's what fairs are for. So I said, "Well, don't you"—I was kind of hurt—I said, "Don't you think I've done a good job?" And he said, "Yes, you've done a good job, but you got a check every 2 weeks, didn't you?" [Laughter] He said, "That's what we hired you to do." Very important lesson for anyone contemplating running for any office. Remember that. That's what we hired you to do.

I say that because I want to close with just 2 minutes of serious talk. I am profoundly grateful for the good fortune and the good times our country has enjoyed. I'm profoundly grateful that we live at a moment in history where we don't have, as we did during the cold war, one big threat to our common existence.

But we're sort of like farmers sitting on a good crop. We had a great crop last year, and we got a lot of money in the bank. Now what are we going to do with it?

And when you're at the State Fair, you need to think like that. If America is a farm and we're the farm family and we've had years of great crops and we've got a lot of money in the bank, what are we going to do with it?

Well, I think that we ought to take the chance of a lifetime to face our big challenges. The next 30 years, the number of people over 65

is going to double. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] It'll change everything, everything. You'll have fewer people working, more people retired. The economics of retirement income from Social Security and Medicare and other things will dramatically change.

I think we've got to use all these good years we've had to try to secure Social Security and Medicare to meet the basic needs of our seniors and to get the seniors' children, the baby boomers' children, through the retirement of the baby boom years. Because we don't want—I can say this; I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—we don't want our children to have to take money they should be investing in our grandchildren to take care of us, because we didn't take care of the challenge of the aging of America. And so we've got to think about that.

We've got to think about the children of America. Hillary said that, and you clapped, and I appreciate it. But I just want to—we finally have a group of kids bigger than the baby boomers, over 53 million children in the schools of America. A higher percentage of them come from families whose first language is not English than ever before. Now, in a global society, this is a very good thing, if but only if, we give every one of them a world-class education and recognize that we need them all.

The Governor of California is a great friend of Hillary's and mine, Gray Davis. And he said, "You know"—he's about a year older than I am—he said, "You know, by the time we get retired, there'll only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. And I don't want my two workers to be D students today." [Laughter] That's pretty good. Interesting thing.

He says it to make the point that we all, whether we have children in the schools or not, whether we have one child or 10 or whatever, we all have a vested interest in the children of America. We have a real opportunity now. We know what works. We know what helps our schools to make sure all our kids can learn.

The third thing I'd like to say, I'd like to allude to something Hillary said. You know, even though we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history, the largest number of jobs ever created in this period of time, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever reported, new records in small business formation every year,

in spite of all that, the hard, cold truth is that this economic prosperity has been very uneven.

And you know it in central and upstate New York. These regions know it. There are parts of New York City that know it. In my home area, in the Mississippi Delta, they know it. In Appalachia, they know it. On the Indian reservations, they know it.

We've got the chance of a lifetime now, when we're all debating how we're going to keep this economy going without more inflation. How can we keep it going? I can tell you how we keep it going without more inflation: Bring jobs and investment to the areas that have not yet participated in the recovery. That gives you growth.

And one of the things—this is the only specific thing I'll mention—one of the things I have asked the Congress to do is to pass a law which would give the same tax incentives to investors to invest in areas with higher unemployment in America we give them to invest in developing areas in the Caribbean and Latin America and Africa and Asia and other places in the world. And I think we ought to do it.

I also believe another thing that will help every area is just to keep this thing going, because the more you keep it going, the more it will reach into more and more neighborhoods. And one of the reasons that I have been opposed to, in effect, giving away, today, the long-term benefits of the economic recovery, which is what I think an excessive tax cut would do, is: If you have a real big tax cut, you don't have money for education; you don't have money to extend the life of Social Security and Medicare. There will be an increase in interest rates, because people will think we're going to overstimulate the economy, and that way all of you who care about interest rates will lose your tax cut in higher interest rates.

And what I want to do is to have a tax cut that is modest and targeted, so that we save enough of this surplus, not only to save Social Security and Medicare and invest in education but also to get this country out of debt in 15 years, for the first time since 1835. That's before Teddy Roosevelt and Taft came to the fair. [Laughter] Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. That's how long it's been.

But again, think like a farmer. If you're a family farmer, chances are you've got an amount of money every year to bring the crop in or to replenish the herd of cattle or whatever it is you do. America is like that.

And if you want this economy to continue to grow, we have to keep interest rates as low as possible. I can't think of anything that would guarantee the children in this audience a generation of security more than essentially taking America's Government out of debt, taking America out of the competition for borrowing money, leaving the money there for you to borrow and our children to borrow, at the lowest possible interest rates, for business loans, for home loans, for car loans, for college loans, for you name it. I think this makes a lot of sense.

So I say to you, when you leave here today, I want you to think about that. I want you to think of Carl McCall as somebody who's been like a good farmer, who's taken good care of your resources. He hasn't squandered the seed. He can bring in a crop next year for you because he's done it. And I want you to think of the challenge and the opportunity, the phenomenal opportunity your country has right now.

I won't be around for a lot of these decisions which have to be made. But we can make them now. And if we stick with them, we literally can meet the challenge of the aging of America, the challenge of the children of America, the challenge to spread the economic bounty of America to communities that haven't had it. We can get this country out of debt, and we can continue to lead the world for peace and freedom and justice. We can do that. But we have to think like the people we're coming here to this fair to celebrate today.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. in the Empire Room of the Art and Home Center Building at the Syracuse State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to State Assembly Majority Leader Michael J. Bragman; and State Comptroller H. Carl McCall's wife, Joyce Brown.

Radio Remarks on Earthquake Relief for Turkey

August 28, 1999

The recent earthquake in Turkey is one of the worst natural disasters of the century. Tens of thousands of people are either confirmed dead or still missing.

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to the loved ones of those who have lost their lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by this tragedy.

Turkey is our longtime ally. The Turkish people are our friends. Today they urgently need assistance. Many are severely injured. Hundreds of thousands are camping outdoors. There is a serious risk of disease spreading. We must help the victims rebuild their lives.

Working with Turkey's Government and others, American military and civilian personnel, including teams from Fairfax County, Virginia, and Dade County, Florida, helped with the rescue efforts. Now we're helping provide shelter,

water, sanitation, and medical services. I'm grateful to all those participating.

Here at home, Americans are helping, too, including religious leaders of many faiths, who've united to call for prayer and humanitarian action. I encourage my fellow citizens to give generously to charitable organizations supporting the relief efforts. For information, you can call our toll-free number in the U.S., that's 1-800-USAID-RELIEF—1-800-USAID-RE-LIEF—or look on the Internet at www.whitehouse.gov.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10:45 a.m. at Edgartown Elementary School in Martha's Vineyard, MA, for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 31. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on Announcement of the Bosnia-Herzegovina National Day

September 1, 1999

Today the Joint Presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina announced that the national day of their country will henceforth be celebrated on November 21, the anniversary of the Dayton peace accords of 1995. In so doing, the leaders of every ethnic community in Bosnia-Herzegovina have made clear that Dayton

marked not merely the end of a war but the beginning of a new country and a blueprint for its future. I am pleased that the date November 21 will be honored as a symbol of multi-ethnic democracy and solidarity between the people of the United States and the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Statement on the Congo Conflict Cease-Fire Agreement

September 1, 1999

I welcome the signing of a cease-fire agreement by founding members of the Rally for Congolese Democracy (RCD) yesterday in Lusaka. Their signature brings into force the Lusaka accord, signed by six African heads of state on July 10th and aimed at ending the war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In a region that has seen terrible violence, there

is now a chance for a genuine and just peace. I urge all parties to implement and adhere to the agreement and to act in good faith to enable the citizens of the Congo and neighboring states to pursue their lives in peace, prosperity, and democracy.

I especially congratulate the leaders of the Southern African Development Community

(SADC), Rwanda, and Uganda for working together to secure RCD signature of the Lusaka accord. This agreement is the result of the vision, dedication, and courage of regional nations and their leaders. It is a crucial step in ending one of the continent's most dangerous wars. The same courage and commitment are now required to see the accord fully implemented.

The continuing effort to build an enduring peace deserves America's support. We will work

closely with all parties to realize the goals of the Lusaka accord: to achieve a broadbased, democratic, and open political process in the Congo and to address the security concerns of neighboring states. I hope the agreement will help end the cycle of violence in the region and promote stability and reconstruction across central Africa.

Statement on the Release of the "Futurework" Report *September 1, 1999*

The "Futurework" report, released today by the Department of Labor, underscores the need for an even stronger commitment to education and training to help workers thrive in an economy that is changing faster than ever before. Now more than ever, American workers must learn the new skills needed to face the challenges of the 21st century economy.

The Republican tax proposal, because it would force cuts in education and worker training of roughly 50 percent in 2009, would deny millions of Americans the chance to gain these skills. Now is not the time to shortchange the future opportunities of American workers by enacting an irresponsible tax plan that fails to allow adequate investment in education and training.

Radio Remarks on Reducing Drunk Driving *August 28, 1999*

Working together, we've made enormous progress in reducing drunk driving in America. Today I'm pleased to report we're making even more. Last year the number of people killed in alcohol-related crashes hit a record low, and young people killed in alcohol-related crashes fell to the lowest rate ever recorded. But even one child killed because of drunk driving is one too many.

Today I'm pleased to announce the Departments of Transportation and Justice will release a total of over \$47 million in grants to help communities combat drunk driving and underage drinking and increase seatbelt use. Ulti-

mately, of course, all of us must take responsibility. So if you choose to drink, always designate a driver and always wear your seatbelt. Let's make this the safest Labor Day weekend ever.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10:40 a.m. at Edgartown Elementary School in Martha's Vineyard, MA, for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 2. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Cazenovia, New York September 2, 1999

I would like to thank the Greens for making us all feel so welcome, and I would like to thank you for—I have been overwhelmed by the kindness and the hospitality of the people these last few days and by the sheer beauty of this place, everywhere we've been, and I want to thank you all for sharing that with us.

I'd also like to thank the people of New York and the people of this area for your many kindnesses to me and to Al Gore and to our families and our administration, including the electoral votes of New York in two Presidential elections.

I want to just make a couple of points. First of all, in terms of where our country is today, we are in a good place because we have tried to make decisions for 6½ years to think about what is best for America, for all Americans and for the future and not just for the moment, for those that may have the most influence. And it's worked pretty well.

In this historic part of our Nation, I think it is fair to say that if you read the history of America closely, as I have tried to do, the continuing mission of this country is to always be working to widen the circle of opportunity, to deepen the meaning of freedom, and to strengthen the bonds of our community. This is more and more important as we grow more diverse and as we get more involved with the rest of the world.

Now, if you look at what has happened in the last 6½ years, I don't think it's a subject of much debate anymore. And I am very grateful for the efforts that I have been able to make with so many others to improve the economy and lower the crime rate and lower the welfare rolls and strengthen the role of America in the world.

But the mission of the country is never over. And Hillary just mentioned a few things. One of the things that I think about all the time is that not every community and not every section of our country has participated fully in this astonishing economic recovery, and that bothers me. It bothers me that not every child in this country is getting a world-class education. It bothers me that there are people in Washington who really don't want to use this truly historic

opportunity to extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life expectancy of those of us in the baby boom. Any of you here who are baby boomers, like me, I'm sure you share my concern. I am determined that, when we retire, our children will not have to support us at the expense of our grandchildren. That's what Social Security is.

And in a global economy, believe me, if we were to pay off the debt of this country in 15 years, for the first time since Andy Jackson was President, then the children in this audience would be the economic beneficiaries. We would have a generation of lower interest rates and higher growth and stronger economies in every place in America.

And that brings me back to why you all came here. [Laughter] When I met Hillary in law school, I was really afraid for her to go home to Arkansas with me, because I was afraid she would be wasting what I think is one of the greatest talents of public service I've ever known in my life. It turned out it hasn't been a waste; she's done pretty well. [Laughter]

But when you hear her talking about all these issues, I think it's important to note that she's not only had 30 years of experience as a child advocate, which puts her in a position to know more about education and family policy than virtually anybody who could run for this kind of job. We worked together when I was Governor for a dozen years, which is why she understands all these economic development issues and the things that you talked about, about the economy.

And then for the last 6½ years in the White House, she has been not only an advocate for health care reform and for our children, but she's literally gone all across the world looking for ways that people can come together instead of be driven apart by all the things that seem to be doing so much to divide people, both in the United States and around the world.

I know I'm heavily biased—[laughter]—but I also have more experience than most people do in this area. I have known thousands and thousands of people in public service. I've never known anybody with the same combination of ability, experience, compassion, and unrelenting

dedication as my wife, and I thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Edward and Joan Green.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Syracuse, New York September 2, 1999

The President. Well, all I can say is this has been a very interesting night. Duke and Terry threw a party in an Irish bar, and the first thing I see when I walk in, besides all of your smiling faces, is a buffalo head. [Laughter] Now, I don't know what that means. [Laughter].

Audience members. It doesn't mean anything. [Laughter]

The President. It could be a piece of New York's trivia. The buffalo in America was saved by Theodore Roosevelt. We had 20 million buffalo head in America in the mid-1800's. When he became President, it was down to 12 known head, and he brought them back. Or it could be just another metaphor for all the speeches about Syracuse that I've heard from Terry. [Laughter] Or it could be a symbol of the golf game we had a couple days ago.

You know, people are asking me how I'm reacting to this whole deal. I love it. And I'm trying to think—all the time, people are coming up to me and saying, what are you going to do when you leave office? And you know, I have a lot of interests. And so one of you who knows that I love music—I'm walking through the crowd tonight, and a gentleman gives me this video tape which says, "How to Find Gigs That Pay Big Bucks." [Laughter]

I am indebted to the people of New York for many things, including voting for me and Al Gore twice and giving us a chance to serve. I thank you. I love Syracuse. When I came here running for President—I have had a wonderful time in this area. It is spectacularly beautiful and is full of the rich history of America. And I hope that our presence here has helped to lift the visibility of this area in a positive way in the eyes of all America. And I hope it does.

I want to say, if I might, just two things. One is, I'm going to spend every day I've got left in the last year and 5 months or so of my Presidency to try to prepare this country

for the new century. We have the chance of a lifetime, which we dare not pass up, with this prosperity we have to prepare for the aging of America. For those of you who are baby boomers, like me, I can tell you our generation does not want to retire and impose an inordinate burden on our children and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. We can save Social Security and Medicare if we do it now and don't squander the surplus. And that's what I am determined to do.

And I'll just mention two more things. We can, if we will use what we know, give every child in this country a world-class education, and they all need it. And the third thing we can do is bring opportunity to the places in America that have still not had job growth and get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. That's what I'm going to work on.

The second thing I want to say is America is always about change. It is constantly in the process of reinventing itself. So if someone said, "Vote for me because I'll do everything Bill Clinton said and did," I would vote against that person, because we're always in the process of change. But we have to build on what works. And what we have to do, even when we're having a good time, is remember what the purpose of this country is. The purpose of this country is every day to make progress in expanding opportunity, deepening freedom, and strengthening our communities.

Now, I have known Hillary a long time, as a matter of fact, to be precise, 28½ years. That's how long we've known each other. I have known thousands of people in public service. And you shouldn't be basically confused by the kind of venom that too often comes out of Washington. The truth is most of the people that I've known in public life, at all levels, in both parties, were good, honest, hard working people that did what they thought was right. And that's the truth—most of the people I've known.

But of all the people I have known in public life, in way over 25 years of working steadily at it now, nobody has the combination of intelligence, experience, heart, grit, and pure devotion to the public interest that my wife does. You could do a good thing for New York by helping her.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at Mulrooney's Pub. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts John (Duke) Kinney and Terence McAuliffe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Middle East Peace Process

September 3, 1999

I am extremely pleased that the leaders of Israel and the PLO have reached an agreement that will allow them to resume implementation of the Wye River accords and restart permanent status talks on an accelerated basis. I congratulate the two leaders for their vision in seizing this opportunity. It shows that when both sides are willing to work together, their fundamental requirements can be met, confidence can be built, and the process can move forward.

I thank the Egyptian Government, especially my good friend President Hosni Mubarak, for

helping to facilitate the agreement. I am grateful to Secretary of State Albright and her team. Their personal involvement made the difference in helping the two sides to bridge remaining gaps and reach consensus.

This truly is a new beginning. A lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is now a step closer. The Israelis and Palestinians are doing their part to bring it about. We must do ours. Today I call on the Congress to fund fully the commitments we made when the Wye accords were first signed.

Message on the Observance of Labor Day, 1999

September 3, 1999

Warm greetings to all Americans across our country as we celebrate Labor Day.

For more than a century, we have set aside this day to honor our nation's working men and women whose energy, talent, creativity, and determination have built the foundations of freedom and prosperity that generations of Americans have enjoyed. Through the decades, America's workers have built a strong economy and strived to bring justice and dignity to the workplace.

Today all Americans owe a debt of gratitude to our nation's labor force. Since 1992, we have experienced the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history, with nearly 20 million new jobs, wages rising at twice the rate of inflation, the highest percentage of home ownership, the shortest welfare rolls, and the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since

1957. We have fully restored fiscal soundness to the federal budget, with a budget surplus of at least \$99 billion—the largest dollar surplus in American history.

With America's robust economy, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to address the needs of our nation's working families. We must take advantage of this unique moment in time to reform Social Security and Medicare to preserve them for our children. We must ensure that these programs are there for our children in the 21st century just as they were there for our parents and grandparents in the 20th century. And we must raise the minimum wage to make certain that our workers are able to earn a decent income.

As we observe this last Labor Day of the 20th century, let us rededicate ourselves to this important effort. On behalf of a grateful nation,

I salute America's working men and women and
send best wishes for a wonderful holiday.

BILL CLINTON

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Juvenile Crime Legislation *September 3, 1999*

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

As the Congress returns this coming week, I urge you to make it your first order of business to send me a juvenile crime bill that includes the Senate-passed gun measures.

The time is long past due to complete work on this bill. Before the Congress went on its recess, I asked the conferees to meet during the break and finish work on the bill. A full month has passed since the conferees first met, and I urge you now to finish the job and act immediately on this vital legislation.

The tragic shooting in Los Angeles just a few short weeks ago is the latest reminder that we must do all we can to keep guns out of the wrong hands. You have the opportunity to send me a balanced and bipartisan juvenile crime bill that helps prevent youth violence and includes the Senate-passed gun provisions to close the

gun show loophole, require child safety locks for guns, and bar the importation of large capacity ammunition clips. These provisions will help save lives, and the Congress should make them the law of the land without further delay.

As millions of our Nation's children return to school, we have a responsibility to do everything we can, as quickly as we can, to keep them safe. The American people are waiting: don't let another day pass.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Trent Lott, Senate majority leader. This letter was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on September 4. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

The President's Radio Address *September 4, 1999*

Good morning. I'm speaking to you today from Waterman Elementary School in Skaneateles, New York, where children, like those all across America, are now getting back to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

When we took office in 1993, Vice President Gore and I charted a new economic course for America that took Washington back to basics: budget discipline, expanded trade, investment in our people. Today we received more good news that this strategy is working. The latest economic report shows that unemployment has now dropped to 4.2 percent, the lowest rate since January of 1970. In the last 6½ years, we've created 19.4 million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion and the largest budget surplus

in history. With this good news, it is more clear than ever that the course we've charted for the economy is right for America. Now we must use this moment of great promise to meet our large, long-term challenges: to increase opportunity and responsibility for our citizens and to strengthen our national community.

Making the most of this moment requires us to meet the challenges of the aging of America by saving Social Security and strengthening and modernizing Medicare with a prescription drug coverage. It requires us to secure America's long-term prosperity by paying down our debt and getting new investment to areas still untouched by our recovery, and it requires us to continue to pursue an ambitious course to give

all our children a world-class education; more and better prepared teachers; modernized schools connected to the Internet; a new commitment to higher standards, to ending social promotion, to more after-school and summer school programs, to ending Federal subsidies for failure, and for supporting proven strategies for turning around schools that aren't working. That, too, is the right course for America.

The risky tax plan passed by the majority in Congress is not the right course for America, and it would make it impossible to pursue these other objectives. I don't believe we should squander our surplus after being in debt for 30 years and quadrupling our national debt in just 12. I don't think we should do something that would imperil our prosperity or jeopardize our children's future—by forcing crippling cuts in education, by failing to add a single day to the life of Social Security and Medicare, by failing to seize this opportunity to get America out of debt for the first time since 1835—or to give more investment to those communities that need it so much: the cities, the small towns, the rural areas left behind.

Instead, we can meet our most pressing national priorities and still have sensible tax cuts and extend our prosperity into the places it has yet to reach. That's the plan I have proposed. I believe that's what the American people want, and that's what I'll work with Congress, with members of both parties, to achieve.

So as America goes back to school and Congress returns from its summer recess, our elected representatives have this big assignment and other important ones, as well. First, we must show we have learned the lessons of Littleton. To protect our children, Congress must pass commonsense measures to prevent youth violence and keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Now, a full month has passed since House and Senate conferees met to work on this legislation; nearly 5 months since the shootings at Columbine. I'm still waiting, and America is still waiting for Congress to act. It shouldn't take another tragedy to shake them from the summer slumber.

Today I'm sending a letter to the Republican leadership urging Congress to take immediate

action to send me a balanced bipartisan juvenile crime bill that closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks for guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. If Congress passes it, I'll sign it.

To protect the 160 million Americans who rely on managed care, Congress should pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. There's a bipartisan bill ready for action. The American Medical Association has endorsed it. So have more than 200 other medical and consumer organizations. It's high time for Congress to act, and if Congress passes it, I'll sign it.

With the number of students at historic levels, Congress should make the investments in education our children deserve. Here again legislation is ready. As part of my balanced budget, I've proposed to build new schools and fix old ones across our land. Congress should pass the proposal and fulfill the commitment it made last year to hire 100,000 well-prepared teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. Congress should also pass my proposal to stop social promotion and provide more funds for after-school and summer school programs and to turn around failing schools. If Congress passes these important educational measures, I'll sign them.

Maintaining our prosperity, paying down the debt, saving Social Security and Medicare, protecting our children, protecting patients' rights, bringing success to struggling communities and to all our children—these are big assignments. But in every one of these areas, there is legislation ready for approval, ready for my signature, as soon as Congress proves it's ready to act.

If we work together in the weeks and months ahead, we can make this season not only one of action but of real achievement for the American people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at noon on September 3 at Belle H. Waterman Elementary School in Skaneateles, NY, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks on the Middle East Peace Process and an Exchange With Reporters September 4, 1999

The President. The new agreement which will be signed today between the Israelis and the Palestinians represents a wonderful opportunity to move the peace process forward. It is a product of hard work and the growing understanding by Israelis and Palestinians alike that the fulfillment of one side's aspirations must come with, and not at the expense of, the fulfillment of the other side's dreams.

The two sides have both strong positions to be reconciled and shared interests to be pursued together. They know there's no sense in an endless tug-of-war over common ground.

The United States has been honored to support these efforts for peace, from the signing of the Oslo agreement on the White House lawn almost exactly 6 years ago, to the Wye River accords achieved with the help of the late King Hussein, to the peace between Israel and Jordan itself in 1994, down to the present agreement. Our success in these endeavors, of course, goes back to the Camp David accords under President Carter in 1978.

Today I want to pay tribute to Prime Minister Barak for fulfilling his promise to seek a just and lasting peace for the people of Israel and to Chairman Arafat for his courage in taking yet another step toward mutual respect and recognition. I am grateful for Egyptian President Mubarak's extraordinary efforts in this instance. He had a critical role in facilitating this agreement. And, of course, I want to say a special word of thanks to Secretary Albright and her team for going the extra mile to help the parties bridge their final gaps and reach consensus.

There is much hard work ahead for all of us. The United States pledged in the Wye River accords that we would help both sides minimize the risks of peace and we would help to lift the lives of the Palestinians. I ask Congress now to provide the funds we need to keep that promise.

Final status talks are now set to begin. We will do everything we can to be supportive all along the way and to achieve our larger goal: a just, lasting, and comprehensive peace in the entire region, including Syria and Lebanon. I hope today's progress is seen by leaders in the

Middle East as a stepping stone toward that larger goal. Our commitment to reaching it will never waver.

Thank you very much.

Reinvestigation of 1993 Waco Incident

Q. Mr. President, were you concerned that incendiary devices were used at Waco—or are you concerned?

The President. Well, let me say I support the Attorney General's decision to seek an independent investigation, and I think that's what ought to happen, and we ought to see what the investigation turns up. We ought to find out what the truth is and let you and the American people know.

Q. Do you still have confidence in the Attorney General and the Director of the FBI?

The President. Yes, I certainly have confidence in the Attorney General. You know, she's told us what happened; and she's told us she asked some questions that she didn't get the right answers to.

And I think that with regard to the Director, I don't think that it's—there is going to be an independent investigation, which she supports and which he has said he supports. I don't think it serves any purpose for the rest of us to assign blame until the investigation is conducted and the evidence is in. I think he did the right thing in saying he thought there ought to be an independent investigation, and I think that that's all we can ask of him. And she is now going to appoint an appropriate person to do it, and I think we ought to let them do their job.

East Timor

Q. Mr. President, are you pleased at the outcome of the voting in East Timor?

The President. Yes, I'm pleased because so many people voted, and I'm pleased because the outcome was so unambiguous. I believe it's 78½ to 21½; that's about as clear an expression of public opinion as you could ever expect.

Now, I'm very concerned about the continuing violence. The people who lost the election should recognize that they lost it fair and square, and we should now find a way to go

forward peacefully. I respect the fact that the Government of Indonesia supported the referendum and has said that it will abide by these results. It isn't often that a country is willing to do such a thing. But I think it is also important that the Indonesians do everything they can to keep the peace and to prevent the bloodshed that we now see in East Timor. They have a capacity, I think, that would enable them to do that.

We will work with the United Nations; we will do everything we can to support it. But this was a truly historic occurrence and one that may provide some guidance, some indication, some hope for people throughout the world. It would be tragic, indeed, if the referendum, which was so heavily supported by the people—not only the 78 percent who voted for independence but just the huge percentage of the citizens that showed up to vote—it would be tragic if all that came out of it was more and more violence and killing of innocents.

So I think it's important that they, the United Nations, and all of us who support them do everything we can to minimize the bloodshed and to facilitate an orderly and honorable transition. And we will support that.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Now that you're—[inaudible]—your vacation and Congress is going to come back, what are you hoping to accomplish as far as the legislative agenda?

The President. Well, I'm quite optimistic, actually, in view of some of the developments of the last few weeks. I hope we can pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. There is now a bipartisan bill that has been supported by the American Medical Association and 200 other health professional, health consumer groups. I hope now that those who have been opposing it in the congressional leadership will change their position and let us go forward.

I'm very hopeful that we will pass juvenile justice legislation that will adopt the common-sense measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands that the Senate adopted. I'm very hopeful that in the end we will get a budget agreement that will enable us to extend the life of Social Security, extend the life to the Medicare Trust Fund, and provide for prescription drugs and pay down the debt of the American people. And there are many other things that are going on.

I would like to emphasize, since this is Labor Day and all the children are going back to school, I'm also especially hopeful that we can be successful with our education agenda. This is the occasion, this year, 1999, as we see in every 5-year period, when we have to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. And back in January, at the State of the Union Address, I asked the Congress to change the terms in which we give money to States and school districts to stop subsidizing failure, to end social promotion, to dramatically increase our commitment to after-school and summer school programs and to proven strategies that turn around failing schools.

We've seen all over the country where there is a systematic effort to turn these failing schools around, they work. And if we do that, plus the charter schools, plus the school modernization program and hooking them all up to the Internet, and our continuing commitment to hire more teachers, I think that this could be one of the most productive years that we have had since I've been President.

It's in the nature of divided government that things that happen that are positive tend to happen late in the process. So I am not at all pessimistic. I'm quite hopeful that we can get over this difference we have over the tax issue, that they will accept an affordable tax cut that will provide—my tax proposal provides about as much relief to middle class Americans as theirs does at a much, much lower cost and permits us to achieve these other objectives.

So I'm going to work as hard as I can with members of both parties to get that done as they come back. I'm looking forward to it, looking forward to talking to the leaders of the Senate and the House in both parties and going back to work.

President's Vacation and Home Purchase

Q. Mr. President, after all you have done in the last 2 weeks, do you need a vacation? [Laughter] And how do you like your new house?

The President. Yes, even by my standards this was a fairly active vacation, you know. Hillary is keeping me busy, and we had a lot of—we also had finalized the house. I love this house. It's a beautiful old house, and the older part of it was built in 1889. The people who lived in it for the last 18 years have taken wonderful care of it. It was obviously a place that

has been lovingly tended to, and it will be a good place to wake up in the morning—lots of light. I like the neighbors; they were nice. And so I'm looking forward to it. I know that Hillary is, and I'm very pleased that we were able to find it.

And I'd also like to say, since you asked me the question, a special word of thanks to all the people who opened their homes to Hillary or to Hillary and me, to people on our behalf, as we were looking for a place. As you might imagine, the circumstances for them were somewhat unusual; the publicity for them—most of them—was somewhat—was unprecedented, and

I was very touched by the way we were received.

And I had a wonderful vacation. I liked it all. But I had to come up to Camp David to get a little rest this weekend.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4 p.m. at Camp David, MD. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Remarks at Coleman Place Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia September 6, 1999

Wow! Let's give her a hand. [Applause] She was great. Come on, more. [Applause] I asked Le'Shia when we went up here, I said, "Are you going to have a good time?" She said, "Yes, I am." [Laughter] I think she's got a good future in politics if she keeps it up.

Well, good afternoon to all of you and happy Labor Day. I want to thank you for coming out today. I want to thank those who are here: my longtime friend and former colleague as Governor, Senator Chuck Robb; and Congressman Scott and Congressman Sisisky. They are working to pass legislation in Washington which would make what we do today part of a national movement so that all of our children could have what Le'Shia says she wants and the children here deserve. And I think we owe Senator Robb and these Members of Congress our support for their leadership for our children.

I also want to thank our wonderful Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who, as Chuck Robb said, worked with us nearly 20 years ago; the three of us were working together. He just finished a big bus tour all across the South, celebrating the start of a new school year and the rededication of the American people and our educators and our families to higher standards and better performance for all of our children.

I want to thank your mayor; your superintendent; your board president; our principal here, Jeanne Tomlinson, who showed me around; and the teachers who visited with me;

the great labor leaders John Sweeney and Bob Georgine, who are here; and the presidents of the American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association, Sandra Feldman and Bob Chase; the Norfolk Federation of Teachers president, Marian Flickinger; the Tidewater Central Labor Council president, Jerry Hufton; the Virginia State AFL-CIO leader, Jim Leaman; Cheri James of the Virginia Education Association; and all the State legislators who are here. Will you raise your hand, all the members of the legislature who are here? We've got a ton of legislators who are here. I wanted to do that to show you that what we are here about—the education of our children and the modernization of our schools—has broad and deep support, and I am profoundly grateful to all of them.

Tropical Storm Dennis

Before I get into my remarks—most of what needs to be said has probably already been said—but I want to just say a word, if I might, about the harm that Virginia has sustained from Tropical Storm Dennis and from the tornadoes that have devastated parts of your State.

On Saturday in Hampton, which is quite near here, 150 homes were destroyed and 6 people were injured. As we pray for their swift recovery, we are also already working on those who lost their homes and to help them get their homes and their property back. FEMA is on the ground in Hampton, and I want to say a

special word of thanks to the State and local officials for their prompt and very able action, which might well have saved lives.

I also want you to know that, as has been requested, I have declared a major disaster for the Commonwealth of Virginia and have ordered Federal aid to be made available to help the State and local recovery efforts.

School Modernization

Now, this is a remarkable day. This is Labor Day, which is really misnamed. Labor Day really means "no-labor day." [Laughter] It's supposed to honor the working men and women by giving them a day off. So all of you had to show up here, and the leaders of American labor and education, the leaders of Virginia labor and education, have shown up here, many of them swinging hammers when they'd rather be swinging in hammocks.

I want to thank the students who have made even a greater sacrifice; they have shown up at school a day early. [Laughter] And I see several, like Le'Shia, in their school uniforms, a policy that my family and I and our administration heartily support.

I want to thank those of you who work here at this school and throughout this district. Your superintendent has already spoken eloquently. But there are tremendous gains which Norfolk students have made on your achievement tests, improving at greater than the statewide average, and I applaud you for that.

I want to thank those who have helped this school achieve its improving excellence. I know your principal has gotten the Navy to donate computers and wire the rooms so that they can all be connected to the Internet, which is what we're trying to do for every schoolroom in America by our new millennial year, next year. I thank them. I thank the union electricians who are finishing the job today.

And let me say I'm also very pleased that the Norfolk district has taken advantage of the Federal E-rate program, which was spearheaded and developed by Vice President Gore. It enables districts to purchase network equipment and other services, and where appropriate, to get cheaper rates to hook up to the Internet, because we want there to be no digital divide in our schools. The poorest children in America deserve to be a part of America's high-technology future, and we're determined to see that it will happen.

Let me also say that I'm very pleased that Norfolk has been able to hire 33 new teachers this fall, thanks to funds that we won with the support of all three of these Members of the Congress last fall when Congress agreed to support my plan to hire 100,000 new highly trained teachers around America.

All this shows that when we work together, when we put our children ahead of politics and leave politics at the schoolhouse door, we can make progress. President Kennedy once said that the time to fix the roof is when the Sun is shining. We are here, literally, fixing buildings today at a time when it may be a little overcast, but surely the Sun has been shining on America.

We have the longest peacetime expansion in our history during these last 6½ years I have been privileged to serve as your President, 19.4 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years. We had a \$290 billion deficit when I took office; it was projected to be \$100 billion more than that this year. Instead, we have a \$99 billion surplus with more to come, thanks again to Senator Robb, the Members of Congress who are here, and others who supported our program.

I say this because now the big debate in Washington is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? There is a huge debate about this. Well, first of all, I think we ought to ask ourselves whether we've got any roofs in America that need to be fixed while the Sun is shining, before the rain comes again. I believe that we need to look at the great, long-term challenges of America. And I'll just mention three today.

One, how do we keep this economic prosperity going and spread it to the people in the communities that have still not felt the positive effects of these recoveries? That's a big issue. Two, how do we deal with the challenge of the aging of America? The number of people over 65 will double in 30 years as we baby boomers retire, and I can tell you, my generation—and I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—is determined that our retirement will not impose a huge burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. We don't want that to happen. And third, how can we meet the challenge of giving all of our children, from increasingly diverse backgrounds, a chance at the future that they deserve, beginning with a world-class education? And they, these children,

are the first generation of American children to be larger than the baby boom generation.

Now, I think we ought to meet those challenges. I think we ought to use this moment to get America out of debt for the first time since 1835 and guarantee long-term economic prosperity with low interest rates and more investment and higher incomes and more jobs for all our people. I believe we ought to give tax incentives to people to invest in the poorest neighborhoods in America, whether they're on Indian reservations or in the Mississippi Delta or in the inner cities. We ought to give people the same incentives to invest in markets here in America we give them today to invest overseas in developing countries.

I just finished a tour around America called the new markets tour. And I want to say a special word of thanks to a man who has been in business here many years who flew down with us today, Ron Dozoretz, for his efforts to help me bring economic opportunity to people who haven't had it. But let me tell you something. All of you know this; we may have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years. We may have the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years. We may have the longest peacetime expansion in history. But you know as well as I do there are still people and places that have not been part of our recovery.

Now, in Washington, all of the experts worry how we can keep this expansion going without inflation. How can we keep creating jobs and raising incomes without inflation? The easiest way is to put people to work who don't have jobs and turn them into consumers and taxpayers. That means no inflation and continued economic growth, and that is what I am committed to.

The second thing we ought to do is recognize that if the baby boomers don't want to be a burden on their children and their grandchildren, then we ought to take this opportunity, the best we will ever have in our lifetime, to fix Social Security and Medicare and add a prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program and strengthen it so it will be there for the baby boom generation.

And the third thing we have to do if we want our children to have a good future is, to have enough investment in defense, in science and technology, in the environment, and especially in their education.

Now, I'm not against cutting taxes, but I think we ought to take care of the big, long-term challenges of America. If you pay the debt off, interest rates will be lower, and that'll be worth more to most average people and most wealthy people than a tax cut. If you, on the other hand, return to deficits and have a big tax cut at a time when the economy's going, the interest rates will go up and take the tax cuts away and higher home mortgage rates, higher car payment rates, higher college long rates, higher credit card rates. But if we say, okay, here's what it takes to get us out of debt, to save Social Security and Medicare, to invest in education, and the other things for our future, then we can give the rest of it back to the American people in a tax cut that they can use for retirement, for education, for child care, for the things that the American people need. But let's take care of first things first.

In my lifetime, the United States has never had an opportunity or an obligation like this to prepare for the retirement of the baby boomers, to prepare for the future of the largest and most diverse generation of children our country has ever produced, to get this country out of debt, and keep a generation of prosperity out there as a beacon of shining hope to children from all backgrounds in America. We ought to take this chance to deal with the long-term challenges of the 21st century for America.

Now, one of the tax cuts that we can afford, that meets more than one objective, is the one I have proposed that would help school districts build, renovate, or expand 6,000 schools. I've already said that Senator Robb is the sponsor of the bill in the Senate to do that. Two representatives here, Bobby Scott and Norm Sisisky, and others are helping us in the House. We now have 222 Members of the House—that's a majority—so we have some Republicans along with the Democrats helping us; there's a bipartisan effort there. But why are we trying to do this?

A lot of you here who are older people remember the end of World War II when, in this school district, so many people came home with so many kids, they had to put up Quonset huts for people to go to school in. Now, there are those who say to me, "Mr. President"—I've had Members of Congress say—"it's a laudable thing you want to do, but the Federal Government's got no business helping local school

districts build schools; most States don't even do that, and it's a State and local responsibility."

Well, normally, that might be true, but just like World War II, these are not normal times. Harry Truman, in 1950, signed legislation to help school districts that needed it build the necessary facilities to get the kids out of Quonset huts. It happened right here where we are standing, and it ought to happen again because we have a bigger challenge now than we had in 1950.

Your school district has already invested \$45 million to expand and modernize schools, but as your superintendent told you today, it's still not enough. The window frames of this building are so old that if you tried to powerwash the windows, the glass would pop out. [Laughter] The electric service in the classrooms is so inadequate that if you plugged a new computer into the wall, the circuit breaker might cut off. When the door opens in some of these trailers, and it's raining, the kids sitting near the door get wet. When it's winter and the kids in the trailers need to go to the bathroom, they have to put on their coats and walk across the parking lot through the snow, or the rain and the freezing, to the main building.

Now, folks, we have to fix this. You can say this is a Norfolk problem, but Chuck Robb told me there are 3,000 trailers in Virginia alone. This is a national problem. I was in a grade school in Florida the other day that had a dozen trailers out behind the main building. One little school. I have seen this everywhere. And if we can meet this big, long-term challenge to America, don't we have the obligation to do it? What is more important than the education of our children and their future?

And let me say this. You can say if you want, and it would be true, that buildings don't make an education, that education is not a money problem. That's one of my laws of politics, by the way. When somebody tells you it's not a money problem, they are never talking about one of their problems. [Laughter] They are always talking about somebody else's problem. All these legislators are laughing at me when I say that. That's true. Of course, it's the magic with the teachers and the kids and the parents' support. But we now have evidence; there is a serious study which shows that children in adequate and well-furnished classrooms do better on achievement tests than kids from the same socio-economic backgrounds who go to places

where the windows are broken and the paint is chipped and the facilities are inadequate and you can't hook them up to the Internet. So I say, let's give all of our kids a chance to maximize their God-given potential.

Now, here's the problem that we're about to confront in Congress when the Congress comes back. They passed a tax cut that's too big to do this. And in order to fund their tax cut, they have to do one of two things, both of which they said they won't do. They either have to get into the surplus produced by your Social Security taxes, which they promised to save to pay the debt down, or they have to cut what we're already spending on education, on the environment, on health care, on technology and research. That's what the problem is.

So that's why they haven't sent me an education bill. I guess if I had that choice, I wouldn't send one to the President either. [Laughter] They don't want to cut education when they said they wouldn't. They don't want to eat up the Social Security surplus when they said they wouldn't. And they can't figure out what to do. But I'll tell you this, if their tax cut passes and they respect the Social Security surplus, here's what would happen.

Today, we're helping 12 million kids in poor communities to make more of their education. If their plan passes, 6 million of them wouldn't get help anymore. Today, we help a million kids to learn to read by the third grade. If their plan passes, half of them wouldn't get help anymore. Today, we're almost at our goal of a million kids in Head Start. There were some Head Start teachers out there when I was driving in today; if their plan passes, over 400,000 of them would lose their support. It means larger classes, fewer students, more trailers, and more leaky roofs.

Now, I don't believe the American people want that. We can have a tax cut, but we've got to do first things first. Let's look after the long-term needs of the country, fix the economy long term, deal with Social Security and Medicare, deal with education, figure out what's left, and then give it back to the people in a tax cut. Let's deal with our responsibilities to our children and our future first. I have put forward a plan that does that.

Back in 1950, when he sent his school construction program to Congress, President Truman said this—49 years ago; it sounds pretty good still today: "The Nation cannot afford to

waste human potentialities, as we are now, by failing to provide adequate elementary and secondary education for millions of children." Equal opportunity in education is America's ticket to the future. It is a bedrock value in this country. It is indispensable to the 21st century for individuals and for our Nation alike. Fifty years ago it was Quonset huts; today, it's trailers and broken buildings.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank all of you who worked to fix this building. I ask you to leave here on this Labor Day committed to fix all the buildings. I thank you for the applause you gave Le'Shia, and I thank all of her fellow students and their families for being here. I ask you to leave here thinking about all the little boys and girls like them all across America. I have been back and forth across this country, and I have seen the conditions that exist here today everywhere, in the largest cities and the smallest towns. There is nothing more important.

Here in Norfolk we honor our military, which has made such a major contribution to this community. I want to thank the Navy Band for being here today, by the way. Thank you very much.

There are those who believe that—and I saw some of their signs outside—that we don't need

a strong military today because the cold war is over. I can tell you that's not true either. We still have significant challenges to your security. But I also want you to understand something I know you know, which is, maybe more than anything else, the future security of the United States of America will rest upon our ability to give every single child in this country the ability to do well in a global economy, in a global society, to live up to his or her dreams. That's what we're here on this Labor Day to support.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:28 p.m. on the playground. In his remarks, he referred to student Le'Shia Jamison, who introduced the President; Mayor Paul D. Fraim of Norfolk; John O. Simpson, superintendent, Norfolk Public School District; Anita O. Poston, chairman, Norfolk Public School Board; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Robert A. Georgine, president, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO; James R. Leaman, secretary-treasurer, Virginia State AFL-CIO; Cheri James, president, Virginia Education Association; and Ronald I. Dozoretz, founder, FHC Health Systems.

Remarks at a Labor Day Picnic in Newport News, Virginia *September 6, 1999*

Thank you very much. Let me just begin by saying how grateful I am for the wonderful reception you have given me. You know, I can't tell you how much I appreciate the kindness and friendship that you have given to me and my family, my Vice President and his family, and our administration, through two Presidential elections and 6½ years of our 8-year term. I thank you.

I want to thank Congressman Sisisky and Delegate Crittenden here, who gave a pretty good reason for keeping Senator Robb in office, and I hope you'll listen to her.

I want you to know what we were doing before we came here. We were actually working on a school, to highlight one of the things I'm trying to get this Congress to do, which is to

pass a bill that would help us to build or modernize 6,000 new schools so our kids, whether they're rich or poor, will have world-class places to go to school in.

So I want to thank the Secretary of Education, the national head of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney and Secretary Riley, and the leaders of our two great teachers' organizations, the NEA and the AFT, Bob Chase and Sandy Feldman. They're all over here with me. Give them a hand. [*Applause*]

Now, you know, somebody asked me the day before yesterday why I was coming down here. They said, "You're not running for anything anymore; you can't." And I said, "Well, yes, but I haven't lost my memory, and those people

gave me two great terms as President. I wanted to go down and thank them.”

And these two guys are—I want you to take care of Bobby Scott. He is a great resource for you and for the country. And I want you—you know, every time Senator Robb runs, he has a challenging race. You know why? Because he sticks up for you, that’s why. Because he makes the hard decisions for the long run, because he was one of those guys who stood up in 1993. We didn’t have a vote to spare. If he had changed his vote, I would have lost that economic plan that’s given us 19.4 million jobs and the biggest surplus in history. And they tried to beat him 2 years later because he stood up for you. Because he believes we all ought to go forward together. And I’ve known him for nearly 20 years now, and he’s always standing up. So next time the election comes around, I want you to stand up for him. Will you do it? *[Applause]*

Now, let me say this. This is Labor Day, so I want to make some remarks about labor. There are a lot of big issues in this country today, but when I got elected President, it was after 12 years of people in the other party running the White House saying they were pro-business and good for the economy, and we had the worst recession since the Great Depression and the biggest deficit in history, and we quadrupled the debt in 12 years.

I said I’m pro-business, but I’m pro-labor, too. I don’t think you can help the economy if you hurt the working people. Guess what? We beat off all their efforts to weaken unions. We beat back all their efforts to hurt the fundamental interests of working people. We passed the Family and Medical Leave Act. We raised the minimum wage once. We helped people with child care who were working more, and we got 19.4 million jobs, record numbers of new small businesses every year, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. It works. If you take care of ordinary people, it works.

So on this Labor Day, as we go back to work, I’d like to just mention some things that relate to you. Number one, we ought to raise the minimum wage again. Number two, we ought to do a better job of enforcing the law that says there should be equal pay for equal work between men and women. Number three, we ought to do more to help workers with children at home, working full-time, succeed by helping

them with their child care expenses more. Number four, we ought to give investors, people with money, the same tax incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in America we give them to invest overseas in poor neighborhoods, because we all know that not every neighborhood has been fully benefited by this economic expansion. I’ve been out there across the country, in the cities, in the small towns, in the rural areas, on the Indian reservations, up and down the Mississippi River. You know as well as I do that in every part of America, there are still people in places who would work or work harder and better if they had a chance to do so, and I am determined to see that we don’t stop this until everybody’s involved. Number four, we ought—before we have this big tax cut the Republicans have proposed, we ought to take care of the big challenges facing America. We ought to make sure Social Security and Medicare are going to be all right when all the baby boomers retire. We’ve got the largest number of children in our schools in history, and they’re more diverse than ever before. We ought to make sure they’ve got a world-class education before we give the money away. And I think that we ought to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, before we give the money away.

Now, let me tell you why that ought to matter to you. Because if the Government is not borrowing money, that means that you’re not in competition with the Government; that means you can borrow cheaper; that means home mortgages are lower; that means car payments are lower; that means credit card payments are lower; that means college loan payments are lower; that means more businesses, more jobs, a stronger economy for the future. That’s why I want to get America out of debt, because it’s good for little people.

You know, I’ll be retired pretty soon; debt will be good for me. I’ve got a good pension; I can buy those Government bonds all day long. I can make money out of debt. You’ll make money if we get out of debt and your interest rates are lower and the economy grows more. And I want these children to have a good economy to grow up into. So you just remember this. Nothing that has happened in this country in the last 6½ years that I have achieved as President could have been possible without others, beginning with the people that work with me, starting with the Vice President, going to

the people in Congress like Senator Robb and Bobby Scott and Norm Sisisky; and going all the way down to the grassroots in America, the people like you that voted for us.

So, on this Labor Day, as you leave here, if somebody asks you, what did the President say, tell them he said, "We had an idea and it worked. That helping ordinary people works,

and it requires people like you to be good citizens and keep people like them in office. And if you do, it will keep right on working."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m., at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to State Delegate Flora Davis Crittenden.

Remarks at Brooke Grove Elementary School in Olney, Maryland September 7, 1999

Thank you so much. You know, when I was in grade school, we used to joke that our favorite class was assembly. [Laughter] But you've been out here so long, and it's so hot, I'm not sure it's true anymore. [Laughter] I will try to be brief.

I want to, first of all, say how greatly honored I am to be here with Governor Glendening and Senator Sarbanes and Congressman Cardin and your Representative, Congresswoman Morella; with Senator Miller and the other members of the Maryland legislature; with your principal, Eoline Cary; Jerry Weast, the Montgomery County superintendent. I want to thank the teachers in the classes whom I visited, Ms. Tepper and Ms. Husted, and their students, who asked good questions and got me to read a book, a book about friendship, which I could use a little of myself from time to time. [Laughter] I want to thank the teachers, the parents, and the students. And I want to thank Nancy Grasmick, and Reggie Felton, the chair of the Montgomery County School Board, and all the people in Maryland for their dedication. And I thank you, Robin Davis, for your introduction and for your devotion to teaching. And we have also on the stage with us Jessica Goldstein, who is another one of the reading specialists, also hired under our program.

Most of all, if I might, I'd like to say a special word of thanks to my friend of over 20 years, the Secretary of Education, Dick Riley. I think, plainly, the finest Education Secretary this country has ever had. And I really thank him for his leadership.

I knew before I came here that this was a blue ribbon school. Now that I've been here, I know why. I loved walking down the halls;

I loved reading the posters on the walls; I loved talking to the students and watching the instruction. Education is the priority in this school. Education must be America's priority, as well.

We now have in our schools, starting last year for the first time since the end of World War II, we've got a group of students in our schools bigger than the baby boom generation, the largest number of children ever in the schools of the United States, and as all of you know, it's also the most diverse group of students ever, racially, religiously, culturally. We have the largest number of students in our schools whose first language is not English, by far in the history of the country. And yet, we know that in a global society our diversity can be an enormous asset if, but only if, we can give every one of our children a world-class education. And we don't have a moment to lose.

I'm here because for 6½ years we have worked very hard to raise standards, to raise expectations, to raise accountability, and to raise the level of support so that every child in America could have an education like the children of Brooke Grove Elementary get. And I think that's what all of you want.

As I indicated, Dick Riley and I have been working on this issue for more than 20 years now. Both Hillary and I made it our first priority when I was Governor of my State for 12 years. Earlier this year I proposed an education accountability plan based on what I have seen working for more than a decade now, to help raise standards, make good schools even better, and have specific initiatives to help turn around schools that aren't making the grade; to provide more funds for after-school and summer school programs for the kids who need it; to expand

early reading programs; to reach our goal of connecting every classroom and library in the country, in every school, to the Internet by the year 2000. We now have HOPE scholarships, more Pell grants, other student loans, grants, and tax credits, which have literally opened the doors of college to virtually every single American.

And last fall, as you've heard, we persuaded a huge bipartisan majority in Congress to come together across party lines and put a downpayment on hiring 100,000 well-prepared teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades, teachers like Robin Davis and Jessica Goldstein, and over 160 others in Montgomery County alone, part of the 30,000 teachers nationwide who are now meeting their students this year, under this initiative.

Everybody knows what Robin said: Students learn better, especially early, in smaller classes. Now we have research which confirms that those early learning gains are maintained by the children all the way through high school. We're not talking about some theory, here. You heard a teacher with 20 years of experience stand up and say what she just said. We now have academic research, objective evidence, that we now have no excuse not to act on.

We have to have more teachers for these swelling classrooms, to get the classes down in the early grades. Just yesterday I talked to a friend of mine who had just come back from a major city in the Midwest, where he had visited an elementary school where the average class size was 37. That is wrong. We can do better. Our children's future is at stake. And I saw the kind of learning in these classes today that we need for every single school in the country.

So why are we here? Because it's budget time again on Capitol Hill. [*Laughter*] And last year, right before the election, we had this truly astonishing and heartwarming coalition of forces across party lines to say, "Okay, we'll support the 100,000 more teachers. We'll make the 30,000 downpayment." We didn't have enough money to hire them all in one year and sustain it, but we could do nearly a third in one year.

So now it's budget time again in Washington, and the question of whether we will continue to move toward our commitment of 100,000 teachers is one of the major questions there. It is all caught up in what you've read about

tax cut debate, should there be one and, if so, what size should it be?

But the larger question is this. We have waited, for a person my age, a lifetime—a lifetime—for the kind of economics we have today. Compared to the day I took office, we've gone from the biggest deficit to the biggest surplus in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history, a 29-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare, a 26-year low in the crime rate, and we have money. We have some money. Now, the question is, what are we going to do with our prosperity?

There is broad agreement that we ought to save the money that you have given in your Social Security taxes to pay down the debt and to keep it for Social Security. There is a huge disagreement about what to do with the rest. The leadership of the Republican Party wants to give it all, virtually all of it in a tax cut. If we do, it means we can't add any time to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund or the Medicare Trust Fund or add the prescription drug coverage that, I think, are necessary as we look forward to the baby boomers' retirement.

I can tell you, folks, I'm the oldest of the baby boomers. One of our biggest worries, my whole generation, is that because we are so big, and bigger than our children's generation, that we will retire and impose such a burden on our children that they won't be able to do right by our grandchildren. We can avoid that now if we save Social Security and Medicare. We're not just doing it for the older people; we're doing it for the children and their future. I think it's important to do that.

I think it's important to pay the debt down. We can get this country out of debt for the first time since—listen to this—1835, when Andrew Jackson was President. Now, what's that got to do with these children? You all read the press; you all see these people speculating how long can these economic good times go on, how can we keep it going without inflation. If we pay our debt down, it means the Government's not borrowing money; it means there is more for you to borrow; it means home loans, it means car loans, it means credit card loans, it means college loans, it means business loans will be less costly; they will be cheaper. That means there will be more investment, more jobs, and higher incomes, and greater prosperity for

a whole generation of Americans. It's important, and we ought to do it.

And finally, we ought to figure out what we need to do to invest in the things that are critical to these children's future, in the environment, in research, in health care, in defense, and most important, in education. And when we do that, then I think we ought to give the rest of it back to you in a tax cut. But we ought to, first of all, think about the long-term welfare of the country, save Social Security and Medicare, get the country out of debt, invest what we have to do in education and other things, then give the rest in a tax cut. Don't put the cart before the horse and then figure out what in the wide world we're going to do.

Let me give you an idea of the differences, because that's what we did, and we proposed a substantial tax cut for middle class Americans. We still have the money in our balanced budget to expand Head Start, to help State and local schools build or modernize 6,000 schools. You don't have that problem here, but a third of our schools are in terrible shape.

I was in a 75-year-old school in Virginia yesterday where they cannot hook the classrooms up to the Internet because the circuits go out every time they put the pressure on the system. And that's important. To help communities expand or start after-school programs and summer schools programs; to help have higher accountability and standards for schools but provide extra help to turn around schools that aren't doing it; and to finish the job of putting the 100,000 teachers in the classroom in ways that also enable us to help improve teacher quality and skills and new technologies.

Now, last month Secretary Riley announced funds to help improve our teacher force. Today we're releasing another \$33 million to create teacher quality partnerships in 22 States, to help recruit, train, and license new teachers and support them once they're in the classroom. We have to work on teacher quality, but you can't have a quality teacher unless you have a teacher in the first place.

Here is the arithmetic problem. If their budget passes with a tax cut, it will require us to reduce our investment in education, in Head Start, early reading, and other programs by about 50 percent over the next 10 years. And over and above their tax cut, even this year

they have put themselves in a position where they are going to have to cut education now. Either they have to dip into the Social Security surplus, something they said they wouldn't do, or cut next year's education budget by nearly 20 percent.

Now, this is basic arithmetic, the kind of things you learn in Brooke Grove. It's basic arithmetic that if schools have record enrollments for 4 years in a row and a third of the schools are in need of repair, you need more teachers and better schools. It's basic arithmetic when 2 million teachers are about to retire, and all the evidence says smaller classes produce higher learning, that you need more teachers, especially in the early grades. It is basic arithmetic, in other words, that if we want the kind of America for our children that they deserve in the new century, we must invest more, not less, in education.

And let me say, this should not be a partisan issue. I think in most communities in America, it isn't. Congresswoman Morella's presence here today and the truly fine record she has established in education proved that Republicans and Democrats can get along on this issue. This is a dispute we're having with the leadership. But it is not too late.

The nature of things in Washington is everything gets done in the 11th hour. It's now about 10:30. [Laughter] And I'm here because I want America to see what you have done, and because I want America to believe that what you have done can be done in every classroom in this country, and because I want America to say, "Let's put first things first." Nothing is more important than our children. Let's take care of them, their economic future, what will happen to their parents and grandparents, and America will do fine.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:02 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland; State Senate President Thomas V. (Mike) Miller, Jr.; Nancy S. Grasmick, State superintendent of schools; Reginald M. Felton, president, Montgomery County Board of Education; teachers Dale Tepper and Barbara Husted; and reading specialist Susan Robin Davis, who introduced the President.

Statement on the Conclusion of the Independent Counsel's Investigation of Henry G. Cisneros

September 7, 1999

Henry has been a dedicated public official who served the American people and this administration with distinction. He is also a good

friend. I am pleased that this matter is finally behind him, and I wish him and his family all the best.

Message on the Observance of Rosh Hashana, 1999

September 7, 1999

Warm greetings to all who are celebrating Rosh Hashana.

During this season of renewal and redemption, Jews from across the nation and around the world heed the sound of the *shofar* announcing the beginning of the High Holy Days and gather together with family and friends to celebrate the creation of the world and the beginning of the new year.

Rosh Hashana is a time for rejoicing, but it also is a time for serious prayer and reflection. Jews give thanks for their blessings and repent for their mistakes. They resolve to change what they can to make the new year better than the last.

Regrettably, this past year saw too many examples of hatred and violence inspired by igno-

rance and prejudice. We all can learn from the Jewish people's strong dedication to civil rights and tolerance, and we all must redouble our efforts to combat the forces of intolerance that still linger in our society.

As we celebrate Rosh Hashana, I urge all Americans to join the Jewish community and to come together as a nation to speak out against hate crimes and to appreciate our common humanity. Together, we can work to ensure that the tragedies of the past year are not repeated and that the coming year is filled with happiness and peace.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a meaningful observance.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks to the NBA Champion San Antonio Spurs

September 7, 1999

Thank you very much. Please be seated, everyone.

Welcome to the White House. I want to say a special word of welcome to Peter Holt, to Gregg Popovich, obviously, to the San Antonio Spurs. We're also joined today by four Members of the House of Representatives from the great State of Texas: Congressmen Gonzalez, Rodriguez, Bonilla, and Edwards. And we thank them for being here.

I want to acknowledge the team captains, Avery Johnson and David Robinson, who is the only graduate of the Naval Academy playing in the NBA. That's important, because I have to

stick up for the service academies here. It's part of my job, you know. [Laughter] I'd also like to offer a special word of welcome to Sean Elliott. He's had a tough few months; we're glad to see him here. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Everybody who works around here at the White House and who knows me knows that I am a basketball fanatic. You know, I live for the NCAA finals and the NBA finals, and I follow basketball very closely. And I've been fortunate enough to be good friends with two or three reasonably successful basketball coaches, who have taught me a little about the game.

And it's really—it's a lot like politics. You get ahead, and then you get behind. [Laughter] Then you try to get ahead again. And normally, you don't know whether you're going to win until right before the end of the game.

And I like this team. They started 6 and 8, and finished 46 and 7. And when we were watching the NBA, the semifinals and the finals—and I always have people come over and watch the games with us—and one night Hillary and I were watching with a bunch of our friends, one of whom was from one of the other towns you were playing, Coach. [Laughter] And he kept cheering and cheering and cheering. And finally, Hillary looked at him and said, "Now, tell the truth. Don't you think the Spurs are the best team in basketball this year?" And he said, "Well, of course." [Laughter]

And I don't think there's much more you can say. This is a team with enormous talent, enormous dedication, a steel will, and a great heart. And they won because they deserved to win. And I think all of us who love this sport, not just people from San Antonio or from Texas, were elated by their success, because they deserved it, and they earned it. And I'm glad to welcome them all to the White House today.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, Peter Holt, chairman, Gregg Popovich, coach and general manager, and team member Avery Johnson made brief remarks.]

You know, there's a thousand things I'd like to say. [Laughter] I identify with a lot of people on the scene. You know, when the commentators kept saying, every time Avery was not guarded, he scored—did you notice that? And they kept referring to one person who made

the mistake of saying he really didn't belong in the NBA and could never lead a team to a championship. You know, when I was Governor of Arkansas, that's what they said about me when I was running for President. I identify with that. [Laughter]

And then every time things were slightly in doubt, the television camera would do this close-up on Tim Duncan's eyes—[laughter]—and I knew they were going to win. I'm trying to develop that killer look. [Laughter] We're about to enter all these tough budget negotiations, and I'm trying to visualize what Duncan looked like when it got really close, you know. [Laughter] But if any of you guys want to stay around and help me through the next month, you're welcome to do it. [Laughter] Government scale's a little low for you, but it's rewarding work; it's rewarding work. [Laughter]

Let me just say one thing, seriously. I don't want to talk about the contents of it. But one of the most interesting telephone conversations I ever had in my life—with someone I had never met, especially—was with Coach Popovich, when I called to congratulate him. And I realized that he was a man with a keen understanding of human nature and the human spirit and what it really takes to make good things happen. And I want to thank you publicly for that conversation and for your remembering what we talked about as we walked in today. I'd say you've got a good chance to repeat.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to team members Sean Elliott and Tim Duncan.

Satellite Remarks Launching the NetAid Website September 8, 1999

Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General. I am delighted to share this historic moment with you, with President Mandela, with Prime Minister Blair, and all our friends supporting NetAid.

The launching of this website represents a truly important new front in the struggle against poverty. Information technology has been vital to the prosperity achieved by many nations this

decade, including ours. The people of the world have never communicated better or more easily, and that has spawned countless new ideas and opportunities.

But it's also a fact that this prosperity has been very uneven within and among countries. The democratic promise of the Internet, therefore, is not yet fulfilled, because vast populations

around the world still have no access to computers at all. Through USAID, the United States Government has pledged millions of dollars to build Internet access in other countries, especially in Africa. But the gulf between the haves and the have-nots is growing much too quickly.

Today we build a bridge across that gulf. NetAid is the creation of a remarkable partnership combining the international reach of the United Nations development program and the powerful resources of the private sector.

I want to thank Cisco Systems' John Chambers as well as the other technology companies. Thanks to them, one of the largest websites ever built has been created to spread information about extreme poverty and to help concerned citizens do something about it. The site will be available around the world, including places where Internet access has been limited, so that a farmer in Africa can find out more about fighting drought; a woman hoping to start a business in Bangladesh can find investors from other countries; a school in Indiana can raise money for a school in Indonesia.

I commend all the sponsors of NetAid for their generosity and vision. And like millions of people, I'm looking forward to the simultaneous concerts on October 9th.

Some people say the rise of the Internet will inevitably bring the world together; some say it will inevitably widen the gap between rich and poor nations. But nothing is inevitable. We have a choice about the future we will build. NetAid sends a powerful signal that we intend to make the Internet an instrument for bettering all our lives, not just those wealthy enough to afford a computer. The millennium should be a time for joining and common purpose. Today we do just that. NetAid will make our global village more responsible and a lot more global.

Now, it is my honor to be the first person from North America to log on to the site. And thank you very much.

Back to you, Mr. Secretary-General.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 12:20 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and John T. Chambers, president and chief executive officer, Cisco Systems, Inc. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Health Care

September 8, 1999

Thank you very much. Dr. Copeland; Mrs. Copeland; Secretary Shalala, thank you for your outstanding leadership; Surgeon General Satcher; OPM Director Lachance; to all the advocates here for seniors, for children, for people with disabilities; representatives of the various health care organizations.

I am of the opinion that there's really not much left for me to say. *[Laughter]* You know, since I've been in this office and this wonderful old house, I've tried to use this room as sort of a classroom for America, to bring people here who actually have firsthand experience of the challenges we face, the opportunities we have, and to try to provide them this microphone and these cameras and this bully pulpit to speak to America and to bring more of America here to Washington, DC.

We've had a lot of very moving events here, but Dr. Copeland, I don't think anybody has ever done a better job of bringing the reality of what it's like to deal with the health care challenges of ordinary people from all walks of life on a daily basis as you have today. And I thank you very much for that.

Secretary Shalala talked quite a bit about the record we have worked hard to establish here on health care issues. I want to thank two people who aren't here today: first, my wife, because of the role Hillary played in extending health insurance coverage to 5 million children, and now we have all the States signed up for the Children's Health Insurance Program; and I want to thank the Vice President for the critical role he has played in fighting for the Patients' Bill of Rights, for our long-term care

tax credit, for our plan to strengthen Medicare and to include prescription drug coverage. And I appreciated the agenda he set out yesterday for expanding affordable health care to children and families who don't have it in the 21st century, something that I still believe needs to be done.

You know, I heard quite a bit about Dr. Copeland before he came here, and one of the things I heard is that his youngest daughter, who just started college a week ago, is such a good student, she's already been guaranteed admission to medical school. If somebody had figured out a way for me to get around organic chemistry, I might have had a different career. [Laughter] That's a wonderful achievement.

But the truth is, there are doctors all across our country today who having given their lives to the health of their patients, have genuine reservations about whether their children should go into medicine. They feel that for all the miracles of modern medicine, doctors are too often hamstrung by accountants, and too often the needs of their patients don't come first. You just heard a pretty good accounting.

I know that you, Doctor, are overjoyed that your own child wants to be a doctor, because you know that we have the power to do what it takes to put patients first again, which means you have faith in the health of our political system.

There are a lot of pessimists who think that nothing's going to happen here this fall, that the parties are just going to fight and maneuver and get ready for next year. I think they're wrong. For one thing, ever since we've had this divided Government, we normally have to wait until the 11th hour for really good things to happen. I've grown used to it. As I said a couple of days ago, it is now 10:30; we're ready for the 11th hour. [Laughter]

But after years of debate and genuine disagreement on a lot of these issues, I think a new and increasingly bipartisan consensus is emerging on the importance of giving patients the health and privacy protections they need, on strengthening and modernizing Medicare, on saving teenagers from the ravages from tobacco, on expanding health care coverage for uninsured children, and empowering adults with disabilities and making long-term care more affordable. But this growing bipartisan consensus will amount to little if the Republican leadership refuses to schedule a vote on the health care legislation.

If they permit the votes, this fall could be one of the most important ones for health care reform in many, many years. If there is nothing but delay, it's just like delaying a patient; it will only make the cure harder. Sooner or later, we're going to have to face up to all these issues. We ought to do it sooner rather than later. It's a simple choice, familiar to every doctor: act early, prevent problems; or act later, at greater cost, with more heartbreak and human loss.

The American people are counting on all their leaders, of both parties, to take the wise former course. First and foremost, the Republican leaders must make the responsible choice to protect 160 million Americans who rely on managed care, with a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. In August Representatives Dingell and Norwood introduced a bipartisan bill that rejects the wholly inadequate, watered-down approach taken by the Senate. It now has a clear majority support in the House of Representatives. That means both Republicans and Democrats are for it.

The Republican leaders, therefore, owe it to the American people to schedule a vote on this bill. They must not give in to pressure to tack on extraneous provisions that would jeopardize the remarkable bipartisan consensus, in the hope that they can make it so bad that I will have to veto it, and then claim it's not their responsibility after all.

The American people deserve the right to see a specialist. They deserve the right to go to the nearest emergency room if they're hurt in an accident. They deserve the right to maintain the same doctor during pregnancy or chemotherapy treatment. They deserve the right to an internal and an external review process; the right to know that their doctor can openly discuss the best treatment options, not just the cheapest; the right to hold health plans accountable for bad decisions.

More than 200 health care and consumer organizations strongly support these protections. Estimates based on Congressional Budget Office figures show that the protections would cost no more than \$2 a month a policy.

Now, as you all know, all of you in this room, I have already established these protections by Executive order for everybody under a Federal health care plan, and our costs are less than \$1 a month a policy. Now, whether we're right

or they're right, it's a small price to pay for peace of mind and quality health care.

Second, I challenge the Republican leadership to join with me to work out a plan to strengthen and modernize Medicare for the 21st century. For more than three decades, Medicare has been a lifeline to dignified retirement. You heard what the doctor said about his own patients. But with people living longer and the retirement of the baby boomers approaching, the Medicare Trust Fund is scheduled to become insolvent in 2015. Now, keep in mind there will be twice as many people over 65 by 2030 as there are today.

Today, anybody that lives to be 65 has a life expectancy of 82. By then, it will be considerably higher. By then, there will only be about two people working for every one retired. We have got to do this now, when we have the funds to do so.

I've asked Congress to dedicate more than \$300 billion of the projected surplus over the next 10 years to take the Trust Fund out past 2025. That's the longest it's been in a long, long time. But we need to do it, with the retirement of the baby boomers approaching.

I challenge Congress to introduce new mechanisms of competition, to improve quality, to control costs. I've challenged Congress to modernize Medicare by helping seniors and people with disabilities pay for prescription drugs. I have also set aside a fund to deal with the Medicare problems that we now have because of the budget decisions made in the '99 balanced budget act, which have imposed severe problems on a lot of our teaching hospitals, some of our therapy services, and other problems of which many of you in this room are quite familiar.

Before the August recess, Senator Roth, the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, committed to mark up a Medicare reform package by early October. I salute him for that. With the leadership of Senator Roth and Senator Moynihan, we can get a bipartisan consensus on what to do about Medicare. I don't expect them to agree with everything I want to do. What I want them to do is sit down and talk with me, and let's agree on the objectives. We have to lengthen the life of the Trust Fund. It is irresponsible for us to leave here with the Trust Fund scheduled to go out of money in 2015, with this projected surplus. It is irresponsible for us to leave here without

dealing with the plain problems being faced today because of Medicare financing difficulties. And I strongly believe it is irresponsible for us to leave here without providing for some prescription drug coverage.

If we were designing Medicare today, there's no way in the wide world we'd have a Medicare program without some prescription drug coverage. And you know as well as I do that these medicines are going to do more and more and more, if properly taken, to lengthen the life and improve the quality of life, of people, and eventually to cut the cost of hospitalization and other more extensive interventions. So we ought to do this now. This should not wait 2 more years. We should do it now.

The third thing I ask the Republican leadership to join me on is to make a responsible choice to protect the sanctity of medical records. You know, to the average person, this seems like a no-brainer, a lay-down. It's actually quite a hot issue, because there are people who do not want to protect the sanctity of medical records. But as more and more of these records are stored electronically, the threats to our privacy will only increase.

We know that protecting medical records has been a genuine priority for leaders in both parties. But the longstanding deadline for action by Congress came and went more than 2 weeks ago. If Congress does not soon pass legislation to protect patient records, I will honor the pledge I made to the American people in the State of the Union to do so through executive action. If need be, I will issue these new protections this fall. We should not delay this anymore.

But again, I don't want this to become a fight either between the executive and the legislative branch, or between the two parties. I would far rather have legislation so that the American people can look to Washington and see people in both parties saying that your medical information belongs to you and you alone. Only you can control how it is used.

The fourth challenge I want to issue to the leadership is to make sure that we make the responsible choice to allow people with disabilities to keep their health insurance when they go to work.

Now, there is huge bipartisan support for this. Last June the Senate unanimously adopted the bill, sponsored by Senators Jeffords and Kennedy, Roth and Moynihan, that would finally

end the system that says to people with disabilities: If you want to go to work, you've got to give up your health insurance and, therefore, you'll have to spend more every month than you can possibly make.

Now, we have worked hard to end the disincentives that for too long kept people on welfare out of the work force. These disincentives are even more severe for people with disabilities, with serious health care problems.

I met a man in New Hampshire a few months ago who, if he had to pay his own health bills, would have had bills of \$40,000 a year, and he desperately wanted to take a \$28,000 job. Now, we're out the \$40,000 anyway. Forget about the human impact on his life and his community and his family. Wouldn't you rather have the man making \$28,000 and giving some of it back in taxes as a productive citizen, having him out there as a role model, having people see what people can do if given the chance to live up to their God-given abilities? This is foolish. It is time to schedule a vote on the work incentive improvement act in the House of Representatives.

Now, the bill has 231 cosponsors in the House, so it's got bipartisan support. Now, most of you here know what the problem is. This bill costs money; under our budget rules, we have to pay for it. I gave them a way to pay for it; they don't like my way to pay for it. I say, "Okay, if you don't like my way, bring me another way." But we can't—when a bill gets this kind of support in Congress—and believe me, instead of 231, the number would be 400 in the House if we didn't have this dispute. They don't like the way I want to pay for it. Okay, it's a big government; there are lots of options. [Laughter]

But any way to pay for this within reason is better than letting one more year go by where people have to give up a precious year of their life when they could be working and being fulfilled and making a contribution to our country when it will not cost us, really, any more money.

So I say, I understand what the problem is. We'll be reasonable. We'll work with you. But we cannot walk away from this session of Congress without passing this legislation. It will change the lives of tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of Americans, with one simple bill.

Fifth, I challenge the Republican leaders to make the responsible choice to prevent yet another generation of children from being lured

into smoking and becoming addicted to it. More than 400,000 Americans each year die of smoking-related diseases; almost 90 percent of them started smoking as teenagers. All the studies confirm that the price of cigarettes is one of the most effective ways to prevent kids from starting to smoke in the first place.

My balanced budget raises the price by 55 cents a pack. It's good health policy; it's good fiscal policy. It will help us to save the Social Security Trust Fund, and it will allow us to honor our commitments by aiding both parents and children. For these reasons, Congress should side with America's families, and not with the tobacco lobby. We don't want to let another opportunity go up in smoke.

Sixth, I challenge the Republican leaders to make the responsible choice to expand health coverage for the children of working families. Today, as I said, with the approval of the plan submitted by Washington and Wyoming, all 50 States and territories have now joined the children's health insurance initiative. Unfortunately, even with full participation from the States, there are still, literally, millions of children who are eligible for help who have not begun to receive it; and other children, like legal immigrants and foster children turning 18, who also need coverage.

Once again I ask the Congress to fully fund the initiative that I gave them to help the States provide the coverage to the kids. We did this initiative together. When we passed the bipartisan balanced budget bill, it had heavy majority support from both parties in both Houses, heavy majority support in both parties in both Houses. And this was one of the things that I think all the Members were most proud of.

Now, we've got a million and a half kids signed up, and we've appropriated money for 5 million kids. And we've simply got to do more to sign these children up. This is a modest cost for a huge return.

Seventh, I asked the Republican leaders to make the responsible choice by helping families cope with the strains of long-term care. In our balanced budget—in the balanced budget, having nothing to do with the surplus or the tax cut or any of that, I proposed a tax credit and other initiatives aimed at helping elderly, ailing, and people with disabilities or the families who care for them to deal with the cost of long-term care. This will become a bigger and bigger challenge as America ages. People will want to

make different kinds of choices based on the facts of their family situation or the facts of the problems of people needing long-term care. That's why I believe the best thing we can do for them now is to give them a tax credit. It is a good beginning, and I hope we can pass it.

Finally, I ask the leaders to join with me in choosing wisely to continue to invest in public health. I'm talking about investing to begin closing the devastating health gaps we see that Surgeon General Satcher has done so much work on in Native American, African-American, Hispanic, and other communities; investing and treating and preventing mental illness; investing in the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

Now, usually, I don't give a talk with eight points—[laughter]—because I'm always—you give a test, and people are lucky to remember four. But I felt better after the Doctor went over most of them. [Laughter] I felt like it was almost a prescription after he got through. This is not a laundry list. They are like eight panels of a protective umbrella for America's future. They're connected; they work together; they'll help millions of Americans weather the many changes in our health care system and the inevitable changes in their own lives.

Health care cannot be a partisan issue. It hasn't been, and it shouldn't be. I was glad

to hear the doctor say that he was referring to his Republican and Democratic patients. You know, every time I give this talk, I say that no one asks you—when you show up at the doctor's office and you fill out those endless forms, there's no box for Republican, Democrat, or independent. [Laughter]

And we see now in Washington a mood change that has already been out there for a long, long time in the country. You see it in the people coming over for the Patients' Bill of Rights; in the people saying, "Yes, we want to provide the opportunity for people with disabilities to go to work." You see it in the efforts we have with children's health insurance.

So I am optimistic about the future. I think the Copelands' daughter will have a good time being a doctor, just like her father did. I think we will make meaningful progress in this session. The bipartisan votes are out there. Nothing can stop it unless the votes aren't scheduled or we decide not to talk. We've got to schedule the votes, and all of you know I'm always willing to talk. [Laughter]

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Lanny R. Copeland, president, American Academy of Family Physicians, his wife, Mica, and their daughter, Mary Anne.

Statement on the Earthquake in Greece September 8, 1999

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I extend our profound sympathy to the loved ones of those who have lost their lives and to those injured in yesterday's earthquake in Greece. Last month people around the world were moved by Greece's generous assistance to Turkey in the wake of the devastating earthquake

that struck near Istanbul. Now we have seen the same spirit of cooperation in President Demirel's pledge of support for the Greek people in their hour of need. We, too, are prepared to help the Greek Government respond to the disaster.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Dominican Republic-United States Stolen Vehicle Treaty

September 8, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Dominican Republic for the Return of Stolen or Embezzled Vehicles, with Annexes, signed at Santo Domingo on April 30, 1996. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of stolen vehicles treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to eliminate the difficulties faced by

owners of vehicles that have been stolen and transported across international borders. When it enters into force, it will be an effective tool to facilitate the return of U.S. vehicles that have been stolen or embezzled and taken to the Dominican Republic.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty, with Annexes, and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 8, 1999.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings

September 8, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 15, 1997, and signed on behalf of the United States of America on January 12, 1998. The report of the Department of State with respect to the Convention is also transmitted for the information of the Senate.

In recent years, we have witnessed an unprecedented and intolerable increase in acts of terrorism involving bombings in public places in various parts of the world. The United States initiated the negotiations of this convention in the aftermath of the June 1996 bombing attack on U.S. military personnel in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in which 17 U.S. Air Force personnel were killed as the result of a truck bombing. That attack followed other terrorist attacks including poison gas attacks in Tokyo's subways; bombing attacks by HAMAS in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem; and a bombing attack by the IRA in Manchester, England. Last year's terrorist attacks upon United States embassies in Nairobi

and Dar es Salaam are recent examples of such bombings, and no country or region is exempt from the human tragedy and immense costs that result from such criminal acts. Although the penal codes of most states contain provisions proscribing these kinds of attacks, this Convention provides, for the first time, an international framework for cooperation among states directed toward prevention of such incidents and ensuing punishment of offenders, wherever found.

In essence, the Convention imposes binding legal obligations upon States Parties either to submit for prosecution or to extradite any person within their jurisdiction who commits an offense as defined in Article 2, attempts to commit such an act, participates as an accomplice, organizes or directs others to commit such an offense, or in any other way contributes to the commission of an offense by a group of persons acting with a common purpose. A State Party is subject to these obligations without regard to the place where the alleged act covered by Article 2 took place.

Article 2 of the Convention declares that any person commits an offense within the meaning of the Convention if that person unlawfully and

intentionally delivers, places, discharges or detonates an explosive or other lethal device in, into or against a place of public use, a state or government facility, a public transportation system, or an infrastructure facility, with the intent (a) to cause death or serious bodily injury or (b) cause extensive destruction of such a place, facility or system, where such destruction results in or is likely to result in major economic loss. States Parties to the Convention will also be obligated to provide one another legal assistance in investigations or criminal or extradition proceedings brought in respect of the offenses set forth in Article 2.

The recommended legislation necessary to implement the Convention will be submitted to the Congress separately.

Remarks on Combating Crime *September 9, 1999*

Thank you very much, Mayor Webb, for your words and your work and your friendship. Thank you, Commissioner Timoney, for the example that you and so many others in law enforcement set. I want to thank all the mayors here today. There's really quite an amazing array of our Nation's chief executives of our cities, and Republicans and Democrats alike. Thank you all for coming.

I thank the county officials who are here, the police chiefs and others in law enforcement who are here, and those of you who are here supporting them from the National Council of Churches and other groups.

I want to thank Attorney General Reno and Secretary Summers and Secretary Cuomo, Deputy Attorney General Holder, Treasury Under Secretary for Enforcement Jim Johnson. They are some of the team and the heart of the team that we have had working at this crime issue now for 6½ years. And any success that our administration has enjoyed, I think belongs in large measure to them as well as to the remarkable partnership that we have enjoyed with all of you, and I thank them for that.

There have already been a couple of references made to the fact that many of you were with me here in the White House way back in January of 1994 when I asked you to walk

This Convention is a vitally important new element in the campaign against the scourge of international terrorism. I hope that all states will become Parties to this Convention, and that it will be applied universally. I recommend, therefore, that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention, subject to the understandings and reservation that are described in the accompanying State Department report.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

September 8, 1999.

a beat in the Halls of Congress to put more police on the street, to ban assault weapons, to keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them, to fund local prevention programs, to help keep our kids out of trouble in the first place even as we have tougher punishment for serious, violent crimes.

At the time, I think most people in this country assumed that the crime rate would go up forever and that nothing could be done to bring it down substantially. But I didn't believe that, because I had seen from neighborhoods in Los Angeles to the street I walked with Mayor Rendell in Philadelphia and to many other places that I have been with many of you from late 1991 through 1993 that the crime rate was already going down in places where people had done what makes sense to reconnect police officers to their communities and to take sensible preventive measures.

Well, with a lot of effort, a lot of blood on the floor, and the sacrifice—I think we should never forget the sacrifice—of some Members' seats in the United States Congress, we did pass the 1994 crime bill. A lot of people used that passage to go home in 1994 and then try to terrify the voters that we were going to take away all their hunting and sporting rights. And others said it was a great waste of money, that

it would never lower the crime rate. Others said there would never be any police put on the street. I heard it all.

But thanks to the mayors, the law enforcement chiefs, the county officials, and others involved in trying to make our streets safer, this strategy has worked beyond all expectations: the lowest murder rate in 30 years, the lowest overall crime rate in 26 years, violent crime down by 27 percent in the last 6 years nationwide. And in many smaller ways, crimes like vandalism that undermine our quality of life have also dropped dramatically.

I know that one reason this has happened is that we have enjoyed the longest peacetime expansion in our history, and we have 19.4 million new jobs. But every single serious analysis of this phenomenon has also shown that a major portion of the credit belongs to sensible law enforcement and prevention strategies and especially to the strategy of community policing and day-to-day involvement in the communities.

I see Mayor Menino from Boston here. Many of you know that Boston went virtually 2 years without any young person being killed in a violent act. You cannot explain those kind of results, which we have seen in the neighborhoods of every person represented in this audience, simply by economic improvement. We now know what works, and more and more mayors and law enforcement officials and other local officials are doing what works. All we've tried to do is to give you the tools to do it.

We've now funded, ahead of schedule and under budget, the 100,000 community police officers promised in the 1994 crime bill. Working together, we have created, I believe, all across the country, across party lines and jurisdictional lines, a new consensus on how to fight crime and violence, on what works. But, as Mayor Webb said, we have been reminded in recent months from Los Angeles to Littleton to Atlanta to what happened in Illinois and Indiana, gun violence is still too much a part of America's life.

We've learned a lot about it and what it takes to reduce it in the last 6 years, and we know that we need to do some more things. But once again, just as I asked you 6 years ago, you have to walk a beat in Congress if you want the results. We have to send the message that out in America, this is not a partisan issue; this is simply a commonsense issue about what does and doesn't work. Mayors and police chiefs, Re-

publicans and Democrats all work on the frontlines. They know the cost of inaction; they know the benefits of prudent action.

You also know that the Federal Government needs to be a partner in giving you the tools to do your jobs. Today the Justice Department will take another step in that direction by releasing \$146 million in grants to hundreds of law enforcement agencies across our country to hire nearly 1,600 more police officers, including over 750 who will walk a new beat, the halls of our schools, to protect our children.

I am also pleased that the Department of Housing and Urban Development will invest \$15 million to help public housing agencies, working with the police, to get guns off the street through gun buy-back programs.

A lot of you have already invested in efforts like these where citizens can exchange their guns for food or clothing or small sums of cash. They have been successfully pioneered at the local level. I just want the Federal Government to lend a hand to do more.

We know that too many neighborhoods still are awash in guns, and that's not just through crime; that is just not through crime that guns lead to tragedy. You heard Mayor Webb mention the tragic case in Gary, Indiana. Listen to this: The rate of accidental shooting deaths for children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate for the other 25 industrialized nations combined. If any of you have or ever had a child in those wonderful, glowing years, that makes a lasting impression. I'm going to say it one more time: The rate of accidental shooting deaths for children under 15 in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate of the other 25 industrialized nations combined. Every gun turned in through a buy-back program means, potentially, one less tragedy. And there's more we can do to help you as well.

As all of you know, in the balanced budget, I proposed funding through our COPS program that would allow us to put another 30-50,000 police on the street in the neighborhoods that still have very high crime rates, to concentrate more resources where they're most needed.

You are doing your part; now it's time for Congress to do its part. Unfortunately, there is the chance that it will go in the other direction. The budget approved by the Republican leaders would cut our successful COPS program policing in half, really by more than half.

First, they said it wouldn't work in '94, and it was a colossal waste of money. Now that it has worked and it's made the streets safer, they still want to cut it. The tax plan that the leadership is supporting would threaten law enforcement across the board. It would force reduction in the numbers of Federal agents that work with your local officials. It would cut deeply into our support for State and local law enforcement.

To make matters worse, Congress has yet to pass a commonsense juvenile crime bill to prevent youth violence and keep guns out of the wrong hands. It's been over a month now since the House and the Senate conferees met, nearly 5 months since the shootings at Columbine. America is still waiting for Congress to act. It shouldn't take another tragedy to make this a priority, though we've had plenty of them in the last 5 months.

Now, the lawmakers are back in town. It would be unconscionable if they were to leave again without sending me a balanced bipartisan juvenile crime bill that closes the gun show loophole, I mean, really closes the gun show loophole, requires child safety locks on guns, and bans the importation of large-capacity ammunition clips.

We need legislation that will strengthen our present laws, not weaken them. We need legislation that applies to all gun shows, not a bill that allows criminals to turn flea markets and parking lots into open-air gun bazaars. And we need legislation that strengthens, not weakens, the Brady background checks.

These Brady checks are working. They've stopped over 410,000 felons, fugitives, and other prohibited persons from buying guns since 1993 when the Brady bill became law. In just the last 7 months, since our new instant criminal background check system went into effect, 100,000 illegal purchases have been stopped by the insta-check system. Today the Justice and Treasury Departments are releasing reports analyzing the effectiveness of the instant check system.

The report makes two things very clear. First, the system does provide law enforcement with a powerful new crime-fighting tool while causing little inconvenience for law-abiding gun purchasers. Listen to this: Seventy-three percent of the checks are completed within minutes, 95 percent in 2 hours or less. That's the good news. But second, the report also makes clear that

it is critically important to give law enforcement sufficient time to thoroughly check records. In fact, less than 5 percent of background checks take longer than 24 hours. But those purchasers, whose checks do take longer than 24 hours, are almost 20 times more likely to be convicted felons or otherwise prohibited from owning firearms.

Now, what does that mean? It means Congress did a good thing in pushing the instant check system. That's a good thing, and all of us should acknowledge that. It's a good thing. Anything that minimizes inconvenience to law-abiding people is a good thing. But it also means that our law enforcement officials should not be artificially required to get all this done within a window of time that is so small and that would inconvenience only 5 percent of the people by going more than a day who, themselves, are 20 times more likely to be prohibited from making purchases in the first place. So everybody, I think, will take heart from the results of this study. They will see that the instant check system is a good thing. And that is good.

But I would also hope that everyone will take heart from the sobering fact that the 5 percent that take longer than a day are 20 times more likely to be prohibited purchasers and not unduly tie the hands of our law enforcement officials who do this work. So let me be blunt. The NRA was right to support the instant check system; they're wrong when they try to tie the hands of the law enforcement officials to look at the last 5 percent, and I would hope the Congress would do that.

In the next few weeks, this juvenile crime bill is but one of an enormous number of opportunities Congress will have, thanks to our present prosperity, to pull our country together and to move our country forward. We have an historic opportunity to lift the burden of debt off the next generation. We can literally not only continue to pay down the debt, but America, in 15 years, if we stay on the present path, could be debt-free for the first time since 1835. That would guarantee a whole generation of low interest rates and prosperity.

We have an opportunity to strengthen Social Security and take it out beyond the lifespan of the baby boom generation, to strengthen Medicare and reform it with prescription drug coverage. We have an opportunity to invest in our children's future with world-class schools and safer streets. The tax plan passed by the

Republican leadership would not permit these priorities to be pursued. We could never pay off the debt; it doesn't add a day to the life of the Social Security or the Medicare Trust Funds; it doesn't provide for prescription drug coverage and would require cuts in education and law enforcement. The cuts in education and law enforcement could be up to 50 percent.

Now, in 1994, because we worked together, we passed the crime bill that enables us to come here and celebrate today, to enable every mayor to sit here and say, "I wish the President were telling this story about my hometown. There is this thing I wish was mentioned today." And back home, people are celebrating, and no one asks you when you're a victim of a crime whether you're a Republican or a Democrat.

And once a person gets elected, when the mayor walks down the street and we're talking about saving lives, no one cares what your party is; they just want people to be safe. We've come a long way since 1994 with a simple strategy: more police, fewer guns in the wrong hands. We don't want to adopt laws and budgets which would give us the reverse: fewer police and more guns in the wrong hands. No one in Amer-

ica wants that to happen. And there is, today, a bipartisan majority in the Congress that does not want that to happen.

So, again, I implore the leadership of the Congress to work with us, to give us safer streets and a brighter future. In 1994 we were having a discussion, a debate based on what we thought would work, based on a year or 2 of experience in a few places. In 1999 there is no reasonable debate. We now have 6 years of what works. We have proven avalanches of indisputable evidence about what it takes to have safe streets and safe futures for our children. It is an American issue beyond the confines of the Capital City, and it should become America's cause as Congress returns to work.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver, CO; Police Commissioner John Timoney and Mayor Edward G. Rendell of Philadelphia, PA; and Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston, MA.

Remarks on the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit and an Exchange With Reporters *September 9, 1999*

The President. Good afternoon. Before I leave on my trip for New Zealand, I wanted to say a few words about the trip and a couple of other issues. These APEC summits started in 1993 when I first invited the leaders of the Asia-Pacific region to meet in Seattle, Washington. They bring together the leaders of more than half the world's people and half of its economic activity.

What we do there will help to decide whether the global economy continues to move in the direction of greater openness and integration, equity, and growth in the next century. This year one of my most important goals is to get a commitment on the part of all our Asian-Pacific partners to rapid, wide-ranging market opening so that we can launch a new trade round at the WTO meeting in Seattle in De-

cember. We must stand together against protectionism and for a common future of prosperity.

During the global financial crisis over the last 2 years, the fact that the United States kept its markets open bolstered Asia and the world. It helped to keep the crisis from becoming even worse, and it certainly helped to turn it around. All of this was good for American workers, as you can see by the continued low unemployment rate in our country.

I will meet with Prime Minister Obuchi and President Kim in Auckland to have the opportunity to discuss not only economic issues but also the difficult issues surrounding our relationships with North Korea. I will also meet with President Jiang and with the new Russian Prime Minister, Mr. Putin. We will be meeting following a difficult period in Asia.

There are encouraging signs of recovery from South Korea to Thailand to Japan. There are also continuing difficulties, as all of you know, caused by everything from economic distress to neglect of human rights. Nowhere are those difficulties more pressing than in Indonesia. It is the fourth-largest country in the world and the largest Islamic country. It has been undergoing an important democratic transformation. It has the capacity to lift an entire region if it succeeds, and to swamp its neighbors in a sea of disorder if it fails.

East Timor

Precisely because Indonesia's future is important, I am so deeply concerned by the failure of its military to bring a stop to gross abuses now going on in East Timor. After 24 years, the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence. Now, there are forces who want to reverse the popular will. At stake are the lives and way of life of innocent people. At issue is whether the democratically expressed will of the people can be overturned by violence and intimidation.

Also at stake is Indonesia's own transition to civilian democratic rule. For these reasons, we will continue with our allies in Asia and elsewhere to make it clear that we expect the authorities to live up to their word and to their responsibilities.

The Indonesian Government and military are responsible for the safety of the East Timorese and of the U.N. mission there. If Indonesia does not end the violence, it must invite—it must invite—the international community to assist in restoring security. It must allow international relief agencies to help people on the ground. It must move forward with the transition to independence. Having allowed the vote and gotten such a clear, unambiguous answer, we cannot have a reversal of course here.

The overwhelming weight of international opinion, from Asia to Africa to Europe to North America, strongly agrees with this position. Right now, the international financial institutions are not moving forward with substantial new lending to Indonesia. My own willingness to support future assistance will depend very strongly on the way Indonesia handles this situation.

Today I have also ordered the suspension of all programs of military cooperation with Indonesia effective immediately. Our military leaders have made crystal clear to senior military offi-

cials in Indonesia what they must do to restore our confidence. In the past few days, I have made many phone calls with our partners in the region and around the world and with Secretary-General Annan. I applaud the efforts, especially, of Australia to mobilize a multinational force to help provide security in East Timor. I thank all countries that have already agreed to participate.

The United States is prepared to provide support to this Australian-led effort. Although we've made no final decisions, we are consulting with Congress now on the best way to support this mission if it goes forward.

The will of the people of East Timor must not be thwarted. They have a right to live in peace and security, and they have earned and voted for their freedom. This issue obviously will be an important part of our discussions in New Zealand, and I look forward to having the opportunity to meet with all of the leaders on this and the other matters we will discuss. Thank you.

Tax Cuts

Q. Mr. President, Republicans in Congress are saying that if you veto their tax cut package, they're not likely to send you another one. Are tax cuts dead for this year, or will you offer them a little bit more, perhaps, than the \$300 billion you said you might be willing to accept?

The President. My bill is \$250 billion, and it provides almost exactly as much aid to middle class Americans as theirs does. Whether there is a bill, of course, is up to them; they can control what bills come up. But if they're saying, "Well, it's our way or no way," then that is evidence that this has been pretty much about politics all along.

I'm all about progress; I want to get something done. I'd like to see us secure and modernize Medicare. I am willing to work with them on the Social Security issue. I think we ought to run the life of the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation, and I am willing to provide for a modest tax cut that will not undermine our ability to pay down the debt and make this country debt-free over the next 15 years. So I'm willing to work with them.

There is always some flexibility in this budget. We can have an agreement, but it is up to them. They know good and well I'm not going to sign this bill. It's wrong for America; it's

bad for the economy; it will lead to an increase in interest rates and a cut in education spending and a lot of other things that won't be good; and it won't add a day to Social Security or Medicare, and it will undermine our ability to pay down the debt. So they know that. The question is whether we're going to meet and work together. My door is open, and I hope we will.

Go ahead, Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News]. Did you have a question?

Clemency for Members of the FALN

Q. I did, about the FALN. Do you think now that the clemency has been accepted, but these—the prisoners say they are political prisoners; they challenge the restrictions on them. And your disagreement with the First Lady, can you describe to us how you discussed it with her on the issue of clemency?

The President. Well, first of all, let me discuss this issue on the merits so you'll know what happened. It came in what I would call the ordinary course of business from the Counsel's Office, and I received a very detailed statement of the facts and the claims. I was requested by hundreds of people, including President Carter, Bishop Tutu, and many other religious leaders and Members of Congress, to look at this and act favorably on it. And then, obviously, there were those who disagreed.

My judgment was that these people should be offered a conditional clemency for two reasons: One, none of them, even though they belong to an organization which has espoused violent means, none of them were convicted of doing any bodily harm to anyone; and two, they had all served sentences that were considerably longer than they would serve under the sentencing guidelines which control Federal sentencing now. Most of them had been in for somewhere around 19 years; they had served very long sentences for offenses that did not involve bodily harm to other people.

Because I did not believe they should be held in incarceration, in effect, by guilt by association, I agreed to offer them clemency if they would abide by the conditions of parole and specifically renounce violence.

What that means is, if they get out and they violate the conditions of parole, and particularly if they are engaged in any way with people who are espousing violence, that their parole will be revoked and they'll have to go back

to prison. So under those circumstances, I felt then and I still feel that that was the just decision.

She didn't know anything about it, as far as I know, until someone from her office called and asked her for a comment, because I did not discuss it with her. I haven't discussed other clemency issues with her, and I didn't think I should discuss this one. So it was up to her and entirely appropriate for her to say whatever she wanted to about it. But I did what I thought was right, and that's what I'll continue to do.

Gene [Gene Gibbons, Reuters].

Q. As a very skilled politician, using that perspective, if your wife decides on a run for office, does she figure to be hurt by what many people perceive as a flip-flop on the issue of clemency for the Puerto Rican nationalists?

The President. Well, you know, they'll have to evaluate that as they please. You know what she said in her statement; I don't know that that's a flip-flop. I had a different position. I thought they should be given another week. If, in the course of this week, if we had come to tomorrow and they hadn't taken it and I had revoked the offer, would that have been a flip-flop by me? I don't think so.

The reason I felt they should be given to this week is, I knew that their lawyer was actually physically going around to see all of them and would not finish until, I think, yesterday. So I thought they ought to be given that amount of time, and it's a judgment I made.

East Timor

Q. Mr. President, what level of military support are you prepared to provide to any peace-keeping mission, and what recourse do you have if Indonesia continues to refuse an international mission for East Timor?

The President. The answer to the first question is, we're still—we're consulting with the Australians and with others, and we're also talking to interested Members of Congress about this, and no decision has been made. I want the American people to know two things: Number one, the Australians have made it clear that they, being the nearest military authority, intend to play the largest role and provide the lion's share of the effort, and that many other countries have already agreed to contribute.

But, secondly, the United States has been, certainly since the Second World War, and indeed, going back before, heavily involved in the

Asia-Pacific region. The Australians and many of these other countries have been our allies in every difficulty that we have faced, and I believe that we should support them in an appropriate way. But that is something that would still have to be worked out.

Now, the second question you asked is the most difficult one. There are any number of countries that are willing to support this endeavor; there are any number of countries on the Security Council who are willing to support it if Indonesia will ask. The problem is, we're in this interim period where the East Timorese have voted for independence, but East Timor is still a part of Indonesia, and we're going through this transition period.

The frustrating thing to me—and I don't know how many phone calls I've made the last 3 or 4 days about this, but the thing that's frustrating people all over the world is, they either can't or won't stop the violence, which is leading people to leave. But they don't want to admit they can't, so they don't want to ask anybody else to come in. That is why I have made the statements I've made today about economic aid and the military cooperation.

I tried to do this with telephone calls, working with others. I have seen the frustration and the anxiety in the voice of the Portuguese Prime Minister and any other number of leaders who are passionately concerned about this area, and obviously Prime Minister Howard in Australia, Prime Minister Shipley in New Zealand, and others. We are doing our best. Kofi Annan is doing his best. He sent a U.N. delegation there. They arrived there yesterday. So this may be a question that you'll have to ask me again tomorrow and the next day and the next day, because I don't have a clear answer for you yet.

Q. What are they telling you? What are the Indonesians telling you, and have you thought of economic sanctions?

Q. [*Inaudible*—force change in Indonesia right now would suspend temporarily IMF and World Bank, who are set to go there. Do you think that's the right approach?

The President. First of all, I think today the right thing to do is to make it clear what our intentions are. And our intentions are: one, to stop military and military cooperation right now until this matter gets resolved; and two, we have sent a clear signal about what we will do on economic cooperation if it is not resolved.

It would be a pity if the Indonesian recovery were crashed by this, but one way or the other, it will be crashed by this if they don't fix it, because there will be overwhelming public sentiment to stop the international economic cooperation, but quite to the side of that, nobody is going to want to continue to invest there if they are allowing this sort of travesty to go on.

So I think one way or the other, the economic consequences to them are going to be very dire, but I think—my statement clearly signals where I'm prepared to go on the economic issue.

Yes.

Q. If you got asked this, I didn't hear the question and I apologize. But what about in terms of support troops for any international mission or infantry-level troops? Would it be mostly just support the United States is considering at this point?

The President. There are any number of ways that we can support this mission and participate in it. But I normally make a practice, and you will know now after several years of our doing this from, I guess we started with Haiti and then Bosnia, I like to consult with the leaders of Congress. They've been gone; they're coming back.

What I want the American people to know is that the Australians are clearly prepared to lead this. Prime Minister Howard's been very strong, very unambiguous, and very impressive, I think, in his determination to try to help. Several other countries have said they will go along if the Indonesians ask and the United Nations approves. And I think the United States should support this mission.

Whatever we do, the lion's share of the people involved will be from the region. But a lot of those people, starting with the Australians, have been with us every step of the way for decades now, and I think we have to be involved with them in whatever way we can; and our military people will have to work that out, and we'll have to work that out—some consultation with Congress as well.

Yes, in the back.

Medicare

Q. Yesterday the Senate was nearing to have some form of prescription drug coverage. Would you be willing to compromise with the Republicans on this issue to include a means testing

on Medicaid coverage in order to jump start negotiations?

The President. In order to jump start what? I think the question is, would I be willing to work with the Republicans and take a smaller drug benefit in order to get one started? Is that what you said? Is that—what did you say? I don't want to misstate you.

Q. If you would accept means testing.

The President. Well, what I don't want to do is to accept something that's so meager it doesn't mean anything. The real problem with the medical benefits, the prescription drug benefits available to seniors today in so many of these programs is that they are so expensive, they're unaffordable, or they're so meager, they don't mean anything.

Any proposal the President sends to Congress has got to be, by definition, subject to negotiation and modification. I mean, that's just any proposal, and you know that. There are things we could do apart from the prescription drugs proposal to come closer together on Medicare. They have acknowledged, as Senator Lott said, which, as I said at the time, for him was probably high praise, when I proposed my Medicare program and I called him about it, he said, "Well, it's not as bad as I thought it would be," which is another way of saying that I adopted a lot of the competitive mechanisms and structural reforms in Medicare that were embraced by the Medicare Commission.

I'm willing to work with them, but I don't want to undermine the universal character of the program, the clear benefits of the program. I don't want to force people into managed care by some pricing gimmick, and I don't want the drug benefit to be so small as to be meaningless or so expensive as to be unaffordable. And I think that—I frankly think the areas we have for compromise and where I think they want to go may be more in other areas. But I am willing—I just want to sit down and talk to them about it.

Now, we are going to have a chance to do that because Senator Roth has committed to mark up a Medicare bill. And so what I would urge you to do is to watch the progress of the Medicare bill in the Senate, in the Finance Committee, and see what we have to say about it. And you'll see whether we're working together or at cross purposes.

East Timor

Q. You've left a big blank on what kind of response you're getting from the Indonesian Government. You keep saying what we're willing to do and what the Australians—what are they—

The President. The reason I left a big blank there is that, so far, both the political and military authorities have been unwilling—they have been very clear; they do not want to ask for international assistance.

Now, that is subject to one of two or three interpretations. Interpretation number one is, they believe they can stop this madness in East Timor and they want to do it, and they don't want to have to admit that they have to have help to do it. Two is, nobody's got the authority to make a decision because it's chaotic there; they've already had a Presidential election and parliamentary elections, but they haven't, because of the complex system for picking a new leader, they haven't done that. Three is that at least some elements in the country support what is happening in East Timor for whatever reasons.

In other words, they didn't like the results of the referendum, and they're trying to undo it by running people out of the country or into the grave. There may be other explanations. But, no, we've gotten very clear answers, which is at this time they are not prepared to ask for international help, and we have continued to press them in our military-to-military contacts, which have been quite extensive over the last several years. General Shelton, in particular, has worked very, very hard to push the Indonesians to send people in there that can stop this killing and stop these people from being run out of their country.

We want to get the humanitarian agencies in there as well. So that's what we're doing. But we've gotten a clear answer. The answer to date has been no, and that's what we're frustrated about, because if the answer were no and they were fixing the problem, that would be the best of all worlds.

Japanese Economy

Q. Mr. President, are you confident that Japan is on the path to economic recovery? Today they reported a second straight quarter of economic growth.

The President. They're doing better, and I'm real pleased about it. I think the world should be pleased about it. I know some in America are worried. They're afraid that a resurgent Japan means more competition for money and more pressure on the dollar. But on the whole, a Japan that could buy more American products and buy more products in Asia from other Asian countries would be very much good for the global economy and therefore good for America's working people.

So you're asking me, do I know for sure that their recovery is underway? I think they're doing better, and I think Mr. Obuchi has shown real ability, real talent in getting people together.

We—as you know, our Treasury officials have continued to recommend things in conversations with the Japanese that we think will help to speed up the recovery, but we're working with them well, and I'm pleased that they seem to be turning around. It's a good thing for the world.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Are our relations with China on the mend now? And what are the prospects for signing a WTO deal with President Jiang?

The President. Well, we've done our best to do what I think is the honorable and decent thing in the wake of the terrible accident involving the Embassy in Belgrade. And we have made it clear in the recent tensions between Taiwan and China that we still strongly support the "one China" policy and the so-called Three Noes. But we also believe that any differences between them should be resolved in a peaceful manner, and we feel very strongly about it.

I hope that those things and the passage of time will permit us to resume constructive conversations with the Chinese, beginning with my meeting with President Jiang, and I would very much like to resume the WTO negotiations. I think it would be good for China, good for the United States, and good for the world economic system. So I hope we'll be able to resume our talks, and if we resume them, obviously, I hope we'll be able to bring them to a successful conclusion.

Religious Persecution in China

Q. Sir, have you seen the new State Department report on religious persecution out today, and do you plan on talking about China's actions when you meet—

The President. On what?

Q. —the State Department report on religious persecution. Have you seen that today, and do you plan on talking about China's actions, the allegations, when you see President Jiang on the weekend?

The President. I have not seen it, but I will see it, and if I think it's appropriate, I'll certainly bring it up. I brought it up before, and as you remember, I actually sent a delegation of religious leaders to China to tour around the country and to talk to religious leaders in China and also talk to high representatives of the Chinese Government about that. That's a big issue for the United States. We have legislation on it, and it's a very large issue for me, personally.

I've been working on that issue ever since I got here and in many countries, so I look forward to having a chance to review the contents of the report and to taking appropriate action. Thank you.

Attorney General and FBI Director

Q. There's a lot of pressure on Reno to resign. Do you think Freeh should resign?

The President. I think Janet—first of all, in terms of the merits of this and the FBI, I don't have anything to add to what I said last week. I think that she did the right thing in asking an outside person to review it. I think that Mr. Freeh did the right thing in supporting that. I've known Senator Danforth for—well, I met him when President Carter was in office, sometime during that period, so somewhere around 20 years. And I have always thought him an honorable man and an intelligent and straightforward man.

The only thing that I would ask is that he conduct a thorough and honest inquiry and do it as promptly as he can so that we can get the facts, take appropriate action, and go forward. But based on what I know of him and what I have observed, I think that's a good move by the Attorney General, and I certainly don't think there's any reason for her to resign.

Thank you.

Clemency for Members of the FALN

Q. Mr. President, can you say that New York senatorial politics played no role in the Puerto Rican decision?

The President. Absolutely. Absolutely. I got the memo from Mr. Ruff. I didn't know it was coming; it came with all the other papers I

get every day and every week, and I dealt with it the way I deal with everything.

Q. The First Lady says you didn't tell her about your deadline when she——

The President. That's also true.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:26 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for New Zealand. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea; President Jiang Zemin of China; Prime Minister Vladimir

Putin of Russia; U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan; former President Jimmy Carter; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; Prime Minister Antonio Guterres of Portugal; Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand; former Senator John C. Danforth, recently appointed Special Counsel to investigate the Justice Department's role in the 1993 siege in Waco, TX; and former Counsel to the President Charles F.C. Ruff. A reporter referred to FALN, the Puerto Rican Armed Forces of National Liberation.

Statement on the Recommendations of the Patten Commission *September 9, 1999*

I welcome the unanimous recommendations of the Independent Commission on Policing (the Patten Commission), which represent an important outcome of the Good Friday agreement. While it is up to the people of Northern Ireland to address the specific proposals, I strongly endorse the report's guiding objective: to take politics out of policing in Northern Ireland. The benchmarks identified—effectiveness, efficiency, impartiality, accountability, representativeness, and respect for human rights—are the guideposts for good policing everywhere. The Com-

mission's recommendations focus on assuring a professional police service in Northern Ireland that meets the highest possible standards and that enjoys the support of the community as a whole. The Commission's approach draws on best practices from other police forces, including those in the United States. I am pleased that two distinguished Americans served on the Patten Commission, and I commend Chris Patten and all the members of the Commission for their efforts.

Statement on the Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Mines *September 9, 1999*

Today I am sending to the United States Senate for advice and consent to ratification International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention Number 176, the "Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Mines." I have previously submitted to the Senate ILO conventions on employment discrimination (Convention Number 111) and the worst forms of child labor (Convention Number 182). Taken together, these steps demonstrate the importance I place on the ILO's work and my commitment to work together with labor and business interests through the ILO to raise labor standards around the world.

Mining has long been recognized as one of the most dangerous jobs in the world. Men, women, and sometimes even children are exposed to hazards that can claim their lives or destroy their health. Mining employs more than 30 million people worldwide. Although that figure accounts for only one percent of the world's entire work force, mining is responsible for about 8 percent of fatal accidents at work, or around 15,000 per year. Despite the considerable advances in safety and health throughout this century, mining remains one of the most hazardous occupations worldwide.

In the United States, miners are protected by a strong and effective Federal statute, enforced by the Mine Safety and Health Administration in the Department of Labor. A tripartite panel of American government, labor, and business representatives has reviewed the convention and has concluded that the United States can ratify Convention 176 without changing our laws or regulations. But in other countries, miners may lack the legal protections they need and deserve. I urge the Senate to give its advice and consent to ratification of this convention, to help ensure safety and healthful working conditions for miners the world over.

As an institution, the International Labor Organization plays a vital role in our efforts to put a human face on the global economy. My administration, led by Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman and joined by our partners in labor and business, will continue to support the efforts of the ILO.

I look forward to working with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Senate leadership to advance Convention Number 176 and the other ILO conventions toward ratification.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Convention Concerning Safety and Health in Mines

September 9, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification of the Convention (No. 176) Concerning Safety and Health in Mines, adopted by the International Labor Conference at its 82nd Session in Geneva on June 22, 1995, I transmit herewith a certified copy of that Convention.

The report of the Department of State, with a letter from the Secretary of Labor, concerning the Convention is enclosed.

As explained more fully in the enclosed letter from the Secretary of Labor, current United States law and practice fully satisfies the requirements of Convention No. 176. Ratification of

this Convention, therefore, would not require the United States to alter in any way its law or practice in this field.

Ratification of additional ILO conventions will enhance the ability of the United States to take other governments to task for failing to comply with the ILO instruments they have ratified. I recommend that the Senate give its advice and consent to the ratification of ILO Convention No. 176.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

September 9, 1999.

Statement on the Situation in East Timor

September 10, 1999

Let me address the deteriorating situation in East Timor. I am alarmed by reports I have just received of attacks on the United Nations compound in Dili.

It is now clear that the Indonesian military is aiding and abetting the militia violence. This is simply unacceptable. The actions of the Indonesian military in East Timor stand in stark con-

trast to the commitments they have given to the international community.

The Indonesian Government and military must reverse this course to do everything possible to stop the violence and allow an international force to make possible the restoration of security.

Statement on House Action on Proposed Appropriations Legislation for the Corporation for National and Community Service

September 10, 1999

I am deeply dismayed that the House has passed an appropriations bill that includes no funding for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Since 1994, and with broad bipartisan support, AmeriCorps has given over 100,000 of our young people the opportunity to serve community and country. It has enabled Americans from every walk of life to work together to revitalize our neighborhoods and

schools. The House's action sends exactly the wrong message to young Americans who want to make a difference in their communities. I have said before, and say again now, that I will veto any bill that inadequately funds AmeriCorps. But I hope that we can work with Members of Congress from both parties to restore full funding for this vital program.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Cyprus

September 10, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384, (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period June 1, 1999, to July 31, 1999. The previous submission covered events during April and May 1999.

Cyprus was one of the many issues raised at the G-8 Summit in Cologne, Germany, this past June. My colleagues agreed that a resolution to the dispute is long overdue and issued a statement urging U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan to "invite the leaders of the two parties to negotiations in the fall of 1999." This is a positive step toward addressing the legitimate

concerns of both sides and reaching a just and lasting solution for all Cypriots.

In July, Secretary of Defense William Cohen traveled to Greece and Turkey to enhance our bilateral relations and underscore the important role Greece and Turkey play in maintaining stability in the southern European region. Secretary Cohen also emphasized the U.S. commitment to reaching a Cyprus solution.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

The President's Radio Address

September 11, 1999

Good morning. All across America the new school year is now underway with over 53 million children, the largest and most diverse group ever enrolled. It's a time of hope and excitement for students, parents, and teachers alike. But in many communities, it's also a time of concern, concern that when our children walk

through the schoolhouse door, they won't be safe from the threat of violence.

We know the vast majority of our schools are safe, but we can't forget the communities in cities, suburbs, and rural areas that do have a serious problem with school violence, and we can't forget that even one incident of school violence is one too many.

The tragic shootings of the past 2 years were a wake-up call, an urgent reminder that to protect our children from violence, we need nothing less than a national campaign that draws on all our resources and demands all our commitment, with all of us taking responsibility.

For more than 6 years now, our administration has worked hard to do our part. We've strengthened and expanded our safe and drug-free schools program, which helps school districts provide counseling, after-school activities, and violence mediation among other things. We enacted a national zero tolerance policy for guns in schools, helping to expel 4,000 students for carrying guns to school last year alone. We announced a grassroots national campaign against youth violence, and we fought hard to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. At the first-ever White House School Safety Conference, and after the tragedy in Littleton at a White House strategy session on youth violence, we launched new actions: 2,000 more school resource officers in our schools, an antiviolence media campaign you may have already seen on television, and a new plan to help schools respond to deadly violence. These steps have made our schools safer, more disciplined, better learning environments. But when it comes to protecting our children, we must do more.

We know the best solutions to the problem of youth violence come when everyone at the local level works together, students, parents, teachers, police officers, local judges, counselors, religious and community leaders. That's why I asked the Departments of Education, Justice, and Health and Human Services to develop the Safe Schools/Healthy Schools initiative to help communities coordinate their efforts to identify troubled young people, prevent them from acting violently, and respond when violence does occur.

As part of this new program, we launched a national competition to find and fund the best ideas to reduce youth violence. Hundreds of communities applied. Today I'm pleased to announce that 54 communities with the best plans

will receive more than \$100 million in safe schools grants. These communities will use the funds in a variety of ways proven to reduce youth violence, from hiring more school resource officers to improving mental health services, to modernizing school security systems, to expanding after-school and mentoring programs. Best of all, they engage the entire community to meet the challenge of building safer schools.

I'm particularly glad that two of these grants are going to communities that have suffered much, one to Jonesboro, Arkansas, in my home State, whose plan includes in-home counseling for at-risk families; and one to Springfield, Oregon, whose plan will build on the strong partnership the schools developed with law enforcement after the tragic shooting there last year.

In the face of terrible loss, the good people of these towns have pulled together to protect their children, and they're an inspiration for all of us. All over America, people are doing their part to fight youth violence. But there are some things only Congress can do. I have called repeatedly on Congress to pass a commonsense juvenile crime bill to prevent youth violence and keep guns out of the wrong hands, with measures that include provisions to require child safety locks on guns, to ban the import of large-ammunition clips, and to really close the gun show loophole.

For months now, the American people have waited for Congress to act. Meanwhile, our children have returned to school in ever greater numbers. So I say again, it shouldn't take another tragedy to make this a priority. It's time for Congress to put politics aside and send me a bill that puts our children's safety first. Let's make this school year the safest yet.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:28 p.m. on September 9 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Jiang Zemin of China in Auckland, New Zealand September 11, 1999

Situation in East Timor

Q. Mr. President, on East Timor, what's the next step for the U.S. and the international community, now that Indonesia seems to be failing to stop the violence there?

President Clinton. Well, today we suspended all military sales and continue to work to try to persuade the Indonesians to support the United Nations' operation to go in and help to end the violence and secure the safety of the people there. And that's what we have to continue to do.

I think the United Nations will support such an endeavor if the Indonesians will request it. And I think it is imperative that they do so. And I think we're making headway.

Q. Is there any time frame for that? Is there any kind of deadline on that?

President Clinton. Well, I think you'll see a development here in the next couple of days. I think something will happen. I'll be surprised if it doesn't. We're working—not just the United States, people all over the world are working very hard on it. And I think people in Asia are very concerned about it.

China-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, how are U.S.-Chinese relations now?

President Clinton. Well, I don't want to speak for President Jiang, but from my point of view,

I'm eager to get on with it and have this meeting. [Laughter]

Q. Will you be able to get a WTO deal, sir?

President Clinton. Certainly hope so.

Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, what's your message when it comes to Taiwan?

President Clinton. My message is that our policy has not and will not change. We favor one China. We favor a peaceful approach to working out the differences. We favor the cross-strait dialog. Our policy has not changed, and it will not change.

Q. President Jiang, are you sticking with your threat to use military force against Taiwan, sir?

President Jiang. Our policy on Taiwan is a consistent one. That is, one, peaceful unification, one country-two systems. However, if there were to be any foreign intervention, or if there were to be Taiwan independence, then we would not undertake to renounce the use of force.

NOTE: The exchange began at 5:18 p.m. in the Drawing Room at the Government House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to American and Asian Business Leaders in Auckland September 12, 1999

Thank you very much, and good morning. Ambassador Bolger, thank you for the fine introduction and for the years of friendship and co-operation we have enjoyed. Prime Minister Shipley, thank you for being here today and for making my family and me and our American group feel so welcome in New Zealand.

Since this is the sort of economic engine of APEC, all of you, I do want to note that my mother-in-law and my daughter and I did our

part to support the New Zealand economy yesterday, and we got some nice free press for doing it, in the newspaper. I appreciate that.

I'd like to thank Jack Smith, who is up here with us, the CEO of General Motors, for his leadership, and those of the other American business leaders: John Maasland, the CEO of APEC; Ambassador Beeman. I'd also like to thank the American team who is here with me: our Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright; our

Trade Representative, Charlene Barshefsky; National Security Adviser Sandy Berger; and National Economic Adviser Gene Sperling.

I am delighted to be here in Auckland for the last gathering of Asia-Pacific leaders in the 20th century. We primarily deal with economic issues, but today, if you'll forgive me, I'd like to begin with a few comments about security issues, because the eyes of the world today, not just in Asia but throughout the globe, are on East Timor, where the people voted overwhelmingly for independence, where, I believe, Indonesia's Government did the right thing in supporting the vote, just as it did the right thing in holding its own free elections earlier this year.

Now it is clear, however, that the Indonesian military has aided and abetted militia violence in East Timor, in violation of the commitment of its leaders to the international community. This has allowed the militias to murder innocent people, to send thousands fleeing for their lives, to attack the United Nations compound.

The United States has suspended all military cooperation, assistance, and sales to Indonesia. I have made clear that my willingness to support future economic assistance from the international community will depend upon how Indonesia handles the situation from today forward. We are carefully reviewing all our own economic and commercial programs there. The present course of action is imperiling Indonesia's future, as well as that of the individual East Timorese.

The Indonesian Government and military must not only stop what they are doing but reverse course. They must halt the violence not just in Dili but throughout the nation. They must permit humanitarian assistance and let the U.N. mission do its job. They must allow the East Timorese who have been pushed from their homes to return safely. They must implement the results of the balloting, and they must allow an international force to help restore security.

We are ready to support an effort led by Australia to mobilize a multinational force to help to bring security to East Timor under U.N. auspices. We all have a great deal at stake in the resolution of this crisis. We have a strong interest in seeing an Indonesia that is stable, prosperous, and democratic, the largest Muslim country in the world, a nation where soldiers are honored for their commitment to defend the people, not to abuse them. All of that has been called into question in the last few days. We don't want to see the will of the people

overturned by violence and intimidation. And because the U.N. helped to organize the vote in East Timor, we have a special responsibility to help to see it through, to stand up to those who now break their promises to the international community.

It is not just the people of East Timor who deserve a democratic future, though they do. It is not just the people of Indonesia who have embraced their own choices in a free election, though they, too, deserve a democratic future. We must help both the people of East Timor and the democratic process in Indonesia because the world community seeks to have the integrity of democracy protected everywhere. And today, again I say, the eyes of the world are on that tiny place and on those poor innocent, suffering people.

I would also like to say just a couple of other words about security issues. I will meet here with President Kim and Prime Minister Obuchi to discuss peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. The people of North Korea need food and opportunities. They need engagement with the south and the chance for a brighter future. They do not need new weaponry that threatens the security of the region and the world.

I would also like to say a word about China and the present tensions between China and Taiwan. The United States has enjoyed friendly relations with both China and Taiwan for some years now. Our policy has been rooted in our commitment to one China, our commitment to a peaceful resolution of the differences between China and Taiwan, our commitment to continuously expanding the cross-strait dialog. We have a clear policy enunciated in the three communiques and in our Taiwan Relations Act.

I reaffirmed to President Jiang yesterday, and I will do what I can to support while I am here and after I leave here, the proposition that these peoples have too much at stake in a peaceful future, benefiting all their—all their children to let the present difficulties deteriorate into a confrontation in which, in the end, all would suffer. I hope all of you, to the extent that you can, will reaffirm that course.

Let me say that, returning to economics, this is a much happier occasion than the last APEC meeting. I think the uniform of the day for the business people sort of illustrates that. *[Laughter]* Last year you might have met in straitjackets. *[Laughter]* But economies that

were going downhill then, now seem to be clearly on the road to recovery.

Just for example, South Korea's industry has produced 30 percent more this June than last. Its economy is expected to grow at least 6½ percent this year. All over the region, key stock markets are now above pre-crisis levels, currencies are stronger, workers are going back to work.

And for every one of you that had something to do with this recovery, I want to express my thanks to the businesses that had to tighten their belts, but pressed ahead; to the governments that had to pursue difficult, but vital reforms; to the international community which mobilized over \$100 billion in assistance and applied it wisely; to the countries which, like the United States, kept our markets open to keep the crisis from becoming worse and to help it turn around more quickly.

Still, the consequences of the last couple of years have been quite severe. Far too many people lost their jobs, their businesses, and their dreams. There are longstanding concerns about stability, openness, human rights, and the environment which remain.

Therefore, the main thing I want to say about economics today is that this is not a time for complacency. There is still hard work to be done and a great deal to be won on the eve of this new millennium.

Here in Auckland, we should put APEC's weight behind the new trade round to be launched at the WTO meeting in Seattle. We should continue to reform the global financial architecture. We must work together to promote stability, as well as peace.

We, in the United States, knew when this crisis started that we had to work in all these ways. We have worked on the global financial architecture. We have worked to try to promote a new round of world trade. We also, remembering the awful experience of the Great Depression, worked hard to keep our markets open. For the first half of 1999, our trade deficit was more than double what it was in the first half of 1997.

But I think it is clear that that decision, even though it's somewhat controversial in the United States, was the right decision for American workers and for American businesses because we always need to be looking at the long term and the prospects of creating a global economy in which there is more trade, not less.

With 45 percent of the world's trade, the APEC nations have a vital interest in whether we take this direction or not. We can lead the way to a stronger, fairer, world trade system just as we did with the information technology agreement 3 years ago with APEC. Our APEC ministers already have backed an ambitious trade agenda; now it's time for the leaders to follow suit.

When we get to Seattle, we should then try to make APEC's agenda the world's agenda. We should be committed strongly to dramatic increase of market access in agricultural, industrial, and service areas. We should be committed to reaching some other agreements along the way during the process of the trade round—for example, to keep the information super-highway free of tolls, with a permanent moratorium on electronic commerce duties—to improve openness in government procurement, to speed up tariff liberalization in all the key areas we've identified. And I also believe we should be committed to completing the entire round within 3 years. Our citizens shouldn't have to wait any longer for governments to get a job like this done.

A strong world trading system is good for all the nations of the region. It is certainly good for the United States, where about a third of our economic growth came from expanded trade until the Asian financial crisis. Over a third of our agricultural products are exported. One in 10 of our jobs depends on exports; millions more depend on our ability to import. In our country, we have had remarkable growth with low inflation, thanks in no small measure to greater competition.

The world trading system will be even more beneficial as more nations commit to play by its rules. Yesterday I had a very good meeting with President Jiang, and China and the United States reaffirmed our commitment to China's entry into the WTO on commercially viable terms. I hope we can make it happen soon. I want to assure you, every one of you, that we are working hard to make it happen soon.

I also believe strongly that our world trading system will grow in popular support if it supports our values, and I mean values that are generally shared by civilized nations across cultural, religious, and regional lines. Twice in the last year or so, I have gone to Geneva to talk about a world trading system for the 21st century and the importance of honoring our values

when it comes to labor, when it comes to the environment, when it comes to the openness with which powerful bodies make their decisions.

Just as we will continue to enforce our trade laws at home to ensure fair competition, we will continue to address what I believe are commitments all of our people really want us to embrace, to decent working conditions and to the health of the global environment.

This will not be, however, about erecting new barriers, but about lifting the lives of all people. I am very pleased, for example, that the delegates at the International Labor Organization unanimously adopted a convention banning the worst forms of child labor.

I am encouraged by our common commitment to address the challenge of global warming. Let me say this is still a very contentious issue among some developing and some developed countries. There are many developing countries that honestly believe that developed countries will use the whole climate change debate as a way of slowing economic opportunity for people in developing countries.

I completely disagree with that. Those who hold this view believe that the only way to grow an economy in the 21st century is with the same energy use patterns we saw in the 20th century. But if you talk to Mr. Smith—and, Jack, I read your press in the morning paper today, and what did he say? He said there are three dramatic changes going on in the automobile industry. One is in commerce; GM sells its first car in Taiwan over the Internet. Two is that cars are becoming automated information, communications, and entertainment systems, self-contained. And three is that the internal combustion engine is being changed in fundamental ways. And before we know it, there will be both blended-fuel and alternative-fuel vehicles which will be emitting far less greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, in ways that accelerate economic growth rather than diminish it.

So I'm going on—as you can see, I'm not looking at my text here; this is something I really believe. One of the central—the world works by adherence to our departure from big ideas. And we organize ourselves around them, and then people like you do real well when you figure out how to improve on them, modify them, find a little niche in which to move. But if you stay with a big idea that's wrong too long, no matter how good the rest of our cre-

ativity is, we all get in trouble. And no matter how hard we work, we get in trouble, because we work harder and harder and harder at the wrong things.

So I just want to say—I only get to make one more of these speeches, and then I'll be gone. *[Laughter]* I'll be an ex-big idea, right? It will be over. *[Laughter]* One of the big ideas the world has to abandon is the idea that the only way to build a modern, prosperous economy is with the industrial energy use patterns of a former era. It is not true.

And when you look at the future of China, when you look at the future of India, when you look at all the other developing economies, and you imagine what you can do with the cell phone, with the Internet, and with alternative energy development, a lot of very poor places in Africa and Asia and other parts of the world can skip a whole generation of economic development unless we stay in chains to a big idea that is no longer true.

I hope you will help to lead the way to bring the developing and the developed countries together around finding new technologies that will both improve the economy and the environment at the same time.

Finally, let me say, I am very grateful that there is a growing recognition that the world trading system and the WTO itself should be more open and accountable. I think this is very, very important. I think that there's a lot of controversy about it from time to time on the specifics, but in the end, greater accountability and greater openness and greater involvement of all elements of society in these decisionmakings will build greater support for a global economic system.

I'd like to say just a few words about the global economic architecture, if I might. I think there's a real danger that I sense growing of people to say, "Well, things are fine now; we don't need to continue to do anything about the economics of the financial architecture." I think that's a mistake.

The Asian financial crisis came after a high tide of capital washed into the region, often highly leveraged, flowing quickly into countries without adequate risk assessment. When the tide receded just as rapidly, if not more rapidly, it left behind a legacy of mounting debt, devaluation, and severe dislocation.

For us in the United States, the crisis underscored our tremendous stake in the stability and

success of Asia. It demonstrated how closely tied our economies had become. And as our Asian markets dried up, our companies, our banks, our workers, our farmers clearly felt the effects.

We've been seeking new ways to help the international system moderate the cycle of boom and bust in much the way that individual economies have learned to do since the Great Depression. We are working more closely to make sure that all, including the developing economies, have a seat at the table, through new mechanisms like the financial stability forum. I just want to urge you all to keep this progress on course.

Emerging economies, of course, have work to do; they still have to continue to restructure their banking systems, make their corporations more accountable, reduce reliance on short-term loans, encourage greater direct investment. Creditor nations must improve our own financial supervision and regulation so investors will assess risks more carefully and banks will lend more wisely.

The IMF now has special financing available to help a country head off a financial contagion—something we in the United States worked very hard to set up—provided the country has maintained responsible economic policies. We must continue to develop such tools.

Working with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, we must also strengthen safety nets so people have unemployment insurance and job training, so that impoverished children are not the first and hardest hit victims of an economic downturn. We must, in short, continue our efforts to put a human face on the global economy, not because it is charity, but because it is the right thing to do from a humane, as well as from an economic standpoint. It is essential to the long-term success of the market. An active role for government is important not to restrain competition or to dictate the flow of investment, but to ensure fair dealing and a level playing field.

New Zealand is leading efforts to broaden competition in domestic markets. The United States and other APEC partners are working with the private sector across the region to make it easier to move goods and services across borders. Our economies will work even better when we have stronger standards for disclosure by businesses and governments.

One of our leaders made a comment the other day that I kind of wished I had made

because I thought it was so clever. Speaking of the broad consensus for greater openness, President Estrada said, "Now, when Alan Greenspan and the common people have the same view, we should listen." [*Laughter*] I don't know whether Mr. Greenspan liked that, but I liked it very much. [*Laughter*]

Let me say in one last point, I think more openness, more honesty, more responsibility in our business dealings gives us a more supportive political system and, therefore, gives us better economic results. I don't believe nations can reap the full benefits of the technology revolution if the free flow of information is curbed, for example. I think entrepreneurs and investors will flee nations where the most lucrative deals are made in secret, where contracts aren't honored, where courts aren't fair, where creativity is stifled, where there are grievous worker complaints.

Instead, I think they will be drawn to countries where there's fairness and openness and freedom, good education system, and broad participation in the prosperity of the nation. These things are important to all of us.

So I say I'm glad you're here in these relaxed jackets instead of straitjackets this year. I'm grateful for what all of you have done to support APEC and its trade liberalization agenda and, specifically, to help lead the nations of Asia out of its financial crisis. But there is still a great deal for us to do together to expand trade, to strengthen the financial architecture, to strengthen the conditions among and within nations for success of the global economy with a human face, and to provide the basic framework of security without which economies cannot grow freely.

On balance, I think one would have to be quite optimistic looking toward the new millennium. But I think we also would have to be quite sober in the price that we will pay if any of us should fail to fulfill our responsibility. If we work hard at the right things, our children will live in a much better world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum. In his remarks, he referred to New Zealand Ambassador to the U.S. James B. Bolger; Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand; President Clinton's

mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham; U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand Josiah H. Beeman; President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea; Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; President Jiang

Zemin of China; ABC News correspondent Jack Smith; and President Joseph Estrada of the Philippines.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters in Auckland

September 12, 1999

President Clinton. Let me say just very briefly, I am honored to have the opportunity to have this meeting with President Kim and Prime Minister Obuchi. We have much to discuss, but I would just mention two or three issues: our common interest in stability and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula, our concern about events in East Timor, our commitment to try to find a common ground on economic issues here and at the WTO meeting to be held in Seattle in the next couple of months, and our commitment to continued, sustained economic growth in the nations of Asia.

I'm very concerned and pleased with the apparent economic turnaround in the region, and I want to do whatever I can to continue to support both these leaders as they attempt to lead the way there.

I also will reaffirm what I said yesterday in my meeting with President Jiang, which is the interests of the United States in the long-term stable, constructive relationship with China, something I know that is supported by both President Kim and Prime Minister Obuchi.

So I am delighted to have them here.

East Timor

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned earlier that you would support an international force in East Timor, but you didn't say anything about a commitment of U.S. troops. Could you give us your thinking on that, sir?

President Clinton. Well, the discussions that I have had with Prime Minister Howard and others—but since Australia would lead this mission and provide most of the troops—have centered around our providing some of the things that only we can provide, probably, like extensive airlift support to bring troops from other countries, primarily of Asia, into the theater,

other logistical support—intelligence, communications—some things which would require our presence in a limited way within the country, within East Timor.

Our people are working that out. General Shelton and our commander, our commander in chief of the Pacific, Admiral Blair, are working with the Australians, and no final decisions have been made, nor could they be until I have extensive congressional consultations. I've talked to, oh, probably 8 or 10 congressional leaders on this, and the Secretary of Defense and Mr. Podesta, on my behalf back home, have talked to many more. But we haven't finalized anything yet.

Keep in mind, the position of the international community at the moment is that such a force would have to be approved by the United Nations, which would only happen if Indonesia asked for it. So right now I think the important thing is to keep the pressure up here to try to get the Indonesians to fix the problem and, if not, to go on and ask for help, support from the United Nations.

[At this point, a question was asked in Korean, and President Kim replied also in Korean. A translation was not provided.]

President Clinton. Would you like to say anything?

[At this point, Prime Minister Obuchi made brief remarks in Japanese, and no translation was provided.]

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:02 p.m. in the Stamford Ballroom at the Stamford Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China; and Prime Minister John Howard

of Australia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Trilateral Summit Joint Press Statement *September 12, 1999*

United States President William Jefferson Clinton, Republic of Korea President Kim Dae-jung and Japanese Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo met today in Auckland to continue to coordinate their respective policies toward the DPRK and to discuss regional and global issues.

The three leaders expressed their expectation that the comprehensive and integrated approach developed jointly by the U.S., the ROK, and Japan provides an invaluable opportunity to ensure peace and stability on the Korean peninsula, and they also expressed their hope that the DPRK responds positively to the concepts discussed by Dr. Perry during his visit to Pyongyang last May.

The three leaders confirmed that they are prepared to undertake measures to improve their respective relations with the DPRK as the DPRK addresses the concerns of the U.S., ROK, and Japan, and takes steps to reduce tensions and establish lasting peace on the Korean peninsula and beyond.

The leaders confirmed that the 1994 Agreed Framework serves as an integral part of their joint efforts as they seek improved relations with the DPRK.

The three leaders reconfirmed their commitment to continue to act in close coordination at all times.

The leaders expressed grave concern over the continuing violence and resulting humanitarian

disaster in East Timor. They reaffirmed that the primary responsibility of restoring law and order in East Timor resides with the Indonesian government, and urged the Indonesian government to take prompt measures to ensure that the free will of the East Timorese people, as clearly expressed in the referendum of August 30, be fully respected. They agreed to work closely with the United Nations and other members of the international community toward that end, keeping in mind the desirability of maintaining the stability of Indonesia as a whole in order to avoid possible negative consequences which might arise in the region.

The three leaders welcomed the fairly smooth progress being made in the efforts to overcome the Asian financial crisis as various economic indicators show signs of economic recovery, and have agreed to cooperate closely in order to sustain the momentum for recovery of the Asian countries. They underscored the need for APEC economies to work together for the successful launching of a new three-year WTO Round at the November Seattle WTO Ministerial. They agreed that the region's leaders must stay the course with politically difficult macroeconomic and structural reforms to sustain the region's recovery.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the contents of this joint statement.

Remarks on the Situation in East Timor and an Exchange With Reporters in Auckland *September 13, 1999*

The President. Let me begin by saying that I welcome the statement of President Habibie last night inviting the United Nations to send a security force into East Timor. I think that this is a real tribute to the determination of

the friends of the people there, the Australians, the New Zealanders here, all the people here at APEC who express solidarity.

I think there are a couple of points I'd like to make about it. Number one, it's important

to get the details worked out and get this force in in a hurry, in a way that it can be effective. Number two, if that happens, then we can resume our work with the people of Indonesia, the world's fourth largest country, to help their transition to democracy and the restoration of prosperity there.

In terms of what our role would be in East Timor, we have had extensive discussions with the Australians through our defense channels, and we've been asked to provide a limited but important function related to airlift, transportation, communications, intelligence, and perhaps some engineering work. Exactly what the details would be have yet to be worked out and require more extensive consultations with Congress.

I made a number of calls before I left the country. Secretary Cohen and Mr. Podesta are back there now working on this issue. But I hope we can wrap it up. The most important thing is for President Habibie to make good on his statement, get the details worked out, get the force in in a hurry.

Q. Mr. President, will there be any U.S. ground troops in combat roles in East Timor?

The President. We've not discussed that; we've not been asked for that. I talked to Prime Minister Howard yesterday, and I stopped in Hawaii, as all of you know, and met with our commander in chief there, Admiral Blair, and obviously, I've talked to Secretary Cohen and General Shelton. What we have been asked to do so far relates to airlift; what countries are going to contribute to troops—someone needs to take them to the theater—relates to transportation, communications, intelligence, and the possibility of some engineering work. All of that would require some presence on the ground in East Timor, but no one has asked us for any combat troops.

Q. Mr. President, these are troops that, by and large, have never worked together before. It's not like the NATO kind of force. Do you see for the United States any kind of coordinating role to keep the peacekeepers together, to have a command structure for them?

The President. We might be asked to provide some help on command and control. But keep

in mind, a number of these troops have worked together. There is a group here in this part of the Asia-Pacific region that train together, that work together, that do exercises together. So there is some experience here. But there will be some work to be done, depending on how many countries come on the command and control, and if we're asked to provide some technical assistance there, of course, we'd be willing to help.

Q. Mr. President, how much control will the Indonesians have about the makeup of the force? They've already said that they're uncomfortable with the Australians being the leaders.

The President. Well, that has to be worked out today. But my view is that we should work with the Indonesians in a cooperative fashion. Perhaps they should have some parallel presence even, but they should not be able to say who is in or not in the force, and what the structure of the force will be. Otherwise it will raise all kinds of questions about whether there will be integrity in the force, and it will also delay the implementation.

The truth is the Australians are willing to carry the lion's share of the role. They're willing to put in a large number of people. They have enormous military capacity. Our people have great confidence in working with them. And so I don't think that we should be in a position of having this thing delayed for days and days and days over that, and I hope that it won't be when the talks occur today with the Indonesians leadership.

Q. Mr. President, as a practical matter, what's the quickest you think a deployment could occur; 24 hours, 48 hours? How quick?

The President. I think we could begin to move quickly, but I think it depends upon the meeting today with the Indonesians. Let's wait and see what happens today, and then you ask me that question either late today or tomorrow, I can give you a more intelligent answer.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 a.m. at the Stamford Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President B.J. Habibie of Indonesia; and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia.

Statement on the National Bioethics Advisory Commission Report on Human Stem Cell Research

September 13, 1999

Today my National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) delivered its report on the ethical use of human stem cells in research. Because of the enormous medical potential of such research, I asked the NBAC in November 1998 to look at the ethical and medical issues surrounding human stem cell research. The scientific results that have emerged in just the past few months already strengthen the basis for my hope that one day stem cells will be used to replace cardiac muscle cells for people with heart disease, nerve cells for hundreds of thousands of Parkinson's patients, or insulin-producing cells for children who suffer from diabetes.

The issues addressed by the NBAC's recommendations are complex and difficult. The commissioners are to be commended for the thoroughness with which they engaged in this discussion and the national dialog that they facilitated, seeking the views and opinions of virtually every segment of our society including scientists, patients, scholars from most of the major religions in the United States, lawyers, philosophers, ethicists, and the public.

I want to thank Dr. Harold Shapiro, Chairman of the NBAC, and other commissioners for a thoughtful report that will contribute significantly to the efforts of my administration as we establish the highest ethical standards for the conduct of human stem cell research.

The Auckland Challenge: APEC Economic Leaders' Declaration

September 13, 1999

We, the Economic Leaders of APEC, celebrate here in Auckland ten years of unprecedented cooperation in our region, in pursuit of a vision of stability, security and prosperity for our peoples. We shall continue to exercise leadership to reach our goals and to meet the challenge we have set ourselves.

We welcome the improved performance and prospects of our economies since we last met, and commend the actions taken to reform those economies affected by the crisis. The cooperative growth strategy we adopted in Kuala Lumpur, and sound macroeconomic policies in key economies, have supported the restoration of confidence and growth, and have allowed us to share growing confidence about our prospects.

We are not complacent about the risks that might impede recovery and sustainable growth and we will sustain the momentum for reform. Continued multilateral and bilateral support is still important. We welcome and endorse the efforts of Ministers through the year in pursuit of APEC's goals. As Leaders, we accept responsibility for resisting protectionism, opening mar-

kets further, and addressing structural and regulatory weaknesses that contributed to the economic downturn from 1997. We will achieve this by strengthening our markets through regulatory reform and enhanced competition and by improving the international framework governing trade and investment flows. To this end we commit to the launch of a new Round of negotiations in the World Trade Organisation.

All people in our communities have a stake in the success of APEC. We want to ensure they achieve their full potential for improved economic and social well being. We particularly welcome the more active participation of women and business in APEC's work this year.

Supporting Growth through Strong and Open Markets

Improved competitiveness through ongoing reform is the road to recovery and sustainable growth. Through APEC, we seek to expand opportunities for business and employment growth, build strong and open markets and ensure that our communities and economies can participate successfully in the international economy. Open,

transparent and well-governed markets, both domestic and international, are the essential foundation of prosperity and enable enterprises to innovate and create wealth.

We will strengthen our markets by:

- providing greater transparency and predictability in corporate and public sector governance
- enhancing the role of competition to improve efficiency and broaden participation by enterprises
- improving the quality of regulation and the capacity of regulators to design and implement policies for sustainable growth
- reducing compliance costs and facilitating business growth
- building a favorable regional and international environment for free and fair competition

In reconfirming our commitment to achieve the Bogor Goals of free and open trade and investment by 2010/2020, we endorse the attached APEC Principles to Enhance Competition and Regulatory Reform. These principles provide a core part of the framework for strengthening our markets which will better integrate individual and collective actions by APEC economies to achieve those goals.

We accept Ministers' proposals for an initial work programme to strengthen markets. This gives priority to strengthening market infrastructure and human capacity in our economies and enterprises, especially in developing economies. It also calls for specific implementation strategies in areas such as natural gas and e-commerce. We call upon the private sector, including the APEC Business Advisory Council (ABAC) and the APEC Financiers' Group, to contribute to these efforts.

We welcome and endorse the work of our Finance Ministers, and encourage their efforts to strengthen domestic financial markets and secure the foundation for the return of capital to the region by:

- enhanced supervision of financial markets, including through improved training of supervisors and regulators
- developing domestic bond markets based on the just published Compendium of Sound Practices
- developing and applying agreed corporate governance principles

The alignment of the APEC Finance Ministers' process with the APEC Leaders' process offers new opportunities for cooperation. We instruct our Ministers to pursue greater links among APEC fora and their work programmes. We look forward to receiving a report from Finance Ministers of further progress in dealing with financial market issues when we next meet.

We reaffirm that individual actions by economies are the principal means by which APEC's goal will be attained. We acknowledge that progress towards the Bogor Goals has been uneven, and undertake to continue concrete actions to fulfill our commitment. We also accept the views of ABAC and other business representatives who have called for action plans to be more specific, transparent and comprehensive, and welcome the initiative by Ministers to review and strengthen processes for individual and collective actions under the Osaka Action Agenda.

APEC's trade facilitation programmes are already delivering substantial benefits—in customs harmonisation, standards and conformance, and increased mobility of business people. We welcome the agreed new initiatives, and instruct Ministers to give priority to this work next year, in consultation with business, and to better communicate the value of APEC's trade facilitation role.

Enhanced economic and technical cooperation is essential if we are to lift our peoples into prosperity, and narrow the development gap among Asia/Pacific economies. The financial crisis has underlined the importance of cooperation in human and institutional capacity building, science and technology exchanges and development of infrastructure. We direct our Ministers to give special attention in the coming year to improving effective and coordinated delivery of APEC's Ecotech and capacity building programmes, in accordance with the Manila Declaration.

We welcome Ministers' report on the APEC Food System proposed by the APEC Business Advisory Council, and endorse its recommendations on the development of rural infrastructure, dissemination of technological advances in food production and processing, and promotion of trade in food products. A robust regional food system that efficiently links food production, food processing and consumption, is a vital contribution to meeting the objectives of APEC.

We instruct Ministers to implement the recommendations taking into account ABAC's submission this year, and monitor annually progress towards achieving the APEC Food System.

We recognise the key role that electronic commerce will play in linking our economies. APEC must continue its efforts to create a favourable environment for e-commerce in co-operation with the private sector.

In a little over 100 days, APEC economies will face the challenges and risks of the century date change. Intense activities in economies and throughout the region have lessened risks but more cooperative planning must occur. We recognise that global interdependence means we must continue our efforts to prepare, accelerate cross-border contingency planning, and enhance transparency about readiness as a matter of the highest priority. We adopt the APEC Y2K 100 Days Cooperation Initiative to intensify cooperation for responding to potential Y2K events. We agree to share information and expertise about Y2K impacts on critical infrastructures during and after the date change.

APEC in the Global Economy

APEC will continue to play a leadership role in strengthening the global economy, especially the multilateral trading system.

Strong financial systems are fundamental to achieving robust, open and growing economies. We welcome the report from our Finance Ministers on developments in strengthening the international finance architecture and are encouraged by the progress made. The establishment of the Financial Stability Forum and the new informal mechanism to enhance dialogue among the systematically important economies should advance cooperation on strengthening the international financial system. We support ongoing efforts to improve crisis prevention and crisis resolution, and urge prompt action to improve transparency of highly leveraged institutions. We also support the developing consensus on the need to ensure that reforms of the international financial system, and domestic financial markets, are mutually reinforcing. APEC's diverse membership provides a special contribution to discussions on domestic and international financial reforms. In respect of both the public and private sectors, APEC advocates:

- greater transparency and openness including improved reliability and timeliness of information

- clearer accountability for decisions and judgements

This year, APEC has a unique opportunity to give impetus to deliberations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). We will give the strongest possible support at Seattle to the launch of a new Round of multilateral negotiations within the WTO, and endorse the positions adopted by Ministers. We recognise the need to build public confidence in this process and to improve coordination on trade related matters among relevant international organisations. We agree on the importance of ensuring full implementation of existing WTO agreements. We see continued growth in international trade and investment as the best means of achieving prosperity and security.

In particular, we agree that the new Round should:

- include comprehensive market access negotiations covering industrial tariffs in addition to the already mandated negotiations on services and agriculture
- lead to timely and effective improvements in market access to the benefit of all participating economies, particularly developing economies and, consistent with this objective, provide scope to review and strengthen rules and disciplines
- have a balanced and sufficiently broad-based agenda and be concluded within three years as a single package which does not preclude the possibility of early results on a provisional basis

We support, as one of the important objectives of the negotiations on agriculture, the abolition of agricultural export subsidies and unjustifiable export prohibitions and restrictions.

We call on all WTO members to join us at Seattle in a commitment not to impose new or more restrictive trade measures for the duration of the negotiations, as applied during the Uruguay Round. We pledge not to impose any such measures before the Seattle WTO Ministerial meeting.

Support for ongoing WTO negotiations will remain a key area of APEC's work throughout those negotiations. In particular we resolve to work actively in the negotiations to ensure that APEC and WTO are mutually reinforcing. To respond fully to the challenges and opportunities of today's interdependent world for the benefit of all our peoples and to avoid fragmentation

of the international trading system, we need to ensure convergence between regional and multi-lateral liberalisation initiatives.

In order to achieve universality of membership, we also seek early progress in the accession negotiations to the WTO, including for those APEC economies that are not yet WTO members. We issue a strong call for these accession negotiations to be concluded at the earliest opportunity, if possible prior to commencement of the new WTO negotiations.

Participation in Prosperity

As Leaders, we recognise our responsibilities to ensure full and successful participation by all of our populations in the modern economy. Technological change has irreversibly integrated global markets for goods and services, and finance. The effective development and application of knowledge will be a key driver of future economic success, and we pledge to ensure that APEC economies are to the forefront of building and sharing their expertise in this vital sector. Cooperation in such fields as e-education, science and technology and life-long skills development should be strengthened. Globalisation must become an opportunity for all.

We commit to ensuring that APEC takes a leading role in enabling developing economies to participate successfully in the global economy, through enhancing human and institutional capacities and progressively opening markets. We recognize that income and wealth disparities between and within economies can pose a challenge for social stability. Appropriate social safety nets play a role in facilitating economic and social adjustment. We welcome efforts by APEC economies, and other institutions, to address social safety net issues, and encourage further efforts to maintain employment and environmentally sustainable growth. In that regard, we welcome the outcomes of the Human Resources Development and Small and Medium Enterprises Ministerial Meetings. APEC economies will pursue enhanced dialogue and continue to seek policy approaches that encourage inclusion and economic advancement, as well as initiative and innovation.

We welcome the Framework for the Integration of Women in APEC, which is a significant step to enhance the ability of women to contribute to and benefit from prosperity of the

region. We shall review implementation of the Framework when we next meet.

In 1999, we have enhanced opportunities for business, especially smaller enterprises, to make their views known in APEC. Those views are of keen interest to us. Further dialogue with the private sector, at all levels, is essential to maintain the dynamism and relevance of APEC. We also look to the private sector for support for reform.

Once again, we welcome the recommendations from the APEC Business Advisory Council, ABAC, and thank members of the Council for their contribution in areas such as capacity building, finance, food, e-commerce and air services. We instruct Ministers to take the ABAC recommendations into account during their work in 2000. We support implementation of the eight steps for more competitive air services, and the identification of further steps to liberalise air services in accordance with the Bogor Goals. Tourism and air services have a large contribution to make to development and community building in the region.

Conclusion

As Leaders, we recognise that our role in APEC, as in our own economies, is to set the course which will allow for sustainable development and which will deliver a strong social dividend to their populations. We acknowledge that economic adjustments may be difficult, and that there is social cost which must be reduced. But we are united in our belief that the path to increased prosperity requires continual reform and adjustment of our policies and outlook. An open regional framework, within which competition and cooperation flourish, is the best means of building a prosperous future together. We embark on APEC's second decade confident that a deepening and enduring spirit of openness, partnership and community is being built. The challenge we collectively face is to maintain our momentum and deliver on our commitment. We accept the challenge.

NOTE: This declaration was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release. An original was not available for verification of the content of this declaration.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on United States Activities in the United Nations

September 13, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit herewith a report of the activities of the United Nations and of the participation of the United States therein during the calendar year 1998. The report is

required by the United Nations Participation Act (Public Law 79-264; 22 U.S.C. 287b).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 13, 1999.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Slovenia-United States Tax Convention

September 13, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Convention Between the United States of America and the Republic of Slovenia for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed at Ljubljana on June 21, 1999. Also transmitted is the report of the Department of State concerning the Convention.

This Convention, which is similar to tax treaties between the United States and OECD nations, provides maximum rates of tax to be applied to various types of income and protection

from double taxation of income. This Convention also provides for resolution of disputes and sets forth rules making its benefits unavailable to residents who are engaged in treaty-shopping or with respect to certain abusive transactions.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 13, 1999.

Letter to Members of Congress on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

September 13, 1999

Dear _____,

This week, the House of Representatives will have an historic opportunity to strengthen our democracy when it considers legislation to reform our campaign finance system. I write to you today to urge the passage of the bipartisan campaign finance reform bill offered by Representatives Christopher Shays and Martin Meehan.

The Shays-Meehan legislation represents real, comprehensive reform. It would ban the raising of unregulated "soft money" by both parties, address backdoor campaign spending by outside

organizations, and strengthen public disclosure. It would revitalize the political process by curbing the role of special interests, giving voters a louder voice, and treating incumbents and challengers of both parties fairly.

For nearly four years I have challenged Congress to pass the Shays-Meehan bill. As you know, it was approved by the House last year, only to be blocked by a minority of the Senate. Today, I ask Members of the House to pass it—without unnecessary amendments that would undermine its intent and reach.

We have had enough talk about reform; the House of Representatives now has a rare and fleeting opportunity to act. The American people know the system needs to be fixed—but many have come to doubt Congress's will to fix it. I urge you to make this the year that Congress

proves the cynics wrong, and passes bipartisan, comprehensive campaign finance reform.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to every Member of the House of Representatives.

Remarks on the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit and an Exchange With Reporters in Auckland September 14, 1999

The President. Good morning. I believe we've had a very successful meeting here with our Asia-Pacific partners. I want to begin by thanking Prime Minister Shipley and the people of Auckland and New Zealand for giving us quite a wonderful visit to a place that most of us have never been before.

Our 19 APEC members pledged to strengthen the world economy and advance our common prosperity. We also came together on East Timor. We unanimously resolved to strengthen the world trading system by opening more markets and agriculture services and industrial products. In November we'll go to Seattle to launch a new world trade round, determined to make this APEC agenda the world's agenda.

We can make trade even more beneficial if China joins the WTO on commercially viable terms. I had a good meeting here with President Jiang, resuming progress in our relationship on issues from the WTO to security matters like preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Our negotiators have now resumed substantive WTO talks.

APEC's members also reaffirmed the importance of continuing reforms in the global financial system. Asia's recovery is clearly underway. We want to keep it going, and to do so, we have to keep up the pace of reform.

At the same time, we stood together against the violence in East Timor. Indonesia's leaders agreed to reverse course. Now we and our partners are working rapidly to deploy an effective international security force to protect the people as they make their transition to independence. Again, let me say how grateful I am for the leadership of Australia and New Zealand in this endeavor.

This will be overwhelmingly an Asian force. But the United States is ready to provide airlift, communications, intelligence, and related capabilities. We are working out the details in consultation with Congress.

I hope the force can be ready to deploy within days. We are working with the U.N. today to bring that about. Until the international peacekeeping force deploys, it is essential that Indonesia works to prevent further violence. It must facilitate efforts to quickly bring humanitarian assistance to the people who have suffered so very greatly. The United Nations is ready to deliver food and medical supplies.

Let me say, finally, this week we made progress on another crucial security issue, building peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. Following talks in Berlin, we understand and expect that North Korea will refrain from testing long-range missiles of any kind, while our discussions continue. It's an important initial step in addressing our concerns about North Korea's missile program.

We're, in turn, considering measures to ease sanctions and move toward normalizing economic relations with North Korea. The work we've done in the past few days will help to build a more secure, more prosperous, more integrated Asia-Pacific region. It will give our citizens, all our citizens, all the way from New Zealand back to Washington, better lives in the 21st century.

Thank you very much.

Congressional Support for a Mission to East Timor

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, I have only made about 10 calls, but of course, Secretary Cohen and Mr. Podesta have been back there, and they've been talking to more. My sense is that the Congress, even though we are heavily committed in the Balkans and elsewhere, will support a mission if we are there in a clearly supportive capacity, if we're talking about a few hundred people, not thousands of people on the ground, and the work we've been asked to do is actually work that a mission like this would need America to do the airlift, some of the internal transportation, the communications, the intelligence, some of the engineering work. These are things that, because of the size of our military, we are uniquely positioned to do.

And I stopped off in Hawaii, talked to Admiral Blair, our commander in chief in the Pacific, and he had been having very detailed conversations with the Australians. That's what we understand they're asking for. It would be a matter of a few hundred people, and I think we could do that.

Indonesian Response to United Nations

Q. Mr. President, how much trouble are the Indonesians making for the Security Council about the Australians leading—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, I know there was a statement yesterday by an Indonesian official, but we do not understand that to be the official position. So, so far, no trouble has been made. I hope that there won't be any. I think that we have tried to make it clear that we would welcome the cooperation with the Indonesian forces if they would work with us; they would be in a position to do some things there to

help facilitate this mission. But I do not believe they should be able to dictate the composition of it once having acknowledged that the United Nations should come in.

Australian Leadership in East Timor

Q. Is Australia's leadership nonnegotiable—[inaudible]?

The President. Well, that's, of course, for the U.N. to decide, but as far as I'm concerned, I'm quite comfortable with it and strongly supportive of it. Keep in mind, they are willing to provide what, in all probability, will be more than half of the total force needed.

We have a high regard for their abilities. We train with them. We work with them. We know that they can do this job, and in so doing, they make it possible for large numbers of other nations to participate who can make only more modest contributions. It's easier for New Zealand, for Malaysia, for the Philippines, for Korea, for any number of other countries to send in troops according to their ability to do it, knowing that there will be a large and very well-trained and led anchor force there. So the Australian commitment makes possible the effective commitments of a lot of other countries, just as our airlift capacity does.

So I would hope we can stick with it, and I think we will. I feel good about it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 a.m. at the Stamford Plaza Hotel prior to departure from Auckland, New Zealand. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand; and President Jiang Zemin of China.

Exchange With Reporters in Queenstown, New Zealand September 14, 1999

Q. How's your golf game today, Mr. President? Did it improve as you went along?

The President. It got a lot better. It had nowhere to go but up when I started. No, we did better, and we won the match, thanks mostly to my partner here. But we did okay. We played the way partners should play. When I had a good score, he didn't; when he had a good score, I didn't play good. We wasted no shots.

Burton Shipley. The President suggested at one stage that we were playing very good brother-in-law golf. I thought the line was very good.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. We did, we actually played the pro and his partner, and we won, and they bought me a Diet Coke. It was a big stake here; it was great.

Q. [Inaudible]—the last hole?

The President. No, we won that, too. All four of us parred all four holes the second time we played.

Mr. Shipley. But we got a couple more strokes.

Situation in East Timor

Q. Are you satisfied with how the talks went in New York today?

The President. What?

Q. It seemed to be positive. It seemed that the Indonesians signed on to what the United States wants.

The President. It appears so. You know, the initial report I got was quite good, but I want to get a detailed briefing about exactly where we are. I think the important thing is to get the force mobilized, get it in in a hurry, and also get the humanitarian aid out there. There are a lot of people still actually in East Timor who need food and supplies, so we've got a lot of work to do.

Hurricane Floyd

Q. What have you heard about the hurricane?

Q. Are you monitoring Hurricane Floyd?

The President. Yes. I talked to Mr. Witt this morning, and he told me he would call me back in about 12, 14 hours and let me know where it was. I've not talked to him since I got up this morning.

Q. It sounds like a monster storm, sir.

The President. Yes, he said it's going to be huge. And we didn't know at the time how many States would be hit for sure. But all the experts think it's going to be a very, very large storm. We'll just have to hope for the best.

President's Visit

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. It's fabulous; it's really quite a wonderful course. It's an honest course. It's a good course. It plays hard, but it's an honest course.

Q. What do you think of Queenstown?

The President. I wish I had weeks to spend here. You know, when we were coming in the airplane, landing, everybody on our plane was just gasping when we saw the landscape. It's just so beautiful. You're all very fortunate.

Q. When are you coming back, Mr. President?

The President. How about next week? [Laughter]

Round of Golf

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. This guy hits the ball further than any person his age I've ever played with, including a lot of the pros I've played—water treatment.

Mr. Shipley. Just not as straight as the pros.

The President. And it's only because his public service has kept him from playing every day that he's not a scratch golfer.

Chelsea Clinton

Q. What did Chelsea do today?

The President. I think she looked around here and went running. I don't think she went caving or anything as great as yesterday.

NOTE: The exchange began at 6:41 p.m. at the Millbrook Resort following a round of golf. In his remarks, the President referred to his golf partner Burton Shipley, husband of Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand; and his opponents, professional golfer John Griffin and publisher Mike Robson. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Memorandum on the Working Group on International Energy September 14, 1999

*Memorandum for the Assistant to the President
for Science and Technology*

Subject: Working Group on International Energy

The report of the President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST), *Powerful Partnerships: The Federal Role in*

International Cooperation on Energy Innovation, will help advance my Administration's goals for addressing energy-linked economic, environmental, and security challenges. As you point out in the synthesis of the report, our window of opportunity for moving the world off of its

current energy trajectory—which entails higher consumer costs, greater regional pollution, more pronounced climate disruption, and increasing risks to energy security—is closing fast. Thus, we should act expeditiously on PCAST's recommendations for strengthening capacities for energy technology innovation, promoting technologies to limit energy demand and for a cleaner energy supply, and improving management of the Federal international energy research and development portfolio.

As a first step, I direct you to form a working group on international energy research, development, demonstration, and deployment under the

National Science and Technology Council, as recommended by PCAST. The working group should build on the PCAST report and assess the portfolio of programs underway in the Federal agencies and develop a strategic vision, including budget recommendations that can be considered in agency requests for FY 2001.

Please commend John Holdren, the members of his panel, and all of PCAST for its fine report on this important matter.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 15.

Remarks on Antarctica and Climate Change, in Christchurch, New Zealand September 15, 1999

Thank you very much. Good afternoon. Prime Minister Shipley, Burton and Anna and Ben; and Sir Edmund Hillary and Lady Hillary; Ambassadors Beeman and Bolger, and their wives; to Mayor Moore: Dr. Erb, Dr. Benton, Mr. Mace, Dr. Colwell; to all of those who have made our visit here so memorable: Let me begin on behalf of my family and my party by thanking the officials and the people of New Zealand for giving us 5 absolutely glorious days in one of the most beautiful places on Earth. We are very grateful.

Hurricane Floyd

I hope you will all indulge me just one moment. This is my only chance to speak not only to you but to the people of the United States today. And since we're here to talk about the weather, you should know that my country is facing one of the most serious hurricanes ever to threaten the United States, if the predictions of its force and scope hold true.

This morning I signed an emergency declaration for the States of Florida and Georgia to provide for assistance for emergency protective and preventive measures. I have been in close contact with our Vice President, Al Gore, and our Director of Emergency Management, James Lee Witt. They are working around the clock to prepare for the storm. I ask all of you here to remember my fellow Americans, and after we finish the state dinner tonight, I am going

to fly home, and we will make the best job of it we can.

Antarctica and Climate Change

Let me say I am particularly honored to be here with Sir Edmund Hillary, referred to in our family as my second favorite Hillary. [Laughter] I read that, when Sir Edmund turned 50, he resolved to do three things: to build a house on the cliffs above the Tasman Sea; to become a better skier; to do a grand traverse up the peaks of Mt. Cook. I'm wondering what he resolved to do when he turned 80. I hear the All Blacks may have a new full-back. [Laughter] I wish you a happy 80th birthday, sir, and I wish all of us might lead lives half so full and productive as yours.

I come here to this beautiful city and to this place to deepen a partnership between the United States and New Zealand that is already long and strong. In this century, young Americans and New Zealanders have fought again and again side by side to turn back tyranny and to defend democracy. We have worked together on peacekeeping missions. We have stood together for expanded opportunity for our people through trade. We even let you borrow the America's Cup from time to time. [Laughter] We hope to reverse our generosity shortly. [Laughter] We are grateful for your friendship, and we thank you for it.

This magnificent center stands as a symbol of what we can accomplish when we work together, and I would argue is a symbol of what will be most important about our cooperation in the 21st century.

You heard Sir Edmund talk about his trip across Antarctica. When he started it, some people called it the last great journey on Earth. As I was reading about it, I understand that he actually overheard one farmer ask another, "That there Antarctica, how many sheep do they run to the acre?" [Laughter]

But America believed in his mission and has long been fascinated with Antarctica. Way back in 1820, Nathaniel Brown Palmer was one of the first people to sight it. A few years later, an American exploring expedition mapped more than 1,500 miles of the Antarctic coast, ending a centuries-old debate over whether a big land mass, in fact, existed around the South Pole.

Forty years ago, inspired in part by Sir Edmund's expedition, the United States convened a meeting in Washington to preserve the Antarctic forever as a haven for peace and scientific cooperation. Today, we can all be proud that not a single provision of the Antarctic Treaty has ever been violated. Forty-three nations, representing two-thirds of the world's population, adhere to the treaty. And the Antarctic is what it should be, a treasure held in trust for every person on the planet.

We are working together to preserve the pristine waters surrounding the continent, and fighting illegal fishing that threatens to destroy species in the southern ocean.

For the United States and New Zealand, our commitments to Antarctica are based right here in Christchurch. Nearly 7 out of 10 United States expeditions to the Antarctic are staged from here. And let me say, the only disappointment I have about this trip is that I didn't stage an expedition from here. [Laughter] So I want you to know, I expect that you will let me come back one more time, so I can fulfill my lifelong desire to go to Antarctica.

I think, of all the work being done here, perhaps the most important to us and to the young people here, particularly, over the next 20 years will be the work that tells us about the nature of climate change and what it is doing to the ice cap here, to the water levels around the world, and to the way of life that we want for our children and our grandchildren.

The overwhelming consensus of world scientific opinion is that greenhouse gases from human activity are raising the Earth's temperature in a rapid and unsustainable way. The 5 warmest years since the 15th century have all been in the 1990's; 1998 was the warmest year ever recorded, eclipsing the record set just the year before, in 1997.

Unless we change course, most scientists believe the seas will rise so high they will swallow whole islands and coastal areas. Storms, like hurricanes and droughts, both will intensify. Diseases like malaria will be borne by mosquitoes to higher and higher altitudes, and across borders, threatening more lives, a phenomenon we already see today in Africa.

A few years ago, hikers discovered a 5,000-year-old man in the Italian Alps. You might think someone would have noticed him before. They didn't because the ice hadn't melted where he was before—in 5,000 years. If the same thing were to happen to the west Antarctic ice sheet, God forbid—it's a remote threat now, but it could occur one day; and if it did, sea levels worldwide would rise by as much as 20 feet. If that happens, not even Augie Auer will be able to save us from the weather. [Laughter] Now, I want you to laugh about it because I figure when people laugh, they listen. But this is a very serious thing.

In 1992, the nations of the world began to address this challenge at the Earth Summit in Rio. Five years later, 150 nations made more progress toward that goal in Kyoto, Japan. But we still have so much more to do. America and New Zealand, in no small measure because of our understanding, which the Prime Minister so eloquently articulated a few moments ago, because of our understanding of the significance of Antarctica and the work we have done here to make this a refuge of scientific inquiry, have special responsibilities in this area.

Of course, we have a big responsibility because America produces more greenhouse gases than any other country in the world. I have offered an aggressive program to reduce that production in every area. We are also mindful that emissions are growing in the developing world even more rapidly than in the developed world, and we have a responsibility there.

But I wanted to say today—and if you don't remember anything else I say, I hope you will remember this—the largest obstacle to meeting the challenge of climate change is not the huge

array of wealthy vested interests and the tens of thousands of ordinary people around the world who work in the oil and the coal industries, the burning of which produce these greenhouse gases. The largest obstacle is the continued clinging of people in wealthy countries and developing countries to a big idea that is no longer true, the idea that the only way a country can become wealthy and remain wealthy is to have the patterns of energy use that brought us the industrial age. In other words, if you're not burning more oil and coal this year than you were last year, you're not getting richer; you're not creating more jobs; you're not lifting more children out of poverty. That is no longer true.

We now know that technologies that permit breathtaking advances in energy conservation and the use of alternative forms of energy make it possible to grow the economy faster while healing the environment and that—thank God—it is no longer necessary to burn up the atmosphere to create economic opportunity.

We have somehow got to convince a critical mass of decisionmakers and ordinary citizens in every nation of the world that that is true. It will help to concentrate their attention if the people who know about Antarctica can illustrate, year-in and year-out, in graphic terms, the consequences of ignoring climate change and global warming.

We are committed to doing more at home and to do more to help developing nations bring on these technologies, so they can improve living standards and improve the environment. We can do this. We can do it in the same way that progress is being made in dealing with the ozone layer. Consider that example, something again which we know more about, thanks to the work of scientists here.

Because of chemicals we produced and released into the atmosphere over the past 50 years, every spring a hole appears in the ozone layer above Antarctica. You already heard, and you know more about it than any country in the world, about the unhealthy levels of ultraviolet radiation which pass through. Now, every Kiwi school child who has participated in Block Day knows what it means, why you have to have sunscreen and a hat.

But in 1987, the international community came together in Montreal and agreed to stop the use of chemicals that deplete the ozone layer. Experts tell us if we keep going, the ozone

hole will shrink, and by the middle of the next century, the ozone hole could actually close, so that, miracle of miracles, we would have a problem created by people, solved by people and their development. This is the sort of thing we have to do with climate change, and the stakes are even higher.

The Antarctic is a great cooling tower for our planet, a great learning tower for our planet's scientists. What happens to it will determine weather all over the globe and will determine the patterns of life of the children here in this audience and certainly of their children and grandchildren. It is a bridge to our future and a window on our past.

Right now, the ice is 2 miles thick and goes back more than 400,000 years. By studying the patterns of the past, scientists will be able to tell us what will likely happen in the future and how we are changing the future from the past based on what we are doing.

So much of what we know today from global climate patterns comes also from satellite images. But scientists have never had detailed images of key parts of the Antarctic to work with until today. So I wanted to come here with one small contribution to the marvelous work that all of our people are doing here. Today America is releasing once classified satellite images of the Antarctic's unique dry valleys. The pictures provide two sets of images taken 10 years apart and provides some of the most detailed and important information we've ever had on these ecological treasures. Last month Vice President Gore did the same thing for the Arctic. Both these releases will help scientists understand changes taking place at the poles and help us take another step toward meeting the challenge of a warming planet.

This is a special challenge for our young people. We have used the Internet, through an initiative called the Globe program, to teach students in more than 50 countries that a grasp of science and ecology is the first step toward a cleaner world. I am pleased that, working with Prime Minister Shipley, we are also going to establish a new Globe program for children right here in New Zealand.

When Sir Edmund Hillary made his trek, the Antarctic was the last new place humanity looked before turning its attention to the stars. In less than 4 months, all humanity will be looking forward to the promise of a new century and a new millennium. When the dawn breaks

on January 1st, the international timeline tells us that New Zealand literally will lead the world into a new age.

Let us vow, in this place of first light, to act in the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty, to conquer the new challenges that face us in the new millennium. Let us work with the determination of Sir Edmund Hillary to strengthen our partnership, to keep our air and water clean and our future alive for our children. We owe it to the children of New Zealand, the children of the United States, and the children of the world. And we can do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:38 p.m. in the courtyard at the International Antarctic Centre.

In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley, her husband, Burton, and their children, Anna and Ben; Sir Edmund Hillary, polar explorer and first man to climb Mount Everest, and his wife, June; U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand Josiah H. Beeman, and his wife Susan; New Zealand Ambassador to the U.S. James B. Bolger, and his wife, Joan; Mayor Gary Moore of Christchurch; Karl A. Erb, Director, Office of Polar Programs, and Rita R. Colwell, Director, National Science Foundation; Richard Benton, General Manager, Visitor Centre, International Antarctic Centre; Christopher Mace, Chairman, Antarctic New Zealand; and New Zealand weather forecaster Augie Auer.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand in Christchurch *September 15, 1999*

Prime Minister Shipley. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to report that we have held very successful talks this afternoon in Christchurch. These talks have ranged over many issues, regional issues—urgent regional issues, international issues, and of course, bilateral issues. I view them as extraordinarily satisfactory from New Zealand's point of view.

I believe President Clinton's visit to New Zealand has been an opportunity for this region to make real progress on pressing international issues. This afternoon we were able to discuss the matter of East Timor, and I was able to thank the President for his leadership while in this country in helping to mobilize international support and opinion for restoring order and relieving the humanitarian crisis that exists in Timor. The plight of the displaced people in Timor has and is at the uppermost part of our minds at this time.

New Zealand is making urgent preparations to contribute our defense force capability and personnel to the U.N. force in East Timor. We appreciated the opportunity this afternoon to review the most recent developments in New York, and the President was able to give us his most recent advice.

I would also like to take this opportunity while we're here to publicly say how much we appreciate the leadership role that Australia is playing at this present time in evacuating the refugees from East Timor and also for providing such a major contribution to the U.N. force.

New Zealand's Navy and Air Force are already on hand, working with the Australians. The New Zealand Cabinet will hold a special meeting tomorrow afternoon to review the latest developments and also to consider how and when we will deploy our troops to the area, if requested by the U.N. I've also asked that Parliament be called together on Friday, so that this important matter can be discussed.

In our discussions with the President, we were able to consider where our current position on defense force personnel and our defense relationship was up to. I valued the opportunity for that discussion to take place, and I believe that good progress has been made.

We reviewed the outlook for global trade. I think we felt that there was a real satisfaction in the achievements that the APEC meeting this week were able to make. There has been a clear sign that there is a commitment from the APEC region to see the launch of a highly successful WTO round, and the Auckland challenge

laid down the challenge to the rest of the world to come to the talks in Seattle with something decisive and clear to put on the table.

As you are aware, APEC represents half of the world's population and half of the world's economy. New Zealand particularly values free and open trade, and we believe that strong markets are the most able way in which we can deliver a social dividend to the people within our respective economies.

Mr. President, we wish you well in the preparations for the WTO round. It is a very important next step in achieving free and open trade globally, and many people depend on success being achieved in these talks.

Finally, on the bilateral issue, I believe that the relationship between the New Zealand Government and the U.S. is in very good heart. There are so many shared values which see us working together across such areas of the environment, world trade, peacekeeping, and, of course, the promotion of human rights.

We also remain committed to working closely together on any trade matters between us that have some difficulties, such as the safeguard action on our lamb exports to the U.S., via the mechanism that's available to us through the WTO. That is, of course, how good friends should work these things through, and that is how it will remain in New Zealand.

Mr. President, it's been a real pleasure and a privilege to have you in our country. Your own warmth has won the hearts of most New Zealanders, and we want to thank you for your leadership on policy issues that have seen very effective steps forward this week on pressing international issues of our time.

I now invite you to make some comments.

President Clinton. Thank you, Prime Minister. Let me begin by thanking you, your Government, and the people of New Zealand for the wonderful welcome that I and my family and our entire delegation have received. I also am very grateful for the tremendous leadership that you gave to the APEC summit. It was quite a success, and, I think, thanks in no small measure to your efforts.

As you mentioned, we have a lot of shared values, and I believe that the world is moving toward a consensus around freer and more open trade but coupled with policies that leave no one behind, that invest in the education and health care and empowerment of people, that protect the economy while growing the environ-

ment, that promote democracy and human rights.

As we see, however, in East Timor, it's one thing to say that there is such consensus and quite another to turn it into reality. We are working together to address the urgent and difficult tasks there. The people are still vulnerable to attack. Many have fled their homes; many are short of food, not only those who have left the country but those who are displaced within East Timor.

As all of you know, the Security Council is now moving on a resolution that would provide a strong mandate for an effective international security force. I expect it to be approved. Meanwhile, we continue to receive reports of violence and intimidation, which Indonesia has a responsibility to prevent. And also, Indonesia has a responsibility to allow relief organizations access to the refugees now.

Now, we know that this international peacekeeping force will face some stiff challenges. But we have affirmed together that we will meet those challenges. With our support, the people of East Timor can have the independence and the democracy they have voted for. By fostering stability there and in helping Indonesia to resume its progress in undergoing the profound transitions at work there, we can make our whole community of nations more secure.

Let me say I'm very proud that the United States and New Zealand will be standing together to defend freedom and human rights once again. We will participate together in the force. As I told the Prime Minister earlier, based on our experience elsewhere, I think it is quite important that Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the other countries that will be participating, prepare through joint exercises that will help us to get ready to do what has to be done together in East Timor.

On trade, in addition to what the Prime Minister has said about APEC, which we have said over and over and over again, which is that we're pleased with the agenda we embraced and we hope it will be embraced at the WTO ministerial in Seattle, I also want to say that I'm very excited that the whole world will soon benefit from the leadership of New Zealand's Mike Moore at the WTO.

If we can keep pushing for freer and more open trade, if we can make that embraced at the WTO ministerial, once again we will see

in the example of New Zealand how a small country can lead by the power of its example.

Again, Madam Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality, your leadership, and for all that your country is doing to build a better world. Thank you.

Prime Minister Shipley. There are to be a couple of questions either side, and we'll take them side by side.

New Zealand-U.S. Military Exercises

Q. Mr. President, could I just ask you, is there any possibility of the United States allowing the resumption of military exercises with New Zealand, given that we're currently barred from those? And if not, isn't that an anomaly when New Zealand works so closely with the United States in areas such as Iraq and the Gulf and also in East Timor?

President Clinton. Well, I think we should do exercises in the specific context of East Timor. That's what I just said and we will do. If I have anything to say about it, we will, along with the Australians and others, have joint exercises as part of our preparation for East Timor.

Q. What about other military exercises?

President Clinton. I would deal with them on a case-by-case basis.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Hurricane Floyd

Q. Mr. President, you spoke earlier today about Floyd being one of the most serious hurricanes ever to threaten the United States. You've been briefed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Can you tell us what they've told you and what everybody can expect? And sir, are you satisfied that Federal and State agencies have done everything possible in the way of mobilizing personnel and equipment?

President Clinton. Well, I think we've done everything we know to do. Let me say, I just got off the phone with Dan Goldin, our NASA Administrator, and we were going over all that has been done in the event Floyd strikes Cape Canaveral. And as I'm sure you all know now, there are essentially two problems that literally threaten our space program. One is that we have our space shuttles in those big silos that are protected, and they're built to withstand 125 miles an hour winds. Right now, Floyd is coming in at about 145 miles an hour. Even if they withstand it, which I think there's a good chance they will, the other thing we had to

worry about is the flooding. We can get several feet of floodwaters in the Cape Canaveral area. And the NASA people have been working furiously to lift everything they can possibly lift as high as they can possibly lift it.

As you know, a lot of individual citizens have been boarding up their homes. There has been a lot of relocation, a lot of evacuation. We have granted preemptive emergency declarations, which is virtually unheard of. I think it was absolutely the right thing to do. The Governors of Florida and Georgia were strongly for it; I think South Carolina will join.

All I can tell you now, Terry, is I think we have to wait and see what happens. We have taken every step that I am aware of we can take. I had a long talk with the Vice President and James Lee Witt today; they're on top of it.

The key will be, I think, when this storm hits—and it won't be long now—where does it come in? Will it come in as far south as Cape Canaveral and move up, or will it hit further north? How long will it last? And we'll just have to keep working, and things may occur as it goes on. But I think there's been a truly extraordinary effort to prepare for this by State and local and national officials. We've worked together; we've done the best we could.

Situation in East Timor

Q. Mr. President, in relation to East Timor, in order to make sure this is not another Rwanda, how can we shortcut negotiations in New York to make sure humanitarian aid gets to East Timor immediately?

President Clinton. Well, let me say, I think we're moving as fast as possible. And the Prime Minister and I talked—we would like to see the first contingent of troops there in a matter of a couple of days, as soon as the resolution passes. And we think that will happen tomorrow, New York time.

You know, we know the Australians are ready to go. We can be ready to go, and we have airlift, and we can bring in others who have made their commitments. So I don't think you have to worry about it. Also—I don't mean there won't be more people killed and more terrible things happen, but what happened in Rwanda was—first, there won't be another 100 days, and not everybody has a machete. So there may be some terrible things happen, but we are moving as fast as we can.

Now, the other thing I would say, though, to make the point you made, it's not just a question of stopping the violence; we've got to get the NGO's and others in there who can provide humanitarian relief to people who are within the country. There are a lot of displaced persons who did not leave East Timor, and we know it. We know what we have to do. All I can tell you is, we'll do the best we can.

Lori [Lori Santos, United Press International].

Q. Sir, you said that Indonesia had the responsibility to prevent the systematic killing. What would you like to see them do, and why haven't they stepped up to the plate?

President Clinton. Well, the why—frankly, I don't think we're going to know that for a while, until we get the people on the ground, and people begin to talk. You know, it's not clear whether some elements of the military were encouraging what has happened or whether they felt they couldn't stop it. It's not clear what the designs were. There are a lot of things about that we don't know. A few days ago I stopped worrying about why and started worrying about how to change it. So, I don't know.

What I would like them to do, now that they have asked the United Nations to come in, is simply to stop the most egregious forms of violence and let the NGO's in to provide humanitarian relief right now. Within—it may become a moot point within 72 to 96 hours. But in 2 or 3 days, a lot of people could die, and they don't have to die if they work with us.

Prime Minister Shipley. From the New Zealand side.

New Zealand-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, we know that the United States are the champions of free trade, and yet, recently tariffs were put on our lamb imports to the United States. How do you equate one with the other? And can you give us your views on P5?

President Clinton. Yes. First, we are a champion of free trade. During the recent Asian financial crisis, when we lost huge agricultural and other markets, we kept our markets open and sustained the largest trade deficits in our history, while we were running the largest budget surpluses in our history, two things which don't normally go together.

I said in the meeting that during this period we bought 10 times as much steel from Japan and Russia as all of Europe did.

Now, I think you understand, in the American system, we have an International Trade Commission. People can bring complaints before it. The Commission makes a ruling. They made a recommendation. After they made a recommendation for some action in the case of the lamb, the Prime Minister called me; I called her back. She expressed some—obviously, the concerns of New Zealand. I did as much as I could to take those into account, including calling for a 3- rather than a 4-year period of action and saying that I would review it in the middle of the timeframe. So I believe what I did was WTO-consistent, and I believe that what I did was appropriate, given the recommendation I was made under our laws, just like I think you have a perfect right to appeal the decision. And if I were in your position, that's exactly what I'd do.

Q. And your view on P5?

President Clinton. On P5, I think it's a very interesting idea. I have asked the Prime Minister to give me 10 to 14 days to go home, talk to all of our people about it, have a chance to think it through. I had hoped to have a well-formulated position by the time I got here. But as you know, all of us have been completely swamped by developments in East Timor, and we honestly haven't had the time to work it through. So I told her I'd get back to her in a couple of weeks, and I will.

Prime Minister Shipley. Can I just comment on the issue of lamb, briefly, before the next question? Perhaps the last question needs to be taken. We have fed the President as much fine New Zealand lamb as we could possibly fit in. [Laughter]

President Clinton. And I've eaten it all. Not so much as a scrap has escaped my attention. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Shipley. This is an issue that New Zealand felt keenly. The WTO is the right forum. We will pursue that actively. But it does not spill over into what we view as not only a very valuable market for New Zealand agricultural exports but also a very warm relationship.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. [Inaudible]—WTO, are the U.S.-China trade talks proving more difficult than you had hoped? When and where will the next round of talks take place? And are you disappointed that there hasn't been a breakthrough?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think, on balance, this has been quite a good week for the United States in Asia, in the Asia-Pacific region. I did have a good meeting with President Jiang; we talked about things other than trade. One of our common interests, North Korea and avoiding the missile launch, appears to be headed in the right direction. We had progress in East Timor, and with the Prime Minister's leadership, we made the right commitments here at APEC. So I think this is good.

Now, on the Chinese-WTO talks, we have reengaged, and each side will now do whatever it thinks is right. You know, I don't totally control the timetable there, but I'm neither optimistic nor pessimistic about it. I am satisfied that we have reengaged, and we will do the best we can to just deal with this on the merits. We only had one or two issues before us when we couldn't quite get there in Washington. I

still think it would be a better thing for China and a better thing for the world if they were in the WTO, but that is, of course, ultimately a decision that they have to make, not me. But we're talking; we're working; and I feel good about it.

Prime Minister Shipley. Thank you very much.
President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 180th news conference began at 3:30 p.m. in the courtyard at the Sign of the Takahe, a historic landmark and restaurant. In his remarks, the President referred to Mike Moore, Director General, World Trade Organization; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gov. Roy E. Barnes of Georgia; and President Jiang Zemin of China. He also referred to Pacific 5 (P5), a proposed free trade area, which would include Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United States.

Statement on House Action on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation *September 15, 1999*

I am heartened that the House of Representatives rejected the politics of business as usual by passing real, bipartisan campaign finance reform. Passage of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform legislation is a victory for the American people. Now I urge the Senate Re-

publican leadership to let a majority rule by allowing the Senate to take an up-or-down vote on this historic legislation. The time has come for Congress to redeem the public's faith in the health of our democracy.

Statement on United Nations Security Council Action on East Timor *September 15, 1999*

Late last night the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1264, which authorizes a multinational force to restore stability in East Timor, at the invitation of the Indonesian Government. Now we must move with purpose and dispatch to protect the innocent people whose lives are still threatened by those seeking to overturn the results of a fair vote. I welcome the passage of Resolution 1264 and look forward to working with the Govern-

ment of Australia and others in the international community to put together an effective force. I have just been briefed by Admiral Blair of CINCPAC on our close cooperation with Australia, and I hope the force can deploy in a matter of days. The United States is prepared to contribute to this operation, and we are discussing with our Australian allies and the Congress an appropriate U.S. role.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand in Christchurch

September 15, 1999

Thank you very much. Forgive my hoarseness.

First, Prime Minister, to you, your family, your government, and the people of New Zealand, I cannot thank you enough for the wonderful welcome that our party and my family members have received here. I apologize for having to rush home, but all of you know of the great storm that is now hitting the American coast. We had to move over 2½ million people today in an attempt to minimize the loss of life. So I hope you'll forgive me, but let me say I have had a wonderful time here.

I'm glad that the fashion people approved of the way I wore the beautiful outfit you gave me. *[Laughter]* You know, I've been President 7 years now. I've been all over the world. I've received any number of items of clothing. And when you go to these meetings, very often the people who are there get the native dress, and we wear them. And usually, when I go home, there is someone making fun of how I looked in the dress of whatever country I was. This is the smartest outfit I've ever been given.

In the calendar cycle, we in the Northern Hemisphere are moving in the opposite direction, so we're coming into fall and winter. And if you watch the television, I'll probably be in your outfit several times more before the end of the year.

Let me say from the bottom of my heart, this has been a magical trip. I think every person, when he or she is young, dreams of finding some enchanted place, of beautiful mountains and breathtaking coastline and clear lakes and amazing wildlife, and most people give up on it because they never get to New Zealand. This has been an amazing thing for me and for all of us.

You might be interested to know that on the front page of the Washington Post today, there is a picture of my National Economic Adviser bungee jumping. *[Laughter]* We all had to re-

mind him that he wasn't supposed to be Houdini and slip the cords, you know. *[Laughter]* And so the whole story was about how much fun we were all having.

I hope that it will also be reported that at this meeting we took a strong stand for freedom and human rights in East Timor, and we are going in there, together with our friends from Australia and others in this region, to try to protect the integrity of the referendum for democracy and independence, and save lives. And I thank New Zealand for its leadership in this cause. We also stood for the proposition that we can best lift the world's fortune by having more free and fair trade. And that, too, was profoundly important.

We celebrated today our partnership in Antarctica and talked about the importance of Antarctica to our whole future. I have mentioned often that, as all of you know proudly, when the new millennium dawns, it will dawn first on New Zealand. I will be proud to cross that bridge into the 21st century with you, knowing that we will be partners for peace and prosperity and a more decent and humane future for all our children. And I thank you for that partnership.

I'd like to ask all of you to join me in a toast to the Prime Minister, to her wonderful husband, to her government, and to the people of New Zealand.

[At this point, the participants drank a toast.]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:56 p.m. in a hangar at the Wigram Air Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Shipley's husband, Burton. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Shipley.

Remarks on Hurricane Floyd, in Honolulu, Hawaii September 15, 1999

Good morning. Let me first say it's good to be back on American soil after a very good week at the APEC conference in New Zealand. I'm especially anxious to get back to Washington to help to deal with the problems caused by Hurricane Floyd.

I have just had telephone calls with our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, who has been giving me regular updates. And as you know, the storm currently, in its rain form, is battering Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, and is targeting the entire Northeast.

These States are now engaged in the largest peacetime evacuation in our history. Yesterday I announced emergency declarations for Florida and Georgia. Today I am issuing similar declarations for South Carolina and North Carolina. I have just spoken with both Governor Hunt of North Carolina and Governor Hodges of South Carolina. I've assured them that we would do everything we can to help them, and they've given me updates on the problems that they expect to encounter, particularly problems for the farmers in those areas, who, if there is severe flooding, could well lose their entire crops.

Let me commend the efforts of FEMA, the National Weather Service, the National Hurricane Center, and the other Federal agencies and State and local officials who are working around the clock to protect people and property. Their efforts, along with new technologies, have

enhanced our ability to predict and prepare for these storms. I hope that every citizen will heed the warnings of the officials and the recommendations to take every action to protect their families and stay out of harm's way. Meanwhile, we will continue to take extraordinary measures to protect lives and property from Hurricane Floyd.

As always, in times of crisis, I am inspired by the way our people come together and work together. It proves that the American spirit is stronger than the force of any storm. We will keep working on this. We're going to leave here in a few minutes, and I'll be getting regular updates. It does seem that the entry point of the storm has moved considerably north from where it was predicted to move. But it is still very, very powerful, and if the present predictions hold clear, there'll be a lot of wind and an enormous amount of water on the coast in South Carolina and North Carolina within the next few hours.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:00 a.m. at Hickam Air Force Base, after crossing the international dateline on his return from New Zealand. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, and Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina.

Remarks on East Timor and the Shootings at Wedgewood Baptist Church and an Exchange With Reporters September 16, 1999

The President. Before I depart for the FEMA operations center, I'd like to say just a few words about East Timor and the terrible murders in Texas last night.

First, I'm pleased that the U.N. Security Council has approved the creation of a multinational force to be led by Australia, to deploy as soon as possible to end violence, restore order, and support the results of the August

30 referendum, where the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence.

After consulting closely with Congress and with the Government of Australia on the best way for the United States to support this operation, and on the recommendation of Secretary Cohen and my national security team, I have decided to contribute to the force in a limited but essential way, including communications and logistical aid, intelligence, air lifts of personnel

and material, and coordination of the humanitarian response to the tragedy.

We will deploy about 200 people, about half of whom will serve on the ground in East Timor. In addition, elements of the Pacific Fleet will provide support. I am especially encouraged that Asian nations will be taking the primary responsibility. The overall force will contain about 7,500 people, roughly half will be Australian, and I understand that Thailand and many other Asian nations will contribute, as well as governments from outside the region.

This mission is in America's interest for several reasons. Indonesia's future is important to us, not only because of its resources and its sea lanes but for its potential as a leader in the region and the world. It is the fourth most populous nation in the world; the largest Muslim nation in the world. All Asians and Americans have an interest in a stable, democratic, prosperous Indonesia.

Our fundamental values are also at stake in East Timor. The election on August 30th was conducted fairly, under the leadership of the U.N., with the agreement of the Indonesian Government. It produced a clear mandate for independence. The violence since is abhorrent to all of us who care about human dignity and democracy.

Of course, on any mission like this, there are dangers and risks of casualties. There remains a great deal of work ahead, but this force is well equipped for the job, and it is a job that is in the interests of peace and stability.

Last night, in the Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, during a prayer service for teen-

agers, a gunman killed seven worshipers, wounded seven others and killed himself. Yet again, we have seen a sanctuary violated by gun violence, taking children brimming with faith and promise and hope before their time. Our Nation's support and prayers are with the families of the victims, those still suffering in the hospital, and the entire Fort Worth community.

Federal law enforcement officials are now working with State officials and local authorities to find all the answers. But we know we have to redouble our efforts to protect our children. We know we have to act as if it were our own children being targeted by gun violence.

We know that there is nothing we can do to assure that this will never happen, but there is a lot more we can do to assure that it will happen more rarely. And I can only hope that the shock of this event will spur that kind of action.

Thank you very much.

Consultation With Congressional Leaders on East Timor

Q. Mr. President, did you consult the leaders? You say you consulted the leaders on the force, this very small force?

The President. Yes. Yes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House prior to departure for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. In his remarks, he referred to Larry Gene Ashbrook, gunman who attacked a prayer group at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, on September 15.

Remarks in a Teleconference With Governors From States Struck by Hurricane Floyd and to Disaster Relief Workers and an Exchange With Reporters

September 16, 1999

The President. Thank you, Governor. Let me just say, there may be some people who question, when this is over, whether we did the right thing to recommend all the evacuations. But now that we have this technology at the National Weather Center, we have to act on it. And we can all be grateful to God that this storm turned away and didn't hurt us as bad

as we feared. But I think that this is a terrific test, even though it was extremely burdensome, because some day our ability to do this evacuation will save hundreds of people's lives.

And I just want to thank you, Governor. I'm glad that all those people, in the end, didn't have to go. But I'm glad we did it because we've got the technology now, we knew what

was likely to happen, and I just wanted to thank you. And I hope that all your people also believe that some day our ability to do this will save hundreds of lives. And I thank you very much.

[A this point, Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina discussed the extent of damage in his State, especially flooding, and the need for a Presidential disaster declaration for the State and for Federal aid to improve and coordinate evacuation routes.]

The President. Thank you, Governor. Let me say that on the third point you made, we'll do everything we can to help you. On the second point, we'll give you the declaration you seek today. And it's unusual, but it's fairly unusual for your wife to be waist-deep in water in somebody's home, too. [Laughter] So we'll try to help as much as we can. And I regret that your have had to go through this after what you went through with Fran. And we'll do everything we can to help you.

[A this point, Gov. James S. Gilmore III of Virginia described problems with flooding, especially concerning water treatment facilities. He also described evacuation efforts and the effect of high winds on electric power service, and he asked the President for a major disaster declaration for Virginia.]

The President. Thank you, Governor. We will do that, and in particular, we want to help you with these emergency protective services that you will need. I'm very concerned about the water filtration plants and the other problems you have. We'll do everything we can to help.

[A this point, Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt thanked the President and the Federal agencies for their response to Hurricane Floyd.]

The President. You know, everywhere I go in the country, that's the one thing nobody criticizes the Federal Government about. [Laughter] And I thank you very much, all of you. I'm very, very—I'm proud of what we've been able to do over these last few years to try to make sure that when something like this happens, we're always ready, and we do the best we can, and we help people. And I'm very proud of you.

This is something that adds a lot to the confidence of people, when they go through what we've just heard about here. Thank you. Thank

you, Governor Gilmore, Governor Hodges, Governor Hunt, thank you all very much. And thank you in the Hurricane Center.

[Following the teleconference, the President made the following remarks to disaster relief workers.]

The President. Thank you very much. You can all hear that I can't speak very well today. I just came back from New Zealand. It's about a 20-hour trip, and I lost my voice on the airplane, and I apologize.

But let me begin by thanking all of you and Secretary Daley, Secretary Slater, my long-time friend James Lee Witt. You have no idea—perhaps you do—but you probably can't imagine how many times over the last 6½ years an American citizen has come up to me all over this country and thanked me for the emergency work that we do. And I always try to tell them that it's not me; it's you.

But when I became President, because I had been a Governor and because we had dealt with a lot of emergencies, I promised myself, as well as the American people, I would do everything I could to organize a team and give them the resources necessary to do what has to be done. And you have all performed superbly. So the first thing I just wanted to do is come by here and thank you very much.

Now, as all of you know, even though this hurricane was not as bad as we had feared, we've got a few problems out there. And I've just been briefed by the team here, members of the Cabinet, and I talked to Governor Hodges, Governor Hunt, and Governor Gilmore. For several communities in the Carolinas and Virginia, the storm has brought very severe flooding. There are hundreds of thousands of people without power. There's been a lot of property destruction, and in the case of Virginia, the flooding of at least one, perhaps two, water filtration systems.

Governor Hunt said today that the North Carolina flooding is perhaps the worst in history. So, today, I'm releasing another \$528 million to FEMA to address the immediate needs of the victims of Hurricane Floyd and other disasters; issuing an emergency declaration for Virginia to cover debris removal and provide funding for emergency protective measures, including fire, rescue, and law enforcement officials;

and a major disaster declaration for North Carolina to provide individual assistance to those directly affected.

In addition, we're working with officials from South Carolina to assess what else we can do there. And we're keeping in close contact with State and local officials in Maryland and the other coastal States, now that the storm has moved on.

Again, I'd like to say that I want to commend the citizens from all the States who heeded the warnings to move safely away, under difficult circumstances. I'm sure there will be those that second-guess us now, because Florida was not hit, and we moved a lot of people out, and there were plenty of people that moved out of other places. The storm wasn't as bad as we thought.

But we now have technology that imposes on us the responsibility of telling people what we think is going to happen. And there is no question that because we can do this, thousands and thousands of lives will be saved. Governor Hunt said today, there is no question in his mind that lives were saved in North Carolina, because of the people who did evacuate.

So while we thank goodness that the storm was not as bad as we had feared, I just want to reaffirm my absolute conviction that the people in the emergency services work did the right thing to issue the warnings, did the right thing to recommend evacuation. And we got a lot of good practice here, which is going to save a large number of lives in the future.

I also would just like to say, in closing, that the United States, at times like this, always pulls together. There are a lot of people out there today without power; there are a lot of people with their homes flooded; a lot of people feeling fairly desperate. And I know I speak for all of you when I say, we don't want them to feel alone. We will do everything we possibly can to be good, loyal, helpful neighbors to them and get them through this.

Thank you very much.

Coastal Development

Q. Mr. President, with Federal flood insurance, is the Government encouraging coastal development at a time when we may be in a new cycle of more dangerous and more frequent storms?

[*Federal Emergency Management Agency Director James Lee Witt answered the question.*]

Agricultural Assistance

Q. Mr. President, will there be any central hurricane relief for farmers whose crops have been damaged, Mr. President? There seems to be a shortfall in the hurricane relief they've gotten.

The President. Well, that's one thing that Governor Hunt asked me about yesterday, and I am looking at that, because the general disaster assistance performers tends to be targeted to the big, grow-crop places in the Middle West primarily—not exclusively—as is natural, because that's where a lot of the big dollar-volume losses have been.

So we've got to go back and look, now, and see what we're doing, because we've got not only this flooding but also, in this part of the country, we've had the biggest drought that these farmers had ever had. So most of them—not most but a large number of farmers from Maryland north, in this country, had lost their crops before the flood came. So we need to look at that, and we will now go back, obviously, down to the Carolinas, and go upward and see where we are. And I'll do my best to work with Congress to get appropriate relief for them.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. at the Federal Emergency Management Agency headquarters. In his opening remarks, he referred to Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina; and Governor Hunt's wife, Carolyn.

Statement on the Announcement of the Gates Millennium Scholarships September 16, 1999

I applaud the leadership and foresight shown by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation today

with its \$1 billion pledge to provide full college scholarships for minority students in the fields

of education, math, science, and engineering. These landmark scholarships will help address important needs: the need to encourage young people to become teachers, the need to ensure that our children are well-prepared in math and science, and the need to open the doors of

higher learning to all students. The Gates millennium scholarships remind us what vital role philanthropies can play in American life and how urgent it is for all of us to invest now in our Nation's young people.

Statement on Robert E. Rubin's Decision To Accept the Position as Local Initiatives Support Corporation Chairman of the Board

September 16, 1999

I am pleased that Bob Rubin has accepted the job as chairman of the board of LISC. This service is consistent with his longstanding commitment to bring economic opportunities to America's most underserved communities. His

selection is not only a tremendous boost for LISC but also for those who advocate community economic development to ensure that all Americans share in our economic prosperity.

Statement on the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances

September 16, 1999

Today, on the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, I am transmitting to the Senate for its advice and consent an amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer.

Preservation of the ozone layer is critical to life on Earth. The Montreal Protocol has led to a dramatic reduction in the production and use of ozone-depleting chemicals, and scientists report that the ozone layer is on its way to recovery. The amendment I transmit today builds on this progress, in part by strengthening

measures to promote compliance with the protocol. I urge the Senate to approve this amendment.

It also is critical that the United States support efforts by developing countries to phase out their use of ozone-depleting chemicals. Regrettably, appropriations measures now before Congress would deny funds I have requested for the Montreal Protocol Fund, which has a long record of success in these efforts. I call on Congress to approve the funds needed to help preserve the Earth's protective ozone layer.

Message to the Senate Transmitting an Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances

September 16, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, the Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (the "Montreal Protocol"), adopted at Montreal on September 15–17, 1997, by the Ninth Meeting of the Par-

ties to the Montreal Protocol. The report of the Department of State is also enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The principal features of the 1997 Amendment, which was negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), are the addition of methyl bromide

to the substances that are subject to trade control with non-Parties; and the addition of a licensing requirement for import and export of controlled substances. The 1997 Amendment will constitute a major step forward in protecting public health and the environment from potential adverse effects of stratospheric ozone depletion.

By its terms, the 1997 Amendment was to have entered into force on January 1, 1999, provided that at least 20 states had deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, or ap-

proval. However, because this condition was not met until August 12, 1999, the 1997 Amendment will enter into force on November 10, 1999.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the 1997 Amendment to the Montreal Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 16, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation on Security of Electronic Information

September 16, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your early consideration and speedy enactment a legislative proposal entitled the "Cyberspace Electronic Security Act of 1999" (CESA). Also transmitted herewith is a section-by-section analysis.

There is little question that continuing advances in technology are changing forever the way in which people live, the way they communicate with each other, and the manner in which they work and conduct commerce. In just a few years, the Internet has shown the world a glimpse of what is attainable in the information age. As a result, the demand for more and better access to information and electronic commerce continues to grow—among not just individuals and consumers, but also among financial, medical, and educational institutions, manufacturers and merchants, and State and local governments. This increased reliance on information and communications raises important privacy issues because Americans want assurance that their sensitive personal and business information is protected from unauthorized access as it resides on and traverses national and international communications networks. For Americans to trust this new electronic environment, and for the promise of electronic commerce and the global information infrastructure to be fully realized, information systems must provide methods to protect the data and communications of legitimate users. Encryption can address this need because encryption can be used to protect

the confidentiality of both stored data and communications. Therefore, my Administration continues to support the development, adoption, and use of robust encryption by legitimate users.

At the same time, however, the same encryption products that help facilitate confidential communications between law-abiding citizens also pose a significant and undeniable public safety risk when used to facilitate and mask illegal and criminal activity. Although cryptography has many legitimate and important uses, it is also increasingly used as a means to promote criminal activity, such as drug trafficking, terrorism, white collar crime, and the distribution of child pornography.

The advent and eventual widespread use of encryption poses significant and heretofore unseen challenges to law enforcement and public safety. Under existing statutory and constitutional law, law enforcement is provided with different means to collect evidence of illegal activity in such forms as communications or stored data on computers. These means are rendered wholly insufficient when encryption is utilized to scramble the information in such a manner that law enforcement, acting pursuant to lawful authority, cannot decipher the evidence in a timely manner, if at all. In the context of law enforcement operations, time is of the essence and may mean the difference between success and catastrophic failure.

A sound and effective public policy must support the development and use of encryption for

legitimate purposes but allow access to plaintext by law enforcement when encryption is utilized by criminals. This requires an approach that properly balances critical privacy interest with the need to preserve public safety. As is explained more fully in the sectional analysis that accompanies this proposed legislation, the CESA provides such a balance by simultaneously creating significant new privacy protections for lawful users of encryption, while assisting law enforcement's efforts to preserve existing and constitutionally supported means of responding to criminal activity.

The CESA establishes limitations on government use and disclosure of decryption keys obtained by court process and provides special protections for decryption keys stored with third party "recovery agents." CESA authorizes a re-

covery agent to disclose stored recovery information to the government, or to use stored recovery information on behalf of the government, in a narrow range of circumstances (*e.g.*, pursuant to a search warrant or in accordance with a court order under the Act). In addition, CESA would authorize appropriations for the Technical Support Center in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, which will serve as a centralized technical resource for Federal, State, and local law enforcement in responding to the increasing use of encryption by criminals.

I look forward to working with the Congress on this important national issue.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 16, 1999.

Statement on the Terrorist Attacks in Russia *September 17, 1999*

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend our deepest condolences to the families of victims of recent bombings in Russia. Our thoughts and prayers are with the loved ones of the nearly 300 people whose lives were tragically lost.

The American people share the world's outrage over these cowardly acts. These attacks were aimed not just at innocent people across Russia; they also targeted fundamental human rights and democratic values, which are cherished by Russia and other members of the international community. We must not allow terrorists to achieve their underlying objective, which is to undermine democratic institutions and individual freedoms.

People across Russia who have been affected by these attacks are now beginning the hard task of rebuilding their lives. Their courage and resilience sets an example for all of us. President Yeltsin and Prime Minister Putin have also made important appeals to their countrymen that these attacks should not lead to new incidents of intolerance or bigotry and that the public should remain calm and unified in response.

In the days and weeks ahead, we will intensify our cooperation with Russian authorities to help prevent terrorist acts. The struggle against terrorism is a long and difficult road, but we must not lose our resolve. America stands ready to work with Russia to protect our citizens from this common threat.

Statement on the Common Ground Partnerships Initiative *September 17, 1999*

Today, as we celebrate Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, thousands of individuals in naturalization ceremonies across America are pledging their allegiance to the United States and to the ideals that undergird our Nation.

Like generations of immigrants past, they are driven by a dream, and to achieve that dream, they seek to learn the ways of this land. I believe we can help these new citizens become full participants in American society. That is why

my administration has proposed the creation of the common ground partnerships, an innovative initiative that would combine expanded English language instruction with education in civics and life skills. This initiative, which my FY 2000 budget funds at \$70 million, will help ensure

that those who become Americans learn not only the words of the citizenship oath but also the broader language of our civic life. I hope that Members of Congress from both parties will recognize the power of this important initiative to build a stronger American community.

Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation *September 17, 1999*

I am pleased that the House of Representatives will have an opportunity in just a few weeks to vote on a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. This will, at long last, give Members of Congress an opportunity to put patients' interests ahead of the special interests.

A bipartisan majority of the House has already expressed support for the Norwood-Dingell pro-

positional, a plan that would provide for an enforceable set of meaningful patient protections that would be extended to all Americans in all health plans. I am confident that the Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights will be adopted, if the House leadership permits a fair process for debating and voting on this important issue.

Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 1999 *September 17, 1999*

I am pleased to send warm greetings to all those observing Yom Kippur.

On this most solemn of holy days, Jews across our nation and around the world prepare for the new year through fasting, prayer, and quiet reflection. Examining their thoughts, words, and deeds of the past year, they strive to acknowledge and learn from their transgressions, seek forgiveness from those whom they may have offended, and ask for God's mercy.

This Day of Atonement can offer a powerful lesson to people of all faiths about the true

spirit of reconciliation and the unconditional love of God. It can teach us not only to face our own failures, but also to love and forgive one another as God loves and forgives us. As the Jewish people set aside this time to repair their relationships and renew their souls, let us all vow to work together to heal divisions, promote tolerance and understanding, and share the blessings of peace in the year to come.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a meaningful Yom Kippur.

BILL CLINTON

Memorandum on Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Hurricane Floyd

September 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Assistance for Federal Employees Affected by Hurricane Floyd

I am deeply concerned about the devastating losses suffered by many as a result of Hurricane Floyd. Many parts of the Federal Government have been mobilized to respond to this disaster.

As part of this effort, I ask the heads of executive departments and agencies to excuse from duty without charge to leave or loss of pay those Federal civilian employees who are affected by Hurricane Floyd and its aftermath and who can be spared from their usual responsibilities. Specifically, I request that excused absence be granted to employees who are needed for emergency law enforcement, relief, or clean-up efforts authorized by Federal, State, or other officials having jurisdiction and employees who are prevented from reporting for work or faced with

a personal emergency because of Hurricane Floyd and its aftermath.

I am also authorizing the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to determine whether there is a need to establish an emergency leave transfer program to assist employees affected by this major disaster. An emergency leave transfer program would permit employees in an executive agency to donate their unused annual leave for transfer to employees of the same or other agencies who were adversely affected by Hurricane Floyd and who need additional time off for recovery. If the need for donated annual leave becomes evident, I direct OPM to establish the emergency leave transfer program and provide additional information to agencies on the program's administration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

The President's Radio Address

September 18, 1999

Good morning. This month millions of students across America are beginning the last school semester of the 20th century. Today I want to talk about our obligation to give them the education they deserve to succeed in the new century, for more than ever, in this information age, education is the key to individual opportunity and our share of prosperity.

That's why, even though we've worked hard to cut spending to balance the budget, we've also nearly doubled our investment in education and training. Many people said we couldn't do it, but we proved them wrong.

Today, we have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. After years and years of deficits, we now have budget surpluses for years ahead. More people have a chance to realize the American dream than ever before. More children have the chance to realize their full

potential than ever before. We've laid a foundation to preserve our prosperity for future generations.

Now, as the budget deadline rapidly approaches this year, we face many of the same tough choices again. And once again, I think the answer is clear: To build a strong nation in the new century, we must continue to invest in our future. That means we must strengthen Social Security, secure and modernize Medicare, pay off the national debt in 15 years, making America debt-free for the first time since 1835. And once again, it means we must invest in education, not sacrifice it.

Months ago now, I sent Congress a responsible budget to maintain our fiscal discipline and honor our commitment to our children's education. So far, the Republicans in Congress haven't put forward a budget of their own. In

fact, they're so busy trying to figure out how to pay for their irresponsible tax plan that they're in serious danger of not meeting their obligation to finish the budget by the end of the budget year. Even worse, they're preparing to pay for their own pet projects at the expense of our children's education.

We know now that the Republicans' risky tax cut would force us to slash vital funding for education by as much as 50 percent over the next 10 years. But what many people don't know is that next year alone, the Republican plan would cut the bill that funds education by nearly 20 percent.

Now, if carried out, this plan would lead to some of the worst cuts in education in our history. More than 5,000 teachers, hired as part of my class size initiative, could be laid off. Fifty thousand students could be turned away from after-school and summer school programs. More than 2 million of our poorest students in our poorest communities would have a smaller chance of success in school and in the workplaces of the future. These aren't just numbers on a balance sheet; they're vital investments in our children and our future.

In a time when education is our top priority, Republicans in Congress are making it their lowest priority. So let me be clear: If the Republicans send me a bill that doesn't live up to our national commitment to education, I won't hesitate to veto it. If it undermines our efforts to hire high-quality teachers to reduce class size or to increase accountability in our public schools, I will veto it. If it fails to strengthen Head Start, after-school and summer school programs, I'll veto it. If it underfunds mentoring or college scholarship programs, I will veto it. If it sends me a bill that turns its back on our children and their future, I'll send them back to the drawing board. I won't let Congress push through a budget that's paid for at the expense of our children and our future prosperity.

So again, I ask Congress to put partisanship aside and send me a bill that puts our children's education first. Let's use the last school semester of the 21st century to prepare our children and our Nation for excellence in the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Radio Remarks on Terrorist Attacks in Russia *September 18, 1999*

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend our deepest condolences to the families and friends of those who lost their lives in the recent terrorist bombings in Russia. We share your outrage over these cowardly acts. We know what kind of pain such tragedies can cause. Our own citizens have suffered from repeated acts of terrorism.

Not very long ago, a terrorist bombing took the lives of more than 160 Americans in our State of Oklahoma. The World Trade Center in New York City was bombed. Last year bombings at our Embassies in east Africa took the lives of American diplomats, along with hundreds of Kenyans and Tanzanians.

The crimes they suffered remind us that terrorism knows no borders, and that acts of terror anywhere are a threat to humanity everywhere. While we stand united with you in our grief,

we also stand united with you in our resolve that terrorism will not go unpunished and will not undermine the work of democracy.

The United States is ready to work with Russia and the Russian people to stand against the scourge of terrorism. We are working with the allies elsewhere to make sure there is no safe haven for terrorists, and we want to work with Russia to isolate nations that support terror. Together, we can ensure that the future belongs to peacemakers not bomb throwers.

In the days ahead, our thoughts and our prayers will be with you as you work to rebuild from these terrible tragedies.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10:45 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast in Russia. These

remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Remarks at a Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Dinner September 18, 1999

Ladies and gentlemen, the main thing I want to say tonight is, thank you. Thank you to the Congressional Black Caucus for your leadership and your partnership, for your genuine friendship. Thank you to Jim Clyburn; to my friend of 27 years Eddie Bernice Johnson; to Eva Clayton; to the dean of the delegation, John Conyers; to your retiring member and a great champion of education and human welfare, Bill Clay; to Corrine Brown and Elijah Cummings and Sheila Jackson Lee and all the other members of the CBC, I thank you for your kindness, your friendship, your support to me, to Hillary, to Al and Tipper Gore, to what we have done together. I thank Senator Carol Moseley-Braun for her continuing willingness to serve.

I welcome and congratulate the award winners, my friends Julius Chambers and Alvin Brown and Tom Joyner. Can you imagine Tom Joyner and his son thanking Al and me for being on his radio program? *[Laughter]* You know, even the people that don't like us don't think we're stupid. *[Laughter]* And I want to thank and congratulate Rear Admiral Evelyn Fields, who has done such a great job. She started as a cartographer and went on to chart a new course of opportunity not only for African-American women but for all women. And thank you for honoring them.

I also would like to welcome the President of Haiti here, President Rene Preval. We're delighted to have him here, and we thank him for his friendship.

There are so many people here who have been associated with our administration, and they were all asked to stand. You know them well. I want to just mention two, if I might. One is my chief speechwriter, Terry Edmonds, because he's the first African-American to ever hold that job, and the reason I'm introducing him is, since Al and Eddie Bernice and Jim talked, I can't give half the speech that he wrote for me, so the least I can do is acknowledge

that he did it. Thank you my friend. You're doing great.

The other person I want to thank for his extraordinary leadership as our special representative to the continent of Africa is Reverend Jesse Jackson, and I want to thank him very much for that and particularly his role in ending the disastrous conflict in Sierra Leone.

I want to congratulate some of the current judicial nominees, more than half of whom are women and minorities, including Judge James Wynn, who would be the first African-American to serve on the fourth circuit; Judge Ann Williams, the first African-American on the seventh circuit; and this week I nominated Kathleen McCree Lewis to serve on the sixth circuit. I congratulate them.

There are just two more people I want to thank. I want to thank my wife for her love, her friendship, and for her leadership for our children and our future; for the way she has represented us around the world and for having the courage to stay in public service. After all we've been through, she would be the best United States Senator you could ever elect to anything.

I also want to thank all the members of the administration here, the Cabinet members; some are African-American, some are not. But one of the most interesting things that anyone ever said to me is—the Presidential scholar, that the Vice President and I knew, came from Harvard one night to a dinner at the White House, and we were pretty low. It was after we had been waxed in the '94 congressional elections; and this man said, "I have been studying administrations for a long time, and you should know that I believe that yours will be reelected; and one reason is, you have the most loyal Cabinet since Thomas Jefferson's second administration." So to all who are here—Secretary Slater, Madame Attorney General, Secretary Herman, any other members of the Cabinet who are here,

our Veterans Affairs Secretary, all the others—I want to thank them.

And finally, and most of all, I'd like to thank the Vice President, without whom none of the good things we have accomplished together would have been possible. He has been, by far, the most influential, active, passionate, intense, effective Vice President of the United States in the history of our Republic, and I am very grateful to him.

Now, you know, this has been an exciting year for African-Americans. A lot of things have happened. I mean, Serena Williams became the first black woman since Althea Gibson to win the U.S. Open; Ken Chenault was named the first black CEO of American Express; and this is very important—I want you all to listen to this—the magnificent African-American writer Toni Morrison agreed with an extreme rightwing journalist that I am the first black President of the United States. *[Laughter]*

Chris Tucker came to see me today—*[laughter]*—and I was in stitches. He's here somewhere tonight. Where are you? Stand up there. *[Applause]* So Chris Tucker is in there; he looks at me with a straight face and says he's coming in to case the Oval Office because he's about to make a movie in which he will star as the first black President. I didn't have the heart to tell him I had already taken the position. *[Laughter]*

I want to make a couple of points. Most of what needs to be said has been said. One of the most interesting books of the Bible is the Book of James. It challenges us to be "doers of the word, and not hearers only." This truly is a caucus of doers. And I'm grateful for all the things that have happened that everyone else has mentioned. But none of it would have been possible without you.

Now we come again to what has become a fairly usual moment in the last 2 years—the end of another budget year in which we must all make an accounting of ourselves to the American people for what we have done and what we are about to do and what we are going to do with the money they give us from the sweat of their brow.

Now, our Republican friends have sent me a tax bill, and it is quite large. The middle class and working class and lower income relief in it is, oh, about the size of our bill, but their bill is more than 3 times the size of ours. And people in upper income groups who are doing

pretty well in the stock market get all the rest of the relief.

But the main thing is that the bill makes choices. We all make choices in life, often when we pretend not to and often when we deny that we are, but we do. And so even when things don't seem to be happening, sometimes decisions of the most momentous consequences are being made. The Vice President courageously presented himself for public office, for the highest office in the land. Many of the rest of you will be running this year; perhaps the First Lady will be among you.

But while we are doing these things, which we know are big, decisions will be made in this Congress which will affect what they can do if the American people are good enough to send them into office.

Why do I want to veto this bill? Not because I enjoy these interminable partisan fights; I frankly find them revolting most of the time. It's not really what the framers had in mind. They wanted us to debate our differences in advance and then figure out what we could agree on and go on and do it. But there are choices here.

Do you know the number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years? I hope to be one of them. *[Laughter]* When that happens, there will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare. We ought to use this surplus to deal with the challenge of the aging of America and take care of Social Security and Medicare and give a prescription drug benefit.

Do you know we've got more kids in our schools than ever before? You heard the Vice President talk about what our agenda is and what he wants to do. Well, you can't do it if you give away the store first. We ought to invest in our kids. We have the most diverse, largest group of children ever in our schools, and they are carrying our future in their little minds every day when they show up. And we need to give them all a world-class education.

And if we do this right, believe it or not, we'll be paying down the debt. We could actually make America debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. Now, here's why progressives ought to be for this: Because if we do that, we'll drive down interest rates, and we'll be able to get more people to go invest money in places that haven't yet felt our prosperity. We'll keep interest rates

down for homes, for college loans, for car loans, for credit cards. We'll guarantee that we'll have a generation of prosperity. We will pass something on to our children. This is a choice.

What I want to say to you is, I want us to get as much of this done as we can so that we leave for our successors in office the chance to do something meaningful. Nothing, in some ways, is more important than trying to make sure every American has a chance to participate in our prosperity. I was so proud of Alvin Brown tonight when I was listening to his speech on the film, getting ready to give him his award; so grateful that the Vice President gave him a chance to lead our empowerment zone and enterprise community programs; so glad that we are continuing to try to involve businesses. The Vice President is determined to bridge the so-called digital divide and put computers in every classroom in America, not just those who can afford it on their own, and make sure they can afford to use them. Thank you, Chairman Kennard, for what you've done on that.

It's very important that we fund the next round of empowerment zones, that we fund the new markets initiative, that we give Americans the same incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods here we give them to invest in poor places overseas. I want to continue with all these incentives. I wish we did more for the Caribbean, for Central America, for South America, and for Africa. I just want to do the same thing for the poor neighborhoods of Appalachia, of the Mississippi Delta, of the Indian reservations, of the cities that have been left behind.

All the things that have been mentioned, I just want to say, me too. To the fair and accurate census, me too; to making sure that our children have safe and good places to learn, me too; to meeting the challenge of quality health care and passing an enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights and doing more in the battle against AIDS, here at home and around the world, and restoring trust between the community and police, passing the hate crimes legislation, and passing the other things that we talked about.

I want to say a few words, seriously, about a topic that the Vice President touched on, and I really appreciated it. And I don't want to trivialize this. I think the killing of innocent people, en masse, in America has been the most painful thing that he and I and our families have had to endure in discharging our respon-

sibilities to the American people—the bombing at Oklahoma City; the terrible school violence at Littleton, Colorado; and before that, across the country, Arkansas and Mississippi, all the way to Oregon, and all the other places that were affected; this awful spate of race-related killings, and then, apparently, people just with their anger out of control, from Illinois and Indiana out to Los Angeles, over to Georgia, and back to Fort Worth, Texas.

None of us should seek to make any capital out of this, but all of us should seek to make sense out of it. That's why we started this big grassroots campaign against youth violence that I hope all of you will be involved in. Two or three people came up to me tonight and said you were doing things back in your home communities, and I'm grateful.

But the Vice President brought up this subject about whether it was evil rather than guns, since that is the debate as it has been posed in the paper and by some others, to explain the terrible thing that happened in the church in Texas, and many of these other things. And he said, essentially, both.

I just want to ask you to think about this, because you think about how many times in your life you're in a—[inaudible]—and you would like to avoid taking responsibility for something that you could actually do something about, in your personal life, in your work life, as citizens. You can always find some other cause for the problem that you can still do something about.

You know, our country has the highest murder rate in the world. And here, I'll tell you another thing you probably didn't know. The number of children who die accidentally from gun deaths in the United States is 9 times higher than the number who die in the next 20 biggest economies combined. Now, if you believe this is about the human heart, you must believe two things: If the murder rate is higher here and the accidental death rate is exponentially higher, you must believe that we are both more evil and more stupid than other countries. Don't laugh. I know it's kind of funny, but don't laugh.

The point I'm trying to make is, the NRA and that crowd have got to stop using arguments like this as an excuse to avoid our shared responsibilities. It may be true that if we had passed every bill that I have advocated, and every bill that the Vice President says he'd pass

if he were President, that some of these killings would have occurred. But it is undoubtedly true that many would not. And that is what we have to think about.

And when we go into this political season, where everybody will turn up the rhetoric, you ought to have your antennae working real good, and ask yourself, are these people looking for a way to assume responsibility, or to duck it? And when I say that, I mean no disrespect to anyone.

Of course, it is because something horrible had happened to that man's heart that he walked into that church in Texas and killed those people, of course it is. And the same things that happened to the children in Los Angeles and the Filipino postalworker, and the same thing that happened to all those people in Illinois and Indiana, of course it is. But we cannot use that as an excuse not to ask ourselves, what's the difference between our setup here and everybody else's setup? And is it worth the price we're paying, or is there something we can do collectively to make America a safer place and make it clear that more of our children are going to grow up safe and sound and healthy? That's what we ought to be doing. Make this election year about assuming responsibility, not ducking it, for America's future. You can do it, and we need you to do it.

Finally, let me just say for the record and for the press here, most of the things the Congressional Black Caucus has really worked for in the nearly 7 years I've been privileged to be President have not benefited African-Americans exclusively, sometimes not even primarily. Most of the things that you have fought for were designed to give all Americans a chance to live up to the fullest of their God-given capacity, designed to give all Americans a chance to live on safe streets, designed to give all Americans a chance to come together.

And in that sense, it may be that, in the end, the efforts we have made—now manifested in our office for One America in the White House, that Ben Johnson leads—to bring this country together as we move forward may be the most important of all. You know, no one can foresee the future. I have loved doing this job, and I'm going to do it to the best of my ability every day that I have left on my term. I am going to do it to the best of my ability. I am going to be a good citizen for the rest of my life and tell people exactly what I think.

But no one can see the future, and no one has all the answers. But I know this, and you do, too. If every American really believed that we were one nation under God, if every person really believed that we are all created equal, if every person really believed that we have an obligation to try to draw closer together and to be better neighbors with others throughout the world, then all the rest of our problems would more easily melt away.

And so I ask you, as we go through the last difficult and exhilarating challenges of this year, as you head into the political season next year, keep in your mind—especially those of you in this Congressional Black Caucus—the enormous potential you have to reach the heart and soul of America, to remind them that we must be one.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 10 p.m. in the ballroom at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Representatives James Clyburn, chair, Eddie Bernice Johnson, first vice chair, and Eva M. Clayton, John Conyers, Jr., William (Bill) Clay, Corrine Brown, Elijah E. Cummings, and Shelia Jackson Lee, members, Congressional Black Caucus; Tom Joyner's son Oscar; and actor Chris Tucker. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 20.

Remarks to the Community in Tarboro, North Carolina *September 20, 1999*

Thank you very much. Well, let me begin, ladies and gentlemen, by thanking Mayor Morris for welcoming me. And I thank Mayor Perkins

from Princeville. I flew over there and saw all the houses still buried underwater. I want to thank all the city officials, all the county officials,

all the State officials for the magnificent job that they have done, the lives they've saved, and all the things they've done to try to ease your way.

I'd like to thank the Members of Congress who came with me today. Your Congresswoman, Eva Clayton, when she was speaking, I started to call her "Reverend Clayton," she did such a good job. [Laughter] She talks to me just like that in Washington all the time. If she wants something for you, she comes in the White House and talks to me just like she did today. And Congressman David Price, Congressman Bob Etheridge, I want to thank them, too.

I want to thank the members of my administration who came here, and I'd like to introduce them to you. This is Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater; Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera. They did a lot of work for us; he's back here behind me. I want to thank the military, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration—they'll be doing a lot of work up and down this street—Aida Alvarez. And I want to thank the people who have spoken before for their praise of the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, James Lee Witt. Thank you.

I also want to thank my good friend Governor Jim Hunt. You know—I know all of you know this anyway, but he is in the process of completing a term, after which he will have served 16 years as Governor of North Carolina. And I served 12 years as Governor of my State—would have made 2 more if you hadn't been good enough to send me to Washington. [Laughter] And I can tell you, it will be—next January will be 21 years since I started working with Jim Hunt—21 years. We didn't have so much gray hair back then. [Laughter] He is the finest Governor in this country and a ferocious advocate. So I will do my best to do what he wants so that I will not have to put up with him camping out on the White House lawn to get help for you.

Let me say, if there's one thing I've learned visiting so many natural disasters, as the President and, before that, for a dozen years as a Governor, is that no matter how much television there is, it doesn't do it justice. Because it can't show what it feels like inside for people to lose a business they've put everything into; to people who lose their home when they have to take their kids to a shelter and not know where they're going to spend the night next week; for

farmers to have labored for 4 years and see a crop totally destroyed by water or the Sun and not know whether they can keep their land or wonder if they can ever buy seed again.

And that's why we have organized all these emergency measures, because—Jim Hunt and I were laughing; you know, we worked so hard to build the economy and to improve education and to protect the environment and take care of the health care needs and all of that, but as all the pastors out here in the audience know, every once in a while something happens that proves to you no matter how hard you work, you are never completely in control. And we are not completely in control.

So that when things like this happen to some of us, we know they could happen to all of us. And our country—first of all, our thoughts and prayers are with you. And secondly, we know we have a responsibility as members of the American family to help you get back on your feet again, and we intend to do it.

Now, the Federal Government has already worked very hard with the Coast Guard and others. We've been involved with your local people. I believe we think we saved almost a thousand lives. Too many people have died here, and not everyone is accounted for. And Governor Hunt told me today, you're still rescuing people that have been accounted for. But there are a lot of people alive today; and with all the loss, we can thank God that there are people who are alive who might not otherwise have been because of the efforts people have made.

So we're going to do what we can to help. And I want to tell you some things we can do in the very short run. We have already authorized FEMA to provide for direct Federal assistance to clean up the 66 counties in North Carolina that have been hurt. Today the Department of Agriculture will approve a disaster food stamp program to help people who need help to get food for their families. And people who need it ought to take it. There's nothing to be ashamed of here; people who need it ought to take it.

Today the Department of Agriculture—all they can do for the farmers, and that's what—is to offer the low-interest loans. Some of the bigger farmers, that'll be enough. Some of the family farmers will be ruined, not just here but in other places. And I'm going to do what I can to see that the emergency farm bill, which was drawn up to deal with the drought and

historic low grain prices overseas, includes the victims of the horrible drought and then the floods on the east coast, from North Carolina all the way up the east coast, where our farmers are.

The Department of Labor has authorized \$12 million for temporary jobs and to assist in clean-up and restoration activity. People who need them ought to try to get them. The money is designed not only to help you clean up but to help people who are out of work and need some immediate income to get it. And if there's more needed, we'll try to get more down here.

The Small Business Administration has authorized disaster loans for homeowners to repair or replace damaged property and loans for businesses to repair property, equipment, and inventory and provide companies with adequate capital until they can resume normal operations. And that's very, very important, so you all need to take advantage of these things.

FEMA has set up an 800 number for victims of the flood. And people who are eligible for the individual relief programs should call the hotline, the FEMA hotline, which is 800-462-9029. For the reporters in the audience, please put this in the paper; that's 800-462-9029.

Now, the next thing that we've got to do is to deal with the housing problem, which is a huge, huge problem. Some people are insured against the floods; and we just learned today apparently, because of blanket policies, but most people who have been flooded out, as has already been said, were not in any flood plain. Some of you are in a 500-year flood plain; nobody gets insured for that. Many people beyond the 500-year flood plain—which means if you got flooded out, it shouldn't happen again for another 600 or 700 years—we know you'll be prepared. *[Laughter]*

Now, for you, there are—and a lot of people here are low income people that don't have much money. Now, the people that can't repay any kind of loan can qualify for cash assistance, and everybody can qualify. We're going to try to do what we did in North Dakota, which is to get as many trailers as possible available for people to live in that can be taken to their property and plugged in, so people can supervise either getting another trailer if they were living in a trailer, or rebuilding their homes while they're onsite.

For those who don't want to do that and who need help, there are cash funds that are available to help you live somewhere else and other help available to buy furniture and do things of that kind. You need to make sure, as soon as you can, if you lost your home, as soon as these centers are clearly up and open—and I know a lot of you are dying to move out of these shelters, but it has got to be safe and the water has got to go down first—but you need to make sure that you know where the application centers are; that you go in, you figure out what you're eligible for.

Now, what we have to do is go back to Washington and complete the assessment of not only how much damage was done here, the worst place, but also in Virginia, which was hit pretty hard, and all the way up to New Jersey and New York, which were hit pretty hard. And then we've got to figure out if we have enough money to deal with the present problem. We know we need extra help for the farmers, but we've got to look and see if we've got enough extra money. Secretary Slater and I saw some roads that were washed out. It costs money to fix some roads that were washed out. It costs money to fix those roads. We've got to make sure we've got the funds necessary to do what needs to be done. If we do, well, we'll flow them; if we don't, we'll go back to Congress and try to get some more.

But the American people know that no individual can handle this alone, and our community ought to be doing this together. So let me say finally, I have been—as always, but particularly today—profoundly impressed by the spirit of the people here. One of the ministers over there, who looks like a professional weight lifter, by the way—*[laughter]*—has got a shirt on that says, "Too blessed to be stressed." *[Laughter]* And I want you to keep that attitude.

Man, I can only imagine what it's like, especially for those of you with young children, spending night after night in the shelters with all these people, some of whom you know, some of whom you don't; everybody is bumping up against everybody else. You get tired of the prepared meals; you wonder where you're really going to be able to go. I know it's frustrating.

But we've got to wait until the water goes down. Then the mayor has got to be careful—both these mayors—before the water can be turned on again, to make sure that it's safe,

that the supply hasn't been contaminated. There are just things that have to be done.

So I urge you to keep your spirits up and know we're going to be with you every step of the way. Know that you have strong advocates in your local officials, your wonderful Governor, and your very vigorous congressional delegations that are represented here. We're going to stay

with you until you get back on your feet again, as long as it takes.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:27 p.m. on Main Street. In his remarks, he referred to Mayors Donald A. Morris of Tarboro and Delia Perkins of Princeville, NC.

Statement on the Death of Raisa Gorbacheva

September 20, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Raisa Maksimovna Gorbacheva, wife of former Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev. We extend our deepest condolences to her family and friends in Russia and other countries.

The example she set through her help for child victims of leukemia and through her own courageous struggle against this terrible disease was an inspiration to people everywhere.

Statement on the Earthquake in Taiwan

September 20, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened by news of injuries and deaths sustained by the people on Taiwan as a result of a major earthquake today. Our thoughts are with all of those who have

suffered losses and who may still be in need of assistance. We are in touch directly with the Taiwan authorities to determine what assistance from the United States may be needed.

Remarks on Hurricane Floyd, in New York City

September 21, 1999

Good morning, everyone. I'm a little hoarse. Forgive me. I want to begin my visit by expressing our concern and support for the families and the communities in this area recovering from Hurricane Floyd.

As you know, I traveled to North Carolina yesterday and saw some of the worst storm damage and flooding that I have, personally, ever seen. I know people in New Jersey and New York have also been injured. I want to thank the city, county, and State officials for all the work they have done to get help to people quickly where it's needed.

We are doing all we can at the Federal level, and I'd like to mention just three things. First,

last Saturday I issued a major disaster declaration for New Jersey. Sunday I issued a similar one for Orange, Rockland, Putnam, and Westchester Counties in New York. These actions help to speed Federal assistance for individuals and communities recovering from flood damage.

Second, FEMA officials are on the ground now responding to the challenges with clean water, housing, and restoring communication and power links. Housing inspectors, small business teams, community relations specialists are on the scene to help meet people's needs. Starting today AmeriCorps volunteers will be helping people clean up the damages to their homes and pick up the pieces of their lives.

Third, I'm sending our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, to New Jersey and New York today to inspect the damage and report back immediately on what more we need to do. I want to make sure that the assistance is delivered responsibly, efficiently, and in adequate amounts.

Again I want to say, as I did yesterday, that in difficult times like this, we're reminded that the power of the American spirit is even strong-

er than the power of a hurricane. The American people are supporting all those who have been injured in this, and we will stand by them until they recover.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. at the Wall Street Landing Zone upon arriving in New York City.

Remarks to the 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City *September 21, 1999*

Thank you very much. Mr. President, Mr. Secretary-General, members of the United Nations General Assembly, good morning. I hope you will forgive me for being a little hoarse today. I will do the best I can to be heard.

Today we look ahead to the new millennium, and at this last General Assembly of the 20th century, we look back on a century that taught us much of what we need to know about the promise of tomorrow. We have learned a great deal over the last 100 years: how to produce enough food for a growing world population; how human activity affects the environment; the mysteries of the human gene; an information revolution that now holds the promise of universal access to knowledge. We have learned that open markets create more wealth, that open societies are more just. We have learned how to come together, through the U.N. and other institutions, to advance common interests and values.

Yet, for all our intellectual and material advances, the 20th century has been deeply scarred by enduring human failures, by greed and lust for power, by hot-blooded hatreds and stone-cold hearts.

At century's end, modern developments magnify greatly the dangers of these timeless flaws. Powerful forces still resist reasonable efforts to put a human face on the global economy, to lift the poor, to heal the Earth's environment. Primitive claims of racial, ethnic, or religious superiority, when married to advanced weaponry and terrorism, threaten to destroy the greatest

potential for human development in history, even as they make a wasteland of the soul.

Therefore, we look to the future with hope but with unanswered questions. In the new millennium, will nations be divided by ethnic and religious conflicts? Will the nation-state itself be imperiled by them or by terrorism? Will we keep coming closer together instead, while enjoying the normal differences that make life more interesting?

In the new century, how will patriotism be defined, as faith in a dream worth living or fear and loathing of other people's dreams? Will we be free of the fear of weapons of mass destruction or forced to teach our grandchildren how to survive a nuclear, chemical, or biological attack?

Will globalism bring shared prosperity or make the desperate of the world even more desperate? Will we use science and technology to grow the economy and protect the environment or put it to risk, put it all at risk in a world dominated by a struggle over natural resources?

The truth is that the 20th century's amazing progress has not resolved these questions, but it has given us the tools to make the answers come out right, the knowledge, the resources, the institutions. Now we must use them. If we do, we can make the millennium not just a changing of the digits but a true changing of the times, a gateway to greater peace and prosperity and freedom. With that in mind, I offer three resolutions for the new millennium.

First, let us resolve to wage an unrelenting battle against poverty and for shared prosperity so that no part of humanity is left behind in the global economy. Globalism is not inherently divisive. While infant mortality in developing countries has been cut nearly in half since 1970, life expectancy has increased by 10 years. According to the U.N.'s human development index, measuring a decent standard of living, a good education, a long and healthy life, the gap between rich and poor countries on this measure has actually declined.

Open trade and new technologies have been engines of this progress. They've helped hundreds of millions to see their prospects rise by marketing the fruits of their labor and creativity abroad. With proper investment in education, developing countries should be able to keep their best and brightest talent at home and to gain access to global markets for goods and services and capital.

But this promising future is far from inevitable. We are still squandering the potential of far too many: 1.3 billion people still live on less than a dollar a day; more than half the population of many countries have no access to safe water; a person in South Asia is 700 times less likely to use the Internet than someone in the United States; and 40 million people a year still die of hunger, almost as many as the total number killed in World War II.

We must refuse to accept a future in which one part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy, while the other lives at the knife edge of survival.

What must we do? Well, we can start by remembering that open markets advance the blessings and breakthroughs we want to spread. That's why we in the United States have worked to keep our markets open during the recent global financial crisis, though it has brought us record trade deficits. It is why we want to launch a new global trade round when the WTO meets in Seattle this fall; why we are working to build a trading system that strengthens the well-being of workers and consumers, protects the environment, and makes competition a race to the top, not the bottom; why I'm proud we have come together at the ILO to ban abusive child labor everywhere in the world.

We do not face a choice between trade and aid but instead the challenge to make both work for people who need them. Aid should focus on what is known to work: credit for poor peo-

ple starting business; keeping girls in school; meeting the needs of mothers and children. Development aid should be used for development, not to buy influence or finance donors' exports. It should go where governments invest in their people and answer their concerns.

We should also come to the aid of countries struggling to rise, but held down by the burden of debt. The G-7 nations adopted a plan to reduce by up to 70 percent the outstanding debt of the world's poorest countries, freeing resources for education, health, and growth.

All of us, developed and developing countries alike, should take action now to halt global climate change. Now, what has that to do with fighting poverty? A great deal. The most vulnerable members of the human family will be first hurt and hurt most, if rising temperatures devastate agriculture, accelerate the spread of disease in tropical countries, and flood island nations.

Does this mean developing countries then must sacrifice growth to protect the environment? Absolutely not. Throughout history, a key to human progress has been willingness to abandon big ideas that are no longer true. One big idea that is no longer true is that the only way to build a modern economy is to use energy as we did in the industrial age. The challenge and opportunity for developing countries is to skip the cost of the industrial age by using technologies that improve the economy and the environment at the same time.

Finally, to win the fight against poverty, we must improve health care for all people. Over the next 10 years in Africa, AIDS is expected to kill more people and orphan more children than all the wars of the 20th century combined. Each year diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia leave millions of children without parents, millions of parents without children. Yet, for all these diseases, vaccine research is advancing too slowly, in part because the potential customers in need are too poor. Only 2 percent of all global biomedical research is devoted to the major killers in the developing world.

No country can break poverty's bonds if its people are disabled by disease and its government overwhelmed by the needs of the ill. With U.N. leadership, we've come close to eradicating polio, once the scourge of children everywhere. We're down to 5,000 reported cases worldwide. I've asked our Congress to fund a major increase

to finish the job; I ask other nations to follow suit.

We've begun a comprehensive battle against the global AIDS epidemic. This year I'm seeking another \$100 million for prevention, counseling, and care in Africa. I want to do more to get new drugs that prevent transmission from mothers to newborns, to those who need them most. And today I commit the United States to a concerted effort to accelerate the development and delivery of vaccines for malaria, TB, AIDS, and other diseases disproportionately affecting the developing world. Many approaches have been proposed, from tax credits to special funds for the purchase of these vaccines.

To tackle these issues, I will ask public health experts, the chief executive officers of our pharmaceutical companies, foundation representatives, and Members of Congress to join me at a special White House meeting to strengthen incentives for research and development, to work with, not against, the private sector to meet our common goals.

The second resolution I hope we will make today is to strengthen the capacity of the international community to prevent and, whenever possible, to stop outbreaks of mass killing and displacement. This requires, as we all know, shared responsibility, like the one West African nations accepted when they acted to restore peace in Sierra Leone; the one 19 democracies in NATO embraced to stop ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo; the one Asian and Pacific nations have now assumed in East Timor, with the strong support from the entire United Nations, including the United States.

Secretary-General Annan spoke for all of us during the Kosovo conflict, and more recently in regard to East Timor, when he said that ethnic cleansers and mass murderers can find no refuge in the United Nations, no source of comfort or justification in its charter. We must do more to make these words real. Of course, we must approach this challenge with some considerable degree of humility. It is easy to say, "Never again," but much harder to make it so. Promising too much can be as cruel as caring too little.

But difficulties, dangers, and costs are not an argument for doing nothing. When we are faced with deliberate, organized campaigns to murder whole peoples or expel them from their land, the care of victims is important but not enough. We should work to end the violence.

Our response in every case cannot or should not be the same. Sometimes collective military forces is both appropriate and feasible. Sometimes concerted economic and political pressure, combined with diplomacy, is a better answer, as it was in making possible the introduction of forces in East Timor.

Of course, the way the international community responds will depend upon the capacity of countries to act and on their perception of their national interests. NATO acted in Kosovo, for example, to stop a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing in a place where we had important interests at stake and the ability to act collectively. The same considerations brought Nigerian troops and their partners to Sierra Leone and Australians and others to East Timor. That is proper so long as we work together, support each other, and do not abdicate our collective responsibility.

I know that some are troubled that the United States and others cannot respond to every humanitarian catastrophe in the world. We cannot do everything everywhere. But simply because we have different interests in different parts of the world does not mean we can be indifferent to the destruction of innocents in any part of the world.

That is why we have supported the efforts of Africans to resolve the deadly conflicts that have raged through parts of their continent; why we are working with friends in Africa to build the Africa crisis response initiative, which has now trained more than 4,000 peacekeepers from 6 countries; why we are helping to establish an international coalition against genocide, to bring nations together to stop the flow of money and arms to those who commit crimes against humanity.

There is also critical need for countries emerging from conflict to build police institutions, accountable to people and the law, often with the help of civilian police from other nations. We need international forces with the training to fill the gap between local police and military peacekeepers, as French, Argentine, Italian, and other military police have done in Haiti and Bosnia. We will work with our partners in the U.N. to continue to ensure such forces can deploy when they're needed.

What is the role of the U.N. in preventing mass slaughter and dislocation? Very large. Even

in Kosovo, NATO's actions followed a clear consensus expressed in several Security Council resolutions that the atrocities committed by Serb forces were unacceptable, that the international community had a compelling interest in seeing them end. Had we chosen to do nothing in the face of this brutality, I do not believe we would have strengthened the United Nations. Instead, we would have risked discrediting everything it stands for.

By acting as we did, we helped to vindicate the principles and purposes of the U.N. Charter, to give the U.N. the opportunity it now has to play the central role in shaping Kosovo's future. In the real world, principles often collide, and tough choices must be made. The outcome in Kosovo is hopeful.

Finally, as we enter this new era, let our third resolution be to protect our children against the possibility that nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons will ever be used again.

The last millennium has seen constant advances in the destructive power of weaponry. In the coming millennium, this trend can continue, or if we choose, we can reverse it with global standards universally respected.

We've made more progress than many realize. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine courageously chose to give up their nuclear weapons. America and Russia have moved forward with substantial arms reduction. President Yeltsin and I agreed in June, even as we await Russian ratification of START II, to begin talks on a START III treaty that will cut our cold war arsenals by 80 percent from their height.

Brazil has joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty, capping a process that has almost totally eliminated the threat of nuclear proliferation in Latin America. We banned chemical weapons from the Earth, though we must implement the commitment fully and gain universal coverage. One hundred and fifty-two nations have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and while India and Pakistan did test nuclear weapons last year, the international reaction proved that the global consensus against proliferation is very strong.

We need to bolster the standards to reinforce that consensus. We must reaffirm our commitment to the NPT, strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention, make fast progress on a treaty to ban production of fissile materials. To keep existing stocks from the wrong hands, we

should strengthen the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials. And today, again, I ask our Congress to approve the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

We must stop the spread of nuclear weapons materials and expertise at the source. Since 1992, we have worked with Russia and the other nations of the former Soviet Union to do that. We are expanding that effort because challenges remain. But thus far, we can say that the nightmare scenario of deadly weapons flowing unchecked across borders, of scientists selling their services, en masse, to the highest bidder has been avoided. Now we must work to deny weapons of mass destruction to those who would use them.

For almost a decade nations have stood together to keep the Iraqi regime from threatening its people and the world with such weapons. Despite all the obstacles Saddam Hussein has placed in our path, we must continue to ease the suffering of the people of Iraq. At the same time, we cannot allow the Government of Iraq to flout 40—and I say 40 successive U.N. Security Council resolutions and to rebuild his arsenal.

Just as important is the challenge of keeping deadly weapons away from terrorist groups. They may have weaker capabilities than states, but they have fewer compunctions about using such weapons. The possibility that terrorists will threaten us with weapons of mass destruction can be met with neither panic nor complacency. It requires serious, deliberate, disciplined concern and effective cooperation from all of us.

There are many other challenges. Today I have just spoken about three: the need to do something about the world's poor and to put a human face on the global economy; the need to do more to prevent killing and dislocation of innocents; the need to do more to assure that weapons of mass destruction will never be used on our children. I believe they are the most important. In meeting them, the United Nations is indispensable. It is precisely because we are committed to the U.N. that we have worked hard to support the management—effective management of this body.

But the United States also has the responsibility to equip the U.N. with the resources it needs to be effective. As I think most of you know, I have strongly supported the United States meeting all its financial obligations to the

United Nations, and I will continue to do so. We will do our very best to succeed this year.

When the cold war ended, the United States could have chosen to turn away from the opportunities and dangers of the world. Instead, we have tried to be engaged, involved, and active. We know this moment of unique prosperity and power for the United States is a source of concern to many. I can only answer by saying this: In the 7 years that I have been privileged to come here to speak to this body, America has tried to be a force for peace. We believe we are better off when nations resolve their differences by force of argument, rather than force of arms. We have sought to help former adversaries, like Russia and China, become prosperous, stable members of the world community, because we feel far more threatened by the potential weakness of the world's leading nations than by their strength.

Instead of imposing our values on others, we have sought to promote a system of government, democracy, that empowers people to choose their own destinies according to their own values and aspirations. We have sought to keep our markets open, because we believe a strong world economy benefits our own workers and busi-

nesses as well as the people of the world who are selling to us. I hope that we have been and will continue to be good partners with the rest of you in the new millennium.

Not long ago, I went to a refugee camp in Macedonia. The people I met there, children and adults alike, had suffered horrible, horrible abuses. But they had never given up hope because they believed that there is an international community that stood for their dignity and their freedom. I want to make sure that 20 or 50 or 100 years from now, people everywhere will still believe that about our United Nations.

So let us resolve in the bright dawn of this new millennium to bring an era in which our desire to create will overwhelm our capacity to destroy. If we do that, then through the United Nations and farsighted leaders, humanity finally can live up to its name.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations General Assembly President Theo-Ben Gurirab; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan in New York City

September 21, 1999

Mr. Secretary-General, distinguished leaders: Tomorrow we will be exactly 100 days away from the beginning of the new millennium. The calendar tells us how old the world is, but we are thinking about something fresh, something new. And it is altogether fitting that we should be here at the United Nations, which is a very young attempt by the world to make ourselves better and to make our children's future brighter.

I would like to say how deeply pleased I am that the United Nations is being led today by a man of the ability and character of the Secretary-General. He continues to speak and act with authority. He said recently that the aim of the U.N. Charter is to protect individual human beings, not to protect those who abuse them. He reminded us that even in these times

of phenomenal prosperity, half of all humanity subsists on less than \$3 a day.

So, Mr. Secretary-General, I thank you for your leadership and your direction.

Let me say that I'm thinking, myself, also a lot about the future. And I plan to be, at least part of the time, a future resident of New York. Now, when I move here, I will be able to complain about all the traffic jams around the U.N.—[laughter]—and all those important people who keep me from getting to my appointed rounds. If I get very upset, I may even write a letter to my United States Senator. [Laughter]

But let me say, again, in all candor, the United States is humbled and honored to host the United Nations. We are honored to be a part of your leadership for peace in East Timor

and in so many other places. And we look forward to going into a new century, to a new millennium, to a new era, with your leadership.

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you to join me in a toast to the Secretary-General and the United Nations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:42 p.m. in the North Delegates Lounge at the United Nations. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-General Annan.

Statement on the National Medal of the Arts and National Humanities Medal Recipients

September 21, 1999

This year's recipients of the 1999 National Medal of the Arts and National Humanities Medal stand at the pinnacle of American artistic and academic achievement. Through their ideas,

their scholarship, and their works of art, they have opened all our eyes to the richness and the miracle of the human experience. All Americans owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to UNITA

September 21, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the Federal Register and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) is to continue in effect beyond September 26, 1999, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on September 26, 1993, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions and policies of UNITA pose a continuing unusual and ex-

traordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. United Nations Security Council Resolutions 864 (1993), 1127 (1997), 1173 (1998), and 1176 (1998) continue to oblige all member states to maintain sanctions. Discontinuation of the sanctions would have a prejudicial effect on the prospect for peace in Angola. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to apply economic pressure on UNITA to reduce its ability to pursue its military campaigns.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 21, 1999.

NOTE: The notice of September 21 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Denmark-United States Tax Convention

September 21, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Denmark for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington on August 19, 1999, together with a Protocol. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is the report of the Department of State concerning the Convention.

It is my desire that the Convention and Protocol transmitted herewith be considered in place of the Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation, signed at Washington on June 17, 1980, and the Protocol Amending the Convention, signed at Washington on August 23, 1983, which were transmitted to the Senate with messages dated September 4, 1980 (S. Ex. Q, 96th Cong., 2d Sess.) and November 16, 1983 (T. Doc. No. 98-12, 98th Cong., 1st Sess.), and

which are pending in the Committee on Foreign Relations. I desire, therefore, to withdraw from the Senate the Convention and Protocol signed in 1980 and 1983.

This Convention, which is similar to tax treaties between the United States and other developed nations, provides maximum rates of tax to be applied to various types of income and protection from double taxation of income. The Convention also provides for resolution of disputes and sets forth rules making its benefits unavailable to residents that are engaged in treaty-shopping.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 21, 1999.

Message to the Senate Transmitting a Protocol to the Germany-United States Tax Convention

September 21, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Protocol Amending the Convention Between the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Estates, Inheritances, and Gifts signed at Bonn on December 3, 1980, signed at Washington, December 14, 1998. The Protocol provides a *pro rata* unified tax credit to the estate of a German domiciliary for purposes of computing U.S. estate tax. It allows a limited U.S. "marital deduction" for certain estates of limited value if the surviving spouse

is not a U.S. citizen. In addition, the Protocol expands the United States jurisdiction to tax its citizens and certain former citizens and long-term residents and makes other changes to the treaty to more closely reflect current U.S. treaty policy.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 21, 1999.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Italy-United States Tax Convention September 21, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Italian Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation with Respect to Taxes on Income and the Prevention of Fraud or Fiscal Evasion, signed at Washington on August 25, 1999, together with a Protocol. Also transmitted are an exchange of notes with a Memorandum of Understanding and the report of the Department of State concerning the Convention.

This Convention, which is similar to tax treaties between the United States and other devel-

oped nations, provides maximum rates of tax to be applied to various types of income and protection from double taxation of income. The Convention also provides for resolution of disputes and sets forth rules making its benefits unavailable to residents that are engaged in treaty-shopping or certain abusive transactions.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and that the Senate give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 21, 1999.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Regina Montoya Coggins September 21, 1999

The President. I was hoping Regina would speak, since I'm so hoarse. [*Laughter*]

I've spent all day at the United Nations, and I'm delighted to see all of you—Texans, Washingtonians, Michigans—Michiganders—[*laughter*]—

Audience member. New Hampshires. [*Laughter*]

The President. —and whoever came from New Hampshire—

Audience member. I did.

The President. —we can give you one night off between now and—[*laughter*].

Let me say, first of all, I am delighted that Lloyd and Libby have opened their beautiful home and let me come in through the kitchen. [*Laughter*] I'm delighted that Regina is running for Congress. Most of you know that she was, first, Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs; she's had a distinguished career in the nonprofit sector as a lawyer; and she did great in the White House; and she's been my friend a long time. Her husband has been a distinguished United States attorney in Texas. So she is supremely well-qualified to go to Con-

gress. We are just a few seats away from being in the majority, and this should be one of them.

I just want to make three brief points. I have to take care of my voice a little bit, but I think it's worth your saying this to people all over America as the election season begins.

When we started in 1992, we made an argument to the American people. We said, "Look, the country's in the worst recession since the Great Depression. The social divisions in this country are deepening. The basically antigovernment philosophy that had dominated the last 12 years masked a growth in the Federal Government and a profligate explosion in the Federal debt." And we were in trouble. So we said, "Give us a chance, and we'll cut the deficit until we get rid of it. That'll drive down interest rates and bring jobs. We will expand trade, because we're only 4 percent of the world's people, and we've got 22 percent of the world's income, so we have to sell something to somebody else. And we will find a way to do this and continue to invest in the education of our children and the other things that bring us together." That's why we say it was an argument. We said, "We believe it'll work." And enough

people agreed with us that the Vice President and I were elected.

None of what has happened in the last 6½ years-plus would have been possible without the support of the Democrats in the Congress, because we have lived through the most partisan era in my lifetime, even more, I think, if you go back and look at the division of votes and the rhetoric, than the McCarthy era, probably.

But now it's not an argument anymore. We don't have to argue with anybody. It is an established fact that the policies we implemented have given us the longest peacetime expansion in history: millions more jobs than were created during the Reagan boom, which was fueled by massive deficit spending; the biggest surplus we've ever had; lowest minority unemployment in history; the lowest unemployment in 29 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years; and the lowest crime rates in 26 years.

We had some other arguments. We said, "We believed that we ought to do more to help balance work and family. So unlike the previous President, I won't veto the family and medical leave law. I will sign it." And they said, "Oh, if you do that, you will raise the cost of employing people. Small business will go under. It'll cut jobs." Well, we've got 19.4 million jobs, and for 6 years in a row we've set records every year for new small businesses getting started. It's not an argument now; it's a fact.

We said, "We ought to—unlike the previous administration, I would sign, not veto, the Brady bill." And I thought we ought to ban assault weapons. They told all the hunters and sportsmen they'd lose their guns, and everything would be miserable. And nobody who shouldn't have a gun would have any difficulty getting one. Now we know 400,000 people didn't get guns because of the Brady bill. We know that nobody's hunting or sport shooting has been interrupted. And we know we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. So it's not an argument anymore; it's an established fact.

I say that because every election is always about change, and it should be. This country should never stand pat, even when it's working. The question will be not whether the election is about change, whether it's a Presidential election, a Senate election, or an election for the House of Representatives. The question will be: What kind of change are we for, and are we going to build on what works, or take it down?

That is the issue. Therefore, every single race for the House of Representatives is a race that matters enormously to the people who live in that district and also will have huge implications for the United States as a whole.

So now we're having a new debate, where we say, "Look, before we squander this surplus it took us 30 years to get back—last one we had was 30 years ago, and we never had one this big—shouldn't we take account of the fact that the number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years, that there'll only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security and Medicare? Shouldn't we take account of the fact that Social Security is supposed to go broke in a little over 30 years and Medicare in 15 years? Shouldn't we fix Social Security and Medicare? Shouldn't we give the elderly people of this country access to prescription drugs, since if we were starting Medicare today, we'd certainly cover drugs, because it substitutes for so many medical procedures? Before we give all this surplus away, shouldn't we figure out what we've got to invest in education and health care and the environment and medical research and science and technology, the things that will keep us strong in hope? And shouldn't we—since we know lower debt leads to lower interest rates, higher growth, and higher incomes—shouldn't we get this country out of debt over the next 15 years for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President?"

Now, in the Fifth Congressional District in Texas, if what we're fighting for comes to pass, the elderly will be better off; the children will be better off; the poor will be better off; the middle class will be better off. And the Republicans will have more money to give to their candidates in the 2002 election. [Laughter] You know, when I see how much money they're raising, it's just testimony to how successful our economic policy is. [Laughter]

And so I say that, because this is—it's something that's very important for people to realize. And we haven't done all this work, to get the country up to the point where it's working, to go into reverse. We need to continue to change, but we need to change from the base of what is working.

There's still a lot of poor people in this country. There's still too many poor children in this country. There's still places, from the Indian reservations to the Mississippi Delta to the inner

cities to the rural farming communities and the little towns that have lost their industries, that haven't felt this recovery. There are still too many working people who don't have any insurance for their children. There are still significant environmental challenges. There are still enormous opportunities out there. We're trying to get funding for the next generation of the Internet, because it's becoming so clogged. The fastest growing instrument of human communication in history. Everyone knows we need a next generation; everyone knows we need some Government money to fund the basic investment. Their party's against funding it; our party's for it. We want to rehabilitate 6,000 schools. They want to rehabilitate 600 schools. We want to put 100,000 teachers out there to make classes smaller so our children will learn more. They don't want to do that.

There are significant differences. They are huge. And they will affect the lives of every family in America.

So what I want you to say is that every race is important. This one's really important, and she is superbly qualified. That we now are not making an argument to the American people; we are taking the evidence to them. And we

have to remind them of what it was like before, so they can remember the difference.

It really matters who's in the Congress, and what decisions are made on any given issue. And as someone who—probably I'm the only person in this room that can't run for office again, or for the first time—[laughter]—my interest is seeing my country do well. That's what I want.

Yes, I think the world of Regina, and yes, I feel very loyal to my party. But we have delivered for this country, and there is so much more to do. There are still vulnerable people. There are still unseized opportunities. And there's still a lot of change to make, but it needs to be the right kind. And if you want it made, you need to send her to Congress.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:14 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Representative Lloyd Doggett and his wife, Elizabeth; and Mrs. Coggins' husband, Paul Coggins, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Texas. Mrs. Coggins is a candidate for Congress in Texas' Fifth Congressional District. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 22.

Remarks on the United States Lawsuit Against Major Tobacco Companies and an Exchange With Reporters

September 22, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Last January, in my State of the Union Address, I announced that the Justice Department was preparing a litigation plan to recover the costs of smoking-related illnesses. Over the years, smoking-related illnesses have cost taxpayers billions of dollars through Medicare, veterans' health, and other Federal health programs.

Today the Justice Department declared that the United States is, in fact, filing suit against the major tobacco companies to recover the cost borne by taxpayers. I believe it's the right thing to do. The tobacco companies should answer to the taxpayers for their actions. The taxpayers of our country should have their day in court.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, the tobacco companies say this lawsuit is pure politics, sir. What do you say?

The President. Well, if you look at the record of this administration, we've been out there on this issue a very long time. No one else ever tried to do that. We did our best to work with them and with the Congress to resolve many of these matters legislatively, and they declined. And I believe this is the appropriate thing to do.

North Korean Moratorium on Missile Testing

Q. Do you think the North Koreans, sir, are going to stick to their moratorium on missile testing now, after the lifting of sanctions?

The President. I do. And of course, if the future proves otherwise, then there are always other options open to us. But former Defense Secretary Bill Perry, and others who worked with him, worked very hard on this, and then our negotiator in Berlin did a very good job. We worked very closely with the Japanese and with the South Koreans on this approach. They are agreed with it. And it offers the most promising opportunity to lift the cloud of uncertainty and insecurity and danger that otherwise would

hand over that whole region, including the American service men and women who are there.

So I'm very, very hopeful about it. If it works, it does; if it doesn't, then there will be other options open to us.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the West Portico at the White House.

Statement on the United States Lawsuit Against Major Tobacco Companies *September 22, 1999*

Today the Justice Department announced that the United States is filing suit against the major tobacco companies to recover the costs of smoking-related illnesses. As I said in my State of the Union Address in January, smoking has cost

taxpayers billions of dollars through Medicare, veterans' health, and other Federal health care programs. The Justice Department is taking the right course of action. It is time for America's taxpayers to have their day in court.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception *September 22, 1999*

Thank you, Peter. A lot of you know I've been hoarse, so for me, less will be more, too. [Laughter] I wrote out this very elaborate speech here, you can see.

Let me say the most important thing I can say to you tonight is, thank you. Thank you for being here; thank you for your commitment; thank you for your friendship to me and to the Vice President, to Hillary, to Tipper, to our administration over these last years; and thank you for your commitment in this election.

I want to make some very brief points that I hope you won't be shy about repeating around the country. I think it's important that people remember what this country was like when Al Gore and I went out to the people in 1992 and asked them to give a chance to put people first. We had the largest, the deepest recession since the Great Depression. We had increasing social division which was aggravated by the previous administration's vetoes of things like the family and medical leave law and the Brady bill.

We asked the American people to give us a chance, and they did. And the results are clear. It's not even really an argument anymore. We've got the lowest unemployment, crime, and welfare rates in a generation, and the longest peacetime expansion in history.

Now, election time is coming. What is the Vice President's great challenge? People think at election time they're supposed to vote for change, and I agree with them. The American people always want change. The issue is what kind of change are we going to vote for? Are we going to build on all the good things that are going on in America to meet the big challenges still out there, or are we going to go back to the approach that got us in so much trouble in the first place? That is the central question.

Now, all of you know this, but the Vice President has played a more pivotal role in the good things this administration's been able to do than any Vice President in history. He cast a deciding vote on the economic plan in 1993, and just

a few weeks ago, he cast the deciding vote in the Senate on the plan to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill, the background check law, a law that has, in spite of what its critics said would happen, resulted in 400,000 people who shouldn't have gotten guns not getting them and no inconvenience to hunters and sportspeople.

So along the way, he's played the critical role in our efforts to hook up all the schools in this country to the Internet and giving the American people the smallest Government since John Kennedy was President, in dealing with a whole host of foreign policy and national security issues, in managing a lot of our environmental policy, in helping us to generate the Technology Telecommunications Act, which has already generated about 300,000 jobs, high-paying jobs, for our country, and I could go on and on.

Even more importantly, he's told the American people how he would change things with an education plan, with a health care plan, with an anticrime plan, with a plan to save Social Security and Medicare. And in every critical re-

spect, it is markedly different from the approach taken by all of the candidates running for the Republican nomination.

Now, it seems to me that if we go out to the American people and tell them those things, and tell them what he stands for, which he can speak for himself better than me, and what kind of person he is and what kind of record we've made and what the real choice is—the question is not whether we're going to change; it's how we're going to change.

He needs you. Everything we have worked for all these years requires your continued efforts. And I am profoundly grateful that you are here in support of him. He has not only been the finest Vice President in our history; he would be a magnificent President of the United States.

Mr. Vice President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. in the Concorde Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to reception host Peter S. Knight, who introduced the President.

Remarks at a Gore 2000 Reception September 22, 1999

Thank you very much. You have to give me 2 seconds to recover myself; Ann Richards just told me a joke. *[Laughter]* I've got to collect myself here. *[Laughter]*

I'll be quite brief tonight, first because I'm hoarse, and secondly, because you're all hungry, and thirdly, because I want to listen to the Vice President. But I want to say a few things, beginning with thank you. Thank you for being here; thank you for supporting his campaign; thank you for giving the good things that we have done these last 8 years a chance to be the springboard for positive change in America.

You know, a lot of people have forgotten that when Vice President Gore and I went out across the country in 1992, we were in the worst recession since the Great Depression. We had a lot of division in our society that was complicated by the previous administration's vetoes of the Brady bill, which is now the law, and the family and medical leave bill, which is now the law.

And we asked the American people to give us a chance to put them first and to take a new direction. And the results are clear: We've had the lowest unemployment, welfare rolls, and crime rates in a generation, and the longest peacetime expansion in history.

So the question facing the American people now is not, as it is often put, do we need a change? The answer is, yes, we do. The question is not will we change? The question is how are we going to change? Are you going to build on the good things that are going on in America now to face the unmet challenges of the country in the 21st century, or will we basically go back to the approach that got us in so much trouble in the first place? That is the choice before the American people.

And I want you to know three things about Al Gore. Number one, he's done more with the job he's had the last 6½ years than any person in history, whether it was something very

public and visible, like breaking the tie to give our economic plan the chance to bring the American economy back or breaking the tie to stand up for closing the gun show loophole so the background check law really works, to things that you may not see, like taking the lead in giving us the smallest Federal Government in 35 years, hooking up every classroom in this country to the Internet, managing big chunks of our foreign relations, being the main person in the administration in the drafting of the Telecommunications Act, which has already created 300,000 high-tech jobs in this country. The American people ought to know that.

The second thing that I think is very important is, he has really told you what he would do if he got to be President. And I'll let him speak for himself on that, but I think one of the principal reasons for the success we had in the last 6½ years is that I was forced to sit down and think through precisely what I

would do if the American people gave me this job. And then when he joined the ticket, we sat down together, and we reissued a blueprint. He's done that in greater detail than anybody else.

The third thing I want you to know is, I believe, having done this job now, I have some sense of what it takes to succeed and who would be good at it. He has the character, the integrity, the experience, the intelligence, the energy, and the ideas necessary to lead this country into the new millennium.

He can only do it if you help him. I hope you will keep helping him, because America needs him, and I thank you for being here.

The Vice President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay-Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas.

Remarks on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives Legislation on Taxpayer Relief

September 23, 1999

Good morning. Thank you. Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you, and good morning. As all of you know, Congress has sent me the tax bill I have repeatedly pledged to veto. In a moment, I will do that because, at a time when America is moving in the right direction, this bill would turn us back to the failed policies of the past.

In the 12 years before I became President, irresponsible policies in Washington piled deficit upon deficit, quadrupling the national debt, leading to high interest rates, eventually bringing us the worst recession since the Great Depression. Interest rates and unemployment were to high; wages were stagnant; growth was slow.

Vice President Gore and I came into office determined to change all that with a new economic strategy focused on fiscal discipline, expanded trade, investment in our people. The strategy has worked. In the past 6½ years, it has produced lower interest rates and ushered in the longest peacetime expansion in our history, with more than 19 million new jobs, rising wages, the lowest unemployment in a genera-

tion, and recordbreaking levels of homeownership. And by balancing the budget for the first time in a generation, we have changed red ink to black, turning a deficit of \$290 billion into a budget surplus of \$99 billion this year, with growing surpluses projected for years to come.

The American people understand that these are not simply numbers on charts. The progress we've made is something they see and feel every day in more jobs, higher paychecks, HOPE scholarships that help send their children to college, lower interest rates for owning a home and buying a car. This is the right course for our people and our Nation. It is making a difference in the lives of Americans. And they want us to stay on it.

Our hard-won prosperity gives us, also, the chance to do something few people ever have, the chance to invest our surplus to meet the long-term challenges of America. We can lift the burden of debt from the shoulders of the next generation. We can secure the future of Social Security and Medicare. We can ensure

a first-rate education and modern schools for our children.

Unfortunately, the tax bill Congress has sent me would deny those opportunities to the American people. The bill is too big, too bloated, places too great a burden on America's economy. It would force drastic cuts in education, health care, and other vital areas. It would cripple our ability to pay down the debt. It would not add a day to the Social Security Trust Fund. It would not add a day to the Medicare Trust Fund or modernize Medicare with prescription drug coverage. Nearly a trillion dollars in tax cuts, but not one dollar for Medicare. I will veto this bill because it is wrong for Medicare, wrong for Social Security, wrong for education, and wrong for the economy.

Now, in the face of my determination to do this, many in Congress seem ready to throw in the towel. That would be a disservice to the American people. They sent us all here to get things done. And we have proved in the past, with the welfare reform bill of 1996 and the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, that we can work together to get things done and bring good results to our country. So, instead, I ask Congress not to go home until we have worked together once again in a good-faith effort to meet the long-term challenges our people face.

First, let's reach a bipartisan agreement to save Social Security. The congressional majority's current plan and its so-called lockbox would fail to protect the Social Security surplus from being spent, and it would not add a day to the Social Security Trust Fund. Instead of this weak lockbox and no additions to the Trust Fund, I ask Congress to work with me to construct a real lockbox that would keep Social Security solvent until the year 2050.

Second, let's work together to save Medicare. With Medicare facing insolvency in just 16 years and with three out of four seniors lacking dependable, affordable prescription drug coverage, we know we must not put off this challenge. Months ago, I put forth a detailed plan for Medicare that would reform and modernize it

with a voluntary prescription drug benefit. It would address the immediate, critical needs of teaching hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and other priorities, while extending Medicare's solvency to the year 2027.

Now, I don't expect the Republican majority to agree with me on every detail of my plan. I never thought that would be the case. But I do expect, and the American people have a right to expect, that we will work together in good faith to meet these long-term objectives.

Third, we should fulfill our obligations to the future by producing a real budget that pays down the debt, brings down interest rates, and makes vital investments in education, the environment, national security, biomedical research, health care, and other areas so vital to our future.

If we do this, within the framework I have outlined, we can not only invest in our future; we can pay down America's debt over the next 15 years and make our country debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was here and planted that big magnolia tree in 1835.

So I say again, let's do first things first: pay down the debt; save Social Security; save and modernize Medicare; invest in education.

In the days ahead, I will ask the Republican majority to work with me to fulfill these fundamental obligations we have to our children and to our future. If we can work together to meet these objectives, we can also work together to pass tax relief we can afford, affordable, middle class tax relief that reflects the priorities of both parties and the values of the American people. That would be a good bill I would happily sign.

Every generation of Americans is called upon to meet the challenges of its time. But few have the unprecedented opportunity we have to meet the challenges not only of our time but the great challenges of our future. We must seize that opportunity.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Legislation on Taxpayer Relief

September 23, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2488, the "Taxpayer Refund and Relief Act of 1999," because it ignores the principles that have led us to the sound economy we enjoy today and emphasizes tax reduction for those who need it the least.

We have a strong economy because my Administration and the Congress have followed the proper economic course over the past 6 years. We have focused on reducing deficits, paying down debt held by the public, bringing down interest rates, investing in our people, and opening markets. There is \$1.7 trillion less debt held by the public today than was forecast in 1993. This has contributed to lower interest rates, record business investment, greater productivity growth, low inflation, low unemployment, and broad-based growth in real wages—and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in almost half a century.

This legislation would reverse the fiscal discipline that has helped make the American economy the strongest it has been in generations. By using projected surpluses to provide a risky tax cut, H.R. 2488 could lead to higher interest rates, thereby undercutting any benefits for most Americans by increasing home mortgage payments, car loan payments, and credit card rates. We must put first things first, pay down publicly held debt, and address the long-term solvency of Medicare and Social Security. My Mid-Session Review of the Budget presented a framework in which we could accomplish all of these things and also provide an affordable tax cut.

The magnitude of the tax cuts in H.R. 2488 and the associated debt service costs would be virtually as great as all of the on-budget surpluses the Congressional Budget Office projects for the next 10 years. This would leave virtually none of the projected on-budget surplus available for addressing the long-term solvency of Medicare, which is currently projected by its Trustees to be insolvent by 2015, or of Social Security, which then will be a negative cash-flow position, or for critical funding for priorities like national security, education, health care, law

enforcement, science and technology, the environment, and veterans' programs.

The bill would cause the Nation to forgo the unique opportunity to eliminate completely the burden of the debt held by the public by 2015 as proposed by my Administration's Mid-Session Review. The elimination of this debt would have a beneficial effect on interest rates, investment, and the growth of the economy. Moreover, paying down debt is tantamount to cutting taxes. Each one-percentage point decline in interest rates would mean a cut of \$200 billion to \$250 billion in mortgage costs borne by American consumers over the next 10 years. Also, if we do not erase the debt held by the public, our children and grandchildren will have to pay higher taxes to offset the higher Federal interest costs on this debt.

Budget projections are inherently uncertain. For example, the Congressional Budget Office found that, over the last 11 years, estimates of annual deficits or surpluses 5 years, into the future erred by an average of 13 percent of annual outlays—a rate that in 2004 would translate into an error of about \$250 billion. Projections of budget surpluses 10 years into the future are surely even more uncertain. The prudent course in the face of these uncertainties is to avoid making financial commitments—such as massive tax cuts—that will be very difficult to reverse.

The bill relies on an implausible legislative assumption that many of its major provisions expire after 9 years and all of the provisions are repealed after 10 years. This scenario would create uncertainty and confusion for taxpayers, and it is highly unlikely that it would ever be implemented. Moreover, this artifice causes estimated 10-year costs to be understated by about \$100 billion, at the same time that it sweeps under the rug the exploding costs beyond the budget window. If the tax cut were continued, its budgetary impact would grow even more severe, reaching about \$2.7 trillion between 2010 and 2019, just at the time when the baby boomers begin to retire, Medicare becomes insolvent, and Social Security comes under strain. If the bill were to become law, it would leave

America permanently in debt. The bill as a whole would disproportionately benefit the wealthiest Americans by, for example, lowering capital gains rates, repealing the estate and gift tax, increasing maximum IRA and retirement plan contribution limits, and weakening pension anti-discrimination protections for moderate- and low-income workers.

The bill would not meet the Budget Act's existing pay-as-you-go requirements, which have helped provide the discipline necessary to bring us from an era of large and growing budget deficits to the potential for substantial surpluses. It would also automatically trigger across-the-board cuts (or sequesters) in a number of Federal programs. These cuts would result in a reduction of more than \$40 billion in the Medicare program over the next 5 years. Starting in 2002, they would also lead to the elimination of numerous programs with broad support, including: crop insurance, without which most farmers and ranchers could not secure the financing from banks needed to operate their farms and ranches; veterans readjustment benefits, denying education and training to more than 450,000 veterans, reservists, and dependents;

Federal support for programs such as child care for low-income families and Meals on Wheels for senior citizens; on many others.

As I have repeatedly stressed, I want to find common ground with the Congress on a fiscal plan that will best serve the American people. I have profound differences, however, with the extreme approach that the Republican majority has adopted. It would provide a tax cut for the wealthiest Americans and would hurt average Americans by denying them the benefits of debt reduction and depriving them of the certainty that my proposals for Medicare and Social Security solvency would provide as they plan for their retirement.

I hope to work with Members of Congress to find a common path to honor our commitment to senior citizens, help working families with targeted tax relief for moderate- and lower-income workers, provide a better life for our children, and improve the standard of living of all Americans.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 23, 1999.

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Lane Kirkland

September 23, 1999

Irena, members of the Kirkland family, Father O'Donovan, Monsignor Higgins, distinguished Members of Congress, visitors from other lands, and my fellow Americans:

I am profoundly honored to be here to pay tribute to a person I admired for many years before I ever thought I would have the chance to work with him as President, a man whom I was honored to present the Presidential Medal of Freedom, because he was, in our time, the very embodiment of the cause of freedom, a man who was both brilliant and articulate and still almost irrationally passionate about the things he knew to be right.

Back in 1985 Lane Kirkland went home to South Carolina, to the State university, and gave one of the most eloquent speeches on the role of Government ever delivered. Perhaps the most memorable line was his reflection on the terms "liberal" and "conservative." If you look at who

is here today to pay tribute to Lane, it's a pretty good place for me to start my remarks.

He said, "As one who has been afflicted by both labels, depending on the stance of the afflictor and the foreign or domestic nature of the issue, I doubt their utility in this day and age for anyone except slapdash journalists."

Not only did Lane reject such labels, we all know that he defied the labels, "liberal" and "conservative." In fact, in many ways, he defied all labels.

He was a man of remarkable contrasts. You've already heard others speak about his humility. He was a true five-star general in the global fight for human liberty, but so down to earth, he was offended if anyone called him anything but Lane.

He was such a powerful force for justice, he could lead hundreds of thousands of working people to march on Washington. But for years,

the most powerful force in his own home was a little dachshund named Stanley. He was a man of idealism and strong opinions, but he was genuinely open to people who had the courage to differ with him. He was a gifted intellectual, but on Sunday afternoons, he put his books aside to watch the Redskins on TV. He was a man of the arts, whose perhaps favorite artistry was his harmonica rendition of "Solidarity Forever." For all of his contrasts, there was a remarkable consistency underlying everything he thought and said and did.

Both George Meany and Lane used to say, "The role of the trade unions is to try to keep the big guys from kicking the little guys around." That was his philosophy of life. And believe me, I got my fair share of lectures about it. [Laughter]

He lived it when he walked the picket lines with hotel workers in Las Vegas, when he got arrested with miners in Appalachia, when he quoted the fiery words of Zapata to mistreated Latino janitors in L.A. He lived it when he stood in solidarity with the oppressed workers of the Soviet bloc or helped to tear down the Iron Curtain in Poland and elsewhere in the communist world. He lived it when he struggled for racial and gender equality, when he fought to strengthen the Civil Rights Act, when he championed the cause of women and minorities within the America labor movement, when he helped to rescue the NAACP from bankruptcy.

You could see it in his own office, where he always treated even the most junior members of his staff with the same dignity and respect

he demanded for working men and women throughout the world. He stood up for the little guy. It was his ideology. It was also his way of life.

I want to conclude today with a story that was passed along to us at the White House by one of Lane's closest advisers. After he passed away, one of the medics who came to the house took Irena aside and said, "When I first took this call, the name Kirkland didn't ring any bells. But when I arrived, I realized who your husband was. As the shop steward for my EMS unit, I want you to know how grateful I am for everything your husband did for us. He was a wonderful man, and I know that everyone in my unit feels the same way."

Well, Irena, for all the distinguished speakers who will pay tribute to your husband today, I don't think any of us could do better than that. So let me just say that I am grateful for this giant of a man, a true American hero, a man who stood up for the little guy. I hope all of us can be faithful to his admonition to do the same. It is the only way we can give him the legacy he has richly earned.

God bless you and your family.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. in Gaston Hall at Georgetown University. In his remarks, he referred to Mr. Kirkland's widow, Irena; Father Leo J. O'Donovan, president, Georgetown University; and Monsignor George G. Higgins, former director, Social Action Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference (later known as the United States Catholic Conference).

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters *September 23, 1999*

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Let me say, I am delighted to see Chairman Arafat again. We have a lot to discuss, obviously, about our bilateral relations, and especially about the permanent status talks. He and Prime Minister Barak have agreed on a very ambitious timetable to have a framework agreement by February, final agreement by next September. The United States is pre-

pared to do all we can to assist them in coming to an agreement.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that we should first meet our own obligations under the Wye agreement, and I hope the Congress will give me the funding, both for Israel and for the Palestinian Authority, so that we can meet our obligations there. And we're working hard. We're into the final budget legs now, and I'm quite hopeful.

Permanent Status Talks

Q. Mr. President, what did Chairman Arafat ask you vis-a-vis the permanent status talks? Did he ask you for a more active role, more involvement, sir?

The President. We're just starting—we're getting off to a late start, so we're just starting our conversation. But you know, I've been active in this all along for 6½ years now. I intend to continue to be active, to do whatever I can to help the parties come to an agreement. If they're willing—and they must be willing, or they would not have agreed to such an ambitious timetable—then I'll do what I can.

Israel-Syria Negotiations

Q. [Inaudible]—about the Palestinian-Israeli track? Prime Minister Barak said just yesterday, any time, any place, for the Syrians to resume negotiations. There has yet to be any positive response there. What's your sense of what the hangup is there, and what can you do to try to move that along?

The President. Well, we're working on it, and I actually am quite hopeful.

President's Involvement in the Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, is there a chance that you'll visit the area, to give it a push on both tracks?

The President. I would do anything that would be helpful to facilitate the agreement. Right now, I'm not sure that would be the most helpful thing. I would do anything I could to facilitate the agreement.

Palestinian State

Q. The question of the state of Palestine, Mr. President, are you willing to spend more

capital and secure your legacy as the President of the United States who achieved the Palestinian state and the peaceful settlement of the Middle East?

The President. Well, I'm certainly willing to do anything I can to achieve a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. The question of the state, as you know—that was a very well-worded question. Congratulations. [Laughter] But the question of the state is one to be resolved in the permanent status talks that have just begun, so I think they will resolve it. I think, obviously, that the two sides will make an agreement on that, or there won't be an agreement.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you, pool.

Q. Mr. President, what can you tell us—

Q. Mr. President, in your U.N. speech—

Israel's Role in the Peace Process

Q. [Inaudible]—what can you tell us about the performance of the Israeli side so far in the last one month?

The President. I'm encouraged. I think you should all be encouraged by the work that they've done together.

Press Secretary Lockhart. Thank you, everyone.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Proposed Education Appropriations

September 23, 1999

The House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations subcommittee today passed a partisan bill that would seriously undermine our efforts to strengthen public education, protect workers, and move people from welfare to work.

This bill is proof that America's highest priority—improving our schools—remains the Republican Congress' lowest priority. The bill

eliminates our effort to hire quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. It denies hundreds of thousands of young people access to after-school programs, fails to improve and expand Head Start, cuts the successful America Reads program, cuts educational technology, and eliminates the GEAR UP program, which helps young people prepare early for success in college. It fails to give public schools the resources

to succeed, and does nothing to demand accountability for results.

The bill also terminates the successful school-to-work program and youth opportunity grants, and makes deep cuts in programs that help dislocated workers, provide worker protections, and ensure worker safety. It undermines America's efforts to move people from welfare to work by reneging on our bipartisan commitment to the States on welfare reform. It contains a range of unacceptable provisions, which would prevent the government from effectively protecting the health and safety of the American people.

The subcommittee bill would also underfund public health priorities, including preventive health, mental health and substance abuse, health care access for the poor, and our efforts to reduce racial health disparities and the spread of AIDS worldwide. It would prevent us from continuing to provide important patient protec-

tions for American workers and improving our Nation's organ distribution system. It also would threaten our ability to manage key entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid.

I warned earlier today that the tax bill sent to me as part of the Republican budget plan would lead to major reductions in key national investments in education and other programs. The subcommittee's bill today is another step in the same misguided direction.

This bill is unacceptable. Our Nation's children deserve much better. I sent the Congress a budget for the programs covered by this bill that provided for essential investments in America's needs and was fully provided for. If this bill were to come to me in its current form, I would veto it. Instead, I urge the House not to pass the subcommittee's bill and to work on a bipartisan basis with my administration on acceptable legislation.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the 1999 National Money Laundering Strategy *September 23, 1999*

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by the provisions of section 2(a) of Public Law 105-310 (18 U.S.C. 5341(a)(2)),

I transmit herewith the National Money Laundering Strategy for 1999.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 23, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iran *September 23, 1999*

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-

month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 23, 1999.

Remarks at a National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Dinner September 23, 1999

Thank you very much. If you've been following the news, you probably know I'm a little hoarse, and I know you're a little tired, so you won't have to put up with me for very long here.

But I'm grateful for the chance to be here. I strongly support the NDI. I thank Ken Wollack and Paul Kirk and all the rest of you for the work you do. I thank my friend Senator Kennedy for being the embodiment of the commitment to democracy and freedom and human rights. Mrs. Kirkland, we're glad to see you here tonight, and I was honored to be at the service at Georgetown today.

I want to thank you for giving this award to President Shevardnadze. He has been a friend of the United States and a friend of ours. He has stood for democracy. You heard him tell the story tonight. He's like anybody who has converted; once he converted, he was really stuck as a true believer. He has endured assassination attempts, illegal coup attempts. He has been through ethnic difficulties in his own country. He has been through pressures from the outside and problems from the inside. He has watched the economy go down and things come apart and come back together again. But once he decided he believed, he stayed hitched, and he embodies something that I think we don't think about enough.

We talk a lot about what it takes to establish democracy. But once having established it, there are always people who will try to twist it to their own end, because we may eliminate communism from the world, but we have not eliminated lust for power or greed that leads to corruption or the hatreds and fears in the human heart that lead to the oppression of those who are different from us in race or religion or belong to some other minority group. This man has stayed the course when the price was high, and I thank you for awarding this to him tonight.

I thank you for giving Hillary this award tonight. I'm sorry Monica McWilliams couldn't be here. That's the only problem—a ruptured appendix—I have seen those Irish women unable to overcome almost instantaneously. *[Laughter]*

I was hoping—Hillary just got in today from out of town, and I didn't have a chance to talk to her about what she was going to say tonight. And I was sitting there in my chair, saying, "Gosh, I hope you're going to tell them about those people in that African village." And I hope all my fellow Americans were listening tonight.

I'll tell you, when we walked in that room in Senegal and all those women came with their token men supporters—*[laughter]*—a role with which I am becoming increasingly familiar—*[laughter]*—I'm telling you, it made chills run up and down my spine. And I wish, too, that every American could have seen it because then we would understand what a precious thing a vote is, and we would understand what a precious responsibility the public trust is.

We, in our country, we want democracy for everybody else, but sometimes we forget that it carries responsibilities of citizenship and responsibilities for those of us in representative positions to keep it going. We think we're so strong, nothing can happen to our democracy. But when a man like Yitzhak Rabin is killed, when we see our friends in Northern Ireland in both communities vote for a clear path to the future of peace and reconciliation and then vote for representatives to get the job done and they still can't seem to get it done—we're nowhere near giving up, by the way; George Mitchell is over there working on it right now—but when you see that, it is an agony because you're always afraid somehow, something will happen to twist it awry.

But what Hillary has done with this Vital Voices movement is simply to give voice and power to practical and compassionate women who find real human answers to human problems and who don't let lust for political power in and of itself or fear of those who are different from them or the desire for personal recognition get in the way of their desire to perfect democracy.

What I would like to say to all of you tonight is, when we go to Bosnia or we go to Kosovo to stop ethnic cleansing or we help to train Africans so they can prevent another Rwanda

or Burundi from occurring again, when we labor in America for peace in the Middle East and try to empower ordinary people everywhere, we should remember with humility that we are supposed to behave in our respective positions of citizenship and authority the way those village women did in Senegal, the way the Irish women do in the Vital Voices conference, the way the women did who had the microcredit loans that I have seen my wife visit on the Indian subcontinent or in Southeast Asia or in countless African and Latin American villages. People who have never had it before, you see, when they get it, they know what they want to do.

And we in the United States have a serious responsibility to the rest of the world and to our own people to stand for peace and freedom and democracy and human rights, and to stand for it at home as well as abroad and to never forget that the purpose of power is to liberate the human spirit, not to grasp onto yesterday's arrangements in a fleeting life that no matter how long we hold onto power, will be over all too soon, anyway.

Lane Kirkland was over 75 years old; to me, he was a very young man. We are all just here for a little while. The premise of democracy is, if people are truly empowered to live out their dreams and help other people solve their problems, that will bring more happiness and self-fulfillment than picking a few of us to increase our wealth and power or the power of

our crowd to oppress another. And we need a little humility here along with our devotion to democracy.

We need to remember the travails of a man like President Shevardnadze who puts his life on the line when he shows up for work. And we need to remember the courage of people like those Irish women or those Senegalese women and their hardy male supporters who believe they could change the world if they only had a voice.

I am grateful to you for honoring this President and my wife, who has done more than anyone I know to give those kind of people a voice. But when you leave here, remember that all of us can do that every day, right here.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. in the ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Kenneth Wollack, president, and Paul Kirk, chairman, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs; Irena Kirkland, widow of Lane Kirkland; President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia, winner of the 1999 W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award; Monica McWilliams, cofounder, Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, and winner of the 1998 award, who was scheduled to present the 1999 award to Hillary Clinton; and former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland.

Remarks Announcing the Adoption Bonus Awards *September 24, 1999*

Thank you very much. When we have events here in this room with people who have come to share their experiences, very often I feel like a fifth wheel. I think everything that needs to be said has already been said. *[Laughter]* But I want to begin by thanking Dawn Keane for her wonderful statement; her husband, Steve; and Sean, Brian, and Sarah. They're beautiful children. They did a good job at the microphone, didn't they? *[Laughter]* I want to thank Olivia Golden and Pat Montoya for their work at HHS on this important issue.

I'd like to thank this remarkable bipartisan delegation from the House of Representatives

here, Dave Camp and Nancy Johnson and Ben Cardin and Maxine Waters, Sandy Levin and Congressman DeLay. This may be the only issue all six of these people agree on. *[Laughter]* Tom's nodding his head up and down. *[Laughter]*

I'll tell you a funny story; this is a true story. The other day I was reading a profile of Tom DeLay in the newspaper. And I got about halfway through, and he was giving me the devil for something. You know, he's very good at that. *[Laughter]* And he started grinding on my golf game and saying that I didn't count my scores and all this, and I was getting really angry.

[Laughter] And then I get to the next part of the story, and it talks all about his experience and his commitment to adoption and to foster children and the personal experience that he and his wife had. And my heart just melted. And all of a sudden, I didn't care what he said about my golf game. [Laughter]

And I say that to make this point: The Keane family, the Manis, the Brown, the Vasquez families, who are behind me today, they represent what we all know is basic and fundamental about our families and our country, more important than anything else we can think of. And they open their homes and their hearts to children, and they open our hearts to them and to each other as we work for more stories like those we celebrate today.

I'd also like to say a special hello to the Badeau family. Some of you may remember this. Two years ago, almost, Sue and Hector Badeau joined us at the White House when I signed the Adoption and Safe Families Act. They brought 18 of the 22 children they have adopted. Now, you need to know that, as if they didn't have enough to deal with, this summer they also welcomed into their home a family of eight Kosovar refugees. So if you ever need proof that there's no limit to human goodness, you can look at Sue and Hector Badeau. I'd like for them to stand. Where are they? There you go. They've got some of their kids here. Stand up. [Applause] Thank you. God bless you.

I would also like to say just a very brief word of thanks to Hillary. You heard her tell the story of her involvement in this, but when we were in law school together, before we were married, she was talking to me about how messed up the foster care and adoption laws were in the country, how many ridiculous barriers there were. And not long after we moved to Little Rock and I became attorney general of our State, she took a case for a young couple who had had a child from foster care for 3 years that they desperately wanted to adopt—this is over 20 years ago. And together they changed the law in our State so that foster parents could be considered for adoption, something that used to be *verboten* in most States in the country.

So I've watched her work on these issues now for almost 30 years, and I am very grateful that one of the many blessings of our time in the White House has been the chance to make a

difference on these adoption and foster care issues, and I thank her for making it possible.

Finally, let me say, again, I want to say a special word of thanks to the Members of Congress in both parties who have come to this event today. We have had a raging, often stimulating, occasionally maddening, debate on what should be the role of Government over the last 5 years in this town. But we have all agreed that Government has a role to try to protect children but to facilitate the most rapid, reasonable, orderly process for both foster care and for transition to adoption.

Hillary said that the House had adopted this provision to let kids coming out of foster care keep their Medicaid until they're 21. I'll just give you one more example of how these issues unify us. Within a 36-hour period, about 6 months ago, my cousin, who runs the public housing unit in the little town where I was born in Arkansas, which has 8,000 or 10,000 people, came up to a HUD conference. And she spent the night with me and we were having breakfast, drinking coffee, and she says, "You know, you've got to do something about these foster kids. They keep going out of the—they come out of the foster homes, and they've got no money, and they need to do some things." And then the next day, literally within 36 hours, I'm talking to these people from New York City who tell me it's maybe the biggest social problem they have now, with all these kids coming out of foster care. So this is an issue that spans the experience of America, the whole sweep of it. And I'm very grateful; I'm grateful that we have this consensus, and I'm grateful that they've acted on it. I urge the Senate to follow suit.

Now, you've already heard about the things that we're doing to try to double the number of children we help move into permanent homes. We have new evidence that these efforts are bearing fruit. The Department of Health and Human Services has just given me a report that tracks our progress in meeting our adoption goals. It shows that the number of adoptions from the foster care system increased from 28,000 in 1996 to 36,000 in 1998. That is the first significant increase in adoptions since the national foster care program was created almost 20 years ago. Now, that's an amazing thing. That's more than—it's about a 30 percent increase. That's a very impressive increase in 2 years. And we are well on our way to meeting

our goal of 56,000 in 2002, doubling the number. For all of you that had anything to do with that, I say thank you. You should be very proud of yourselves.

Now, if you look at this HHS report—and I urge those of you who are interested in it to actually get it and scan it, at least—you will see how much this bipartisan cooperation I talked about and the work that's being done by people in the trenches to clear away the barriers is making a difference, a stunning example of what we can do when we put our children first. You will see that we have acted on each and every one of the 11 recommendations set forth in the original Adoption 2002 report, breaking down barriers to adoptions, ensuring accountability, rewarding innovation, supporting adoptive families themselves.

One of the key recommendations we adopted into law in 1997 was to give States, for the first time, financial incentives to help children move from foster to adoptive homes. Under the new bonus system, States are entitled to up to \$4,000 or \$6,000, depending on whether the child has special needs, for each adoption above their previous average.

Today I have the honor of presenting the first round of these awards, worth \$20 million, to 35 of our 50 States. The good news is that these States did this, using creative new approaches and exceeding their own high goals. Illinois, for example—listen to this—the State of Illinois increased its adoptions 112 percent—112. *[Applause]* Yes, you can clap for Illinois. That's good.

Now, the bad news, if you can call it that, is that even though we believed this would work, we didn't think it would work this well this quickly—*[laughter]*—and we didn't put enough money in to give all the States all the money to which they're entitled. So I hope we can rectify that, because I think we all think that we want to give the States the incentives to figure out how best to do this. But the fact is, I think all of us are very proud of what these States have done for some of their most vulnerable citizens. And I look forward to working with the Congress to make up this shortfall and get the other 15 States above their goals as well.

Today I am also awarding \$5.5 million in adoption opportunity grants to outstanding public and private organizations in 16 of our States

to help fund research and new ways of increasing interstate adoptions and adoptions of minority children. Together these efforts will help to accelerate the remarkable progress we've seen.

Now, again let me say, I think the big goal we ought to have for this legislative session is to get the Senate to follow the lead of the House and schedule a vote on the Chafee-Rockefeller bill to ensure that the foster children are not cast out in the cold when their time in foster care ends. I hope—I know if we can get it up and get it on the calendar, it will pass with the same overwhelming bipartisan support that we've seen in the House. So I urge all of you to do what you can to make sure that that is a big priority for the Senate, and I will do my part.

Together, we can help our foster children—all of them—first grow up in good homes and, if they turn 18 as foster children, to make a good transition from—transit to independence with health care, education, housing, and counseling.

Now ultimately, let me say the credit in all this does not really belong to all of the political leaders, even though they've worked very hard, all of us have together. It does not belong to all the public servants, even though there is a real new attitude, I think, in the organizations, the social services organizations, to try to do the right thing and move this along.

But none of this will work if there aren't good people in every community like the Keanes, the Manises, the Browns, the Vasquezes, the Badeaus, who are willing to give a child unconditional love and a good upbringing. They are the proof of the unlimited goodness of the human heart. All the rest of us are trying to do is to unleash it. And we need to keep right on doing that.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Dawn and Steve Keane, and their adopted children Sean, Brian, and Sarah, who introduced the President; Christine DeLay, wife of Representative Tom DeLay; and Myra J. Irvin, program manager, Hope Housing Authority in Arkansas. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Meeting September 24, 1999

Thank you. Well, I'm glad to see you. And I seemed to have recovered enough of my voice to get through this, so I'll try to do that.

Governor Romer, Representative Sanchez, Mayor Archer, Joe Andrew, Andy Tobias, and Beth Dozoretz, and all of our team. I wanted to begin by saying a simple thank you to all the members of the DNC and to the leaders. I want to say a special word of thanks to the finance staff, with whom I have been dealing a lot lately; we've been working hard, and they've done a very good job, and we've done a good job under pretty difficult circumstances, raising the funds that our candidates and our party needs. And I want to thank them for their work.

I want to congratulate the convention team that was announced, Governor Romer, Lydia Camarillo, Don Foley, all the others; thank you for your determination to make Los Angeles a great success. And I want to thank my friend of many, many years, Roy Romer, for the work that he has done for our party.

I will recommend to the DNC tomorrow that, as Governor Romer moves on to this new responsibility, we elect Mayor Rendell of Philadelphia to the position of general chair. For those of you who know him, he has provided an absolutely astonishing leadership for us there. We've not had a Governor in Pennsylvania since I've been President. In the last election we carried the greater Philadelphia area by 370,000 votes, I think, about 20,000 votes more than our margin in the State of Pennsylvania. And in the city of Philadelphia in 1996, for the first time, the Vice President and I had the same victory margin that President Kennedy did in 1960, when there were 400,000 more people there. I say that to tell you I think our party has been well led and will be well led.

I just want to mention one thing that Roy Romer will always have on his résumé. In 1998, when we gained five seats in the midterm elections, though we were outspent by \$100 million—\$100 million—and all the pundits said—I want you to remember this, as you're treated to more punditocracy over the next year—[laughter]—all the pundits said we were going to be wiped out. They were on all these shows,

"I believe they'll lose 20 seats." "No, I think they're going to lose 30 seats." [Laughter] "No, I believe they might lose more." "And they're certainly going to lose five or six in the Senate. They'll never be able to stop anything there." I heard it for a year.

It was a terrible Senate election for us in terms of who was up, who was not. We lost no Senate seats. We gained five House seats, and it was the first time since 1822 that the party of the President had won seats in the midterm of a second term.

So for all of you that were part of that, I thank you. I thank you. And I want to just take a few moments to try to talk about where we are in this moment as a country, as a party, by referring briefly to the recent past and by looking at the present and the future.

When I first announced for President—it's amazing how much quicker things are happening now. You know, I did not even announce for President until October of 1991. It's September; I feel like I've been going through this campaign all my life. [Laughter] And I'm not even running. [Laughter]

But anyway, back to the subject at hand. In 1991, when I announced, I asked for change in our party, in our national leadership, and in our country. I asked America to embrace the new challenges that we faced with new ideas based on old-fashioned values of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans.

I asked that we have a new role, a clearly defined role, for our National Government, that didn't say we could solve all the problems, but didn't say we could walk away from them either. I asked us to stop demonizing Government, on the one hand, but to stop defending everything Government did, on the other, and instead to focus on what we could do to give the American people the tools to meet their challenges, to solve their problems.

And then I asked the Vice President to join the ticket. We put out our economic plan, and we asked the American people to give us a chance to put people first. People gave us a chance in '92. We made a lot of very tough decisions. We passed an economic plan, I would

remind you, with not a single Republican vote, with the Vice President breaking the tie in the Senate. And they told everybody in America we'd raise their taxes—even though, for most people, we hadn't—and that it would be a disaster and that a recession was on the way.

Then we passed a crime bill to put 100,000 police on the street, to ban assault weapons. We passed the Brady bill. They told everybody in America we were going to come take their guns away. [Laughter] Didn't they? And in 1994 they put out their Contract With America, and they thumped us good, they beat us good, because the voters had not felt the benefits of the economic plan. We had just passed the crime bill a couple of months before, and for all they knew, some Government bureaucrat was going to knock on their door and take their guns away. Probably—that alone probably cost us the House of Representatives. And everybody said—same crowd said, "Oh, these guys can't win; they're history." Remember that, all their, "It's over?"

I always believed if we got up every day and thought about the American people, the kind of people I met in New Hampshire that were being evicted from their homes, and we just thought about the people that nobody else in Washington seems to think about and we kept asking ourselves, what is the right thing to do for them, that we could marry good politics and good policy, and it would work out all right.

Well, 1996 came around, and the economy was cooking, and the country was pulling back together. And I went to New Hampshire, where they beat a Congressman who voted for the crime bill with the assault weapons ban in it. And I never will forget this. I went in '96 to New Hampshire. You know I have a special feeling about the place. [Laughter] They voted for me twice, and they normally don't vote for Democrats.

And I got all these people there, and a bunch of them were kind of big, old rural guys in their plaid shirts, obviously hunters. And I stood up before this crowd in New Hampshire, and I said, "You know, in 1992 you voted for me to give me a chance. Then in 1994 you beat a Congressman who voted for my crime bill; I caused him to get beat, because they told you that we were going to take your guns away, and I feel terrible about it. So here's what I want you to do. If any one of you suffered any inconvenience at all at hunting season since

we passed that bill, I want you to vote against me, too. But if you didn't, they lied to you, and you need to get even." [Laughter]

And so a majority of the voters in New Hampshire, a State where both independents and Republicans outnumbered registered Democrats, agreed. Then in 1998, as I said, under the leadership of our team, we ratified the course the country was on.

I think it is very important—a lot of you, almost all of you come from somewhere else. You actually live in America, with real people—[laughter]—and you go about your business every day. And it seems that a huge part of our job every year is to make sure that people can think for themselves and follow their own instincts and see the world as they experience it and not be swayed too much either by the financial advantage of other side or the conventional wisdom that emanates out of Washington. So I want you to be of good cheer and proud, because America is a better place than it was in 1992.

You know, I saw a survey the other day that said that times had been so good for so long, the American people couldn't remember when it was bad and tended to give everybody good ratings on the economy, Bush, Hoover, the whole crowd. [Laughter] It's been good a long time. [Laughter]

So let's take just a little walk down memory lane here, shall we? [Laughter] In the 12 years before I become President, the administrations told the American people the Government was the problem, and they railed against the Government. But under them the Government got bigger, not small; and the deficits got bigger. They said that supply side economics would overcome the laws of arithmetic—[laughter]—that if you cut taxes and increased spending, it would somehow balance the budget. And boy, we stuck with that theory for a long time. We just kept doing the same thing over and over again. And after 12 years, we had quadrupled the debt of the United States of America. We had very high interest rates.

And it actually did work in the short run. My retired senior Senator, Dale Bumpers, used to say, "If you let me write a couple billion dollars' worth of hot checks, I'll show you a good time, too." [Laughter] So, you know, it worked for a while; I mean, you know, we had all this money, and who knew where it came

from? They just kept throwing this old money out there at us.

And so we got out of the early recession and got through '84 and got through '88. Then, lo and behold—but we never could get a recovery really going. We kept falling back, kept falling back, and lo and behold, after the '88 election, we found ourselves in the worst recession since the Great Depression, and wages were stagnant, and unemployment was high, and unlike previous recessions, we couldn't exactly go into deficit spending, because that's what got us there in the first place.

So the Vice President and I went to the American people, and we said, "Look, we're going to have to get rid of this thing, and here's our plan to cut it in half, and after we do that, we'll go on and get rid of it. We've got to do it because otherwise, for the people who care about the business economy; we're never going to get interest rates down; we're not going to be competitive in the global economy. And for our liberals that want the Government to have money to invest in social programs and education, we're never going to do it because the budget's paralyzed by the deficit." And we'd gotten to the point where we were spending about 15 cents of every dollar you pay in taxes just to pay interest on the debt.

So we said, "We'll find a way to do it. It won't be easy, and we'll make a lot of people mad. We might have to get rid of a bunch of stuff. But if you vote for us, we'll go after the deficit. We'll continue to invest in the education of our children, science and technology, and helping the environment. But we'll get rid of a bunch of stuff, too, and we'll give you a new Government that's smaller, but more active in the ways it needs to be."

And the people gave us a chance. And it was an argument when we were elected; that is, we made an argument to the American people, and in '94, in their lives it was still an argument. And we won the argument in '92; we lost the argument in '94. But the reason we won it in '96 and '98 is it wasn't an argument anymore. There were facts out there in people's lives. So the debate took on a whole different turn when people's lives, real people's lives, had been changed.

And now we have the longest peacetime expansion in our history, instead of the worst recession since the Great Depression. We have over 19 million jobs, instead of a handful. We

have rising wages instead of stagnant wages. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls—rates in 32 years, and the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Folks, this is not an argument anymore. It's a fact, and you should be proud of it.

Instead of a \$290 billion deficit, we've got a \$99 billion surplus and projected surpluses into the future for years. The air is cleaner. The water is cleaner. The food is safer. We've cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as they did in 12 years. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of this country. Nearly everybody now can afford to go to college because of the HOPE scholarship and the other college aid we've provided.

The strategy has been validated. You can get rid of the deficit and still invest in the things you have to invest in. We've eliminated hundreds of programs but nearly doubled investment in education, while getting rid of the deficit. You can expand trade in ways that help ordinary people. You can balance the environment and the economy, and you can balance work and family.

And I think this is very, very important for the American people to make the decisions now about where we go from now to 2000, because, you know, a lot of political rhetoric, since people always want to change—and that's a good thing, not a bad thing, by the way. But a lot of political rhetoric is premised on the fact that we were all born yesterday; the older I get, the more I wish that was true. [Laughter] It would be nice for individuals like me but very bad for a country. So we can't allow a collective amnesia here.

There is a history here. There was a clash of ideas. Then there was a test of ours, just like there was a test of theirs. So the question is not whether we're going to change but how are we going to keep changing.

Here, now, what are we going to do with this surplus? I vetoed their tax bill yesterday; you all know that. But, you know, I will say again, I still believe there is the opportunity for us to work together. This is not an election yet. I mean, the election may be going on in the newspapers every day, but here, in the minds of the American people, they still think we should be drawing a paycheck to work for them. Where you live, for most people, the election is not going on. If you live in Iowa or

New Hampshire, it's already going on. If you live in Arkansas, you're still worried about the price of cattle, you know?

So we got hired to show up for work, and we still get a paycheck here every 2 weeks; all these guys in Congress and me, we still get paid. And I believe that it is imperative; the reason I vetoed the tax bill is it would make it impossible for America to meet our long-term challenges, and we can do a lot of that now, before the next election.

What are they? Number one, the aging of America. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. *[Laughter]* The aging of America; that's a big problem not only for those of us in the baby boom who are going to age but for our children and grandchildren. Why? Because we're the biggest generation in American history until the kids that are now in school. They're bigger than we are, but it took that long.

So now that we have the funds, I believe we ought to save Social Security. By that I believe we ought to do some special things. Most importantly, we ought to run the life of that Trust Fund out at least 50 years. That will take you through the life span of the baby boomers when the generational balance will tend to right itself.

I think we ought to do something for elderly women who are retired. They're the fastest group of seniors, and they tend to be poorer than the rest of our seniors and living on their own. And I personally would like to see the earnings limitation lifted, because I think we ought to encourage our seniors who want to work—who want to work—to work, and not penalize them for doing so.

I think we ought to do something about Medicare. It's supposed to go broke in 15 years. And as all of you know if you deal with health care at all, in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, as we feared, the one thing that hasn't worked out very well is, it's clear to me that the cuts in Medicare, in terms of teaching hospitals, rural hospitals, therapeutic services, nursing homes, that the cuts were too severe. And we have to put some more money back in it.

So we've give the Congress a plan that would lengthen the life of the Medicare Trust Fund to 2027, and that's the longest it's been alive, believe me, the Trust Fund, in—*[inaudible]*—who knows when. And it would provide for a

modest, affordable, but significant prescription drug coverage.

Now, this is a big deal. If you were designing a Medicare program, if there were no Medicare and we were creating it today, we would absolutely have a drug benefit in it, because a lot of people can stay out of the hospital; a lot of people can stay alive longer; a lot of people can stay healthy longer. We would never consider having such a program without covering prescription drugs. And because we don't, about 75 percent of our seniors don't have affordable, adequate coverage.

And we can do this now. And we can do it without breaking the bank, because there are also some structural changes we can make which will save a lot of money over the next few years.

I believe—that's the first thing. I think we need to meet the challenge of our children's education. We have the largest and most diverse group of children in the history of America. Every one of them needs a world-class education—every one of them. If we—if I had allowed this tax bill to become law, we would have had to have huge cuts in education or spend one-half of the surplus attributable to Social Security taxes, which would have really put us in a pickle, with the seniors about to retire, the baby boomers about to retire.

So I gave the Congress a plan that would save Social Security and Medicare, continue to invest in education and defense and the other things that are important, and do it in a way that over the next 15 years would pay down the debt so that in 15 years, for the first time since Andy Jackson was President, we'd be out of debt as a country, debt free.

Now, they think that's a bad idea on the other side, and they're supposed to be the conservative party. Why should the progressive party be for getting us out of debt? Why should the Democrats be for—I mean, we're supposed to be more liberal than them. We want to help poor people. Why in the wide world should we be for that? I'll tell you why. We live in a global economy where interest rates are set globally.

You saw what happened to Asia a couple of years ago, when everybody, all of a sudden, overnight, decided it wasn't such a good place to invest, and all of a sudden, all of these countries that thought they were doing a good job woke up with a severe headache.

And we've seen this sort of thing happen. No, the decisions aren't always rational or fair. But we know that money is an international commodity, and interest rates, therefore, are globally set, although we can all influence them. Obviously, the Federal Reserve can influence them; others can.

If we could take ourselves out of debt, publicly held debt, which is what I propose, for the first time since 1835, here's what would happen. For the next generation, even if we had a recession and we had to borrow some money then later to keep things going, interest rates would be much lower, because the Government wouldn't be competing with you for the money. That means all the working people, people like those who work in this hotel here, their credit card bills would be lower. Their monthly car payments would be lower. Your home mortgage payment would be lower. Your college loan payment would be lower. All the people we represent would be better off if we could have long-term low interest rates and lower inflation. And that's why we ought to be for this.

Now, people that have lots of money and don't have to work very hard—I hope I'll be one of them one day, too; I doubt it—[laughter]—you know, they're okay with high interest rates. They just move their money around and make more money. But we should be for this conservative position, because we have a progressive conscience and heart.

And so this is a plan that the Vice President and I and our administration have asked Congress to adopt. There are plenty of things that we can work together with the Republicans on, to work this out, but we ought to save Social Security and Medicare, keep investing in education, and get this country out of debt.

And if we could make an agreement, I might say there's another reason the Republicans ought to be for it. So if we could make this agreement and keep the thing going on, then all their campaign speeches for the 2000 elections would make more sense. [Laughter] Because right now, every one of their Presidential candidates is out there telling us that they want to spend more money on defense or pay our service men and women more; you know, they don't want to stop investing in education or whatever it is they're saying out there. And every one of them are for this tax bill that I vetoed. And if it became law, they'd all be

stuck. Every one of their campaign speeches would be bogus, because there would be no money to pay for all these things they're out there promising the voters. So they ought to be for what I'm doing, too. I'm saving them a red face in 2000. [Laughter] Everybody ought to be for it.

But just think of this: Think of how proud we can feel if we were to lift the burden not only off the baby boomers but off our children and grandchildren of the baby boom retirement by saving Social Security and Medicare, if we were to guarantee a generation of lower interest rates and greater investment and more jobs and higher incomes by getting this country out of debt; if we really committed ourselves to a world-class education for every child in this country, without regard to their race or their background or where they lived. These are big things, and we have to lay the foundation now.

And as you look ahead, just remember there really are differences between these two parties that are honest and heartfelt. You know, we want to save Social Security, not privatize it and leave individual seniors to the luck of their own investments. We want to save Medicare, not force seniors, by pricing systems, into managed care plans. And the people that want to do that don't even want to vote for a Patients' Bill of Rights. We want a real, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, and their leadership and a lot of their folks are still trying to find a way not to do that.

Keep in mind, this is the party that opposed family and medical leave before. Now they're against the Patients' Bill of Rights. Remember how they told us family and medical leave is going to bankrupt the country; it's a terrible thing. Millions of people—millions of people have taken time off now—millions—because of a baby being born or a parent being sick—millions of people. And every year, we've set a new record for new small businesses formed. They were wrong, and we were right about that.

We want to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill. Why? Why? We want to do that because now 400,000 people who have criminal backgrounds or were otherwise unfit to get a handgun have been blocked by the Brady bill, but as they know that, more and more people are going to use the gun shows or the urban flea markets. So we want to close the loophole and do background checks.

It's the same old thing, you know, and the same old crowd's against it. And it's so interesting; it's funny to me. When they were against the Brady bill, they told us that crooks didn't buy guns in gun shops anyway, so the Brady bill was a total waste. It was just a burden on poor gun shop owners and poor gun buyers because no crooks—the guns—the crooks, they said, they all get their guns at the gun shows and the flea markets. [Laughter] That's what they said then.

So now, I say, "Okay, let's do the background checks," and they say, "Oh, we can't do that. It's too burdensome." And when we asked the leadership of the other party to do it, when we asked the candidates running for President to do it, they flew like a covey of quails back to the nest of the NRA. There are differences between the two parties.

And again, in '92 it was an argument, because this issue of what is a sensible way to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children had not been seriously debated for 30 years, since—or then, 24 years, since Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated, and we had a brief, all-too-brief burst of focus on this, thanks to the leadership of President Johnson, who, like me, came out of a hunting culture and, like me, understood what was true about what the other side was saying and what was not. As a result, they don't like either one of us very much. [Laughter]

But I'm telling you, folks, this is a big deal going forward. This is a big deal. We have given you the lowest crime rate in 26 years by doing what law enforcement people and community leaders say makes sense. But this country's still too dangerous. There are still too many people getting killed, with people that have mental health problems walking around with guns.

A lot of these horrible killings we're seeing here, we need to do more to help these people; we need people identifying these people and getting them help quicker and doing things. You're trying to stop some of this stuff from going on. But you know, we can create a country in which everybody that wants to go hunting, can go hunting, everybody that wants to be a sport shooter can do it, and we can still stop putting weapons into the hands of children, criminals, and people who are unstable. We can do that.

We got the crime rate down to a 26-year low, but it's too high. We can make this the

safest big country in the world. And the American people will make that decision in the next election by the decision they make. There are honest differences between us.

And what I want to say to you is, thank you. Let's get as much done as we can. People still, where you live, most of them don't think we're in a Presidential election. That's something that happens after the conventions. They think that they're paying good taxes to pay our salary, and they'd like us to work a while longer. And so let's do that.

And as you go into the next election, don't fight with people when they say we need a change. Tell them we certainly do; we always need a change. The question is not whether we're going to change but what kind of change we're going to make. And are we going to change based on all the good things that are going on in America now? Or would we instead take a U-turn and go back to the stuff that got us in so much trouble before the Vice President and I came here and got the help of the fine Members of Congress and others who have worked with us? That is the issue. And you don't have to argue so much anymore. You've got evidence.

Now, we'll be at a financial disadvantage, of course. One of the interesting consequences of the recovery of our administration, the economic recovery we sparked, is we've given all those Republicans a lot more money to spend on politics. [Laughter] You know, every time I see the total amount of money they're spending, I think, there's one more statistic for our economic plan. [Laughter] And some more evidence that some folks never learn. So we'll do that.

The last thing I want to tell you is, be of good cheer. Let me tell you something. I come to this hotel and give a lot of speeches, as you might imagine. And today I came in, and they had six working people from the hotel in their uniforms to greet me, not the executives, not the management, people that work here. And they gave me my very own employee ID card. [Laughter]

They're the people we're fighting for. You just imagine you had an employee ID card every day when we fight for the minimum wage and we fight to save and reform Medicare and Social Security and we fight for the education of our children, when we fight to let disabled people keep their Medicaid when they go to work, so they can go into the work force. We fight for

all these things. When we fight for one America across all the lines that divide us, when we fight for the employment nondiscrimination act, when we fight for the hate crimes legislation, when we fight for these things, it's because we identify with each other.

It's a long time between now and November of 2000. In June of 1992 you know where I was in the polls? Not behind, third—third. [Laughter] This is not a horse race. You don't collect any money if you show. [Laughter] But you know what I thought? I'll never forget, June 2, 1992: We win the California primary, and we win in New Jersey, and we win in Ohio, and we have enough votes to be nominated on the first ballot. And the story the next day is, "Oh, but we did exit polls in California, and what they really want is Mr. Perot and not Governor Clinton." And you know, I got that probably because I'd had such wonderful national press during the entire nominating process. [Laughter]

But then, what happened? Then the election started for the real people. Then it wasn't—they weren't, you know, sort of saying, "Well, this is what I've heard," and this is sort of this vaguely—thing; then it became real. And people began to look and listen. And they opened not just their minds but their hearts, and they get—feel about these things, you know. And the American people nearly always get it right. That's why we're still around here after all this time. That's why we're still around here. It's the longest lasting great democracy in history. They nearly always get it right.

But you have to help them make sure that they hear every element of our side. A lot of

times, young people come to me and ask me for advice on running for office. And I say, I always had one rule: I wanted to make sure that by election day, everybody that voted against me knew exactly what they were doing. [Laughter] You think about that. In a democracy, that's what you want. That's what you want.

Our party has been revitalized. People all over the world now are trying to do their versions of what we have done, to marry fiscal responsibility and a strong national posture involved in the rest of the world with compassionate policies at home that bring people together and lift people up. And it's working.

You think about having your own employee ID card. And let's not ever forget who we're here for, why we belong to our party, and why we did all this. And let's just work like crazy, keeping a good frame of mind. And I'll bet you anything, it will come out all right.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Jefferson Ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Representative Loretta Sanchez and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, general cochair, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Andrew Tobias, treasurer, and Beth E. Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Lydia Camarillo, chief executive officer, and Donald J. Foley, chief operating officer, 2000 Democratic National Convention; and Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia.

Remarks at a Democratic Business Council Luncheon September 24, 1999

Thank you. You think that story John told was true? [Laughter] You better keep that Republican's name secret, or they'll subpoena him before a committee before you know it. [Laughter]

I want to thank all of you at the DBC. I want to thank my long-time friend John Merrigan, and Mitchell Delk, and my good friend Jan Jones, and all the others who have

been involved with the DBC. I want to thank our finance people, starting with Beth Dozoretz and Fran Katz, and going through all of the people who have worked on this event.

I want to thank all of you who give so consistently to our party, to give us a chance to get our message out. Thank you, Joe Andrew; thank you, Lou Weisbach, Lottie Shackelford, Janice Griffin. Thanks, Secretary Slater, for being here

and for being there for me for nearly 20 years, now. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Roy Romer for his wonderful service to our party. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Our former chair, Don Fowler, is here. We've got a lot of other good folks here. But I wanted to say to all of you that I think it's quite important how you think and how you talk about where we are, where we've been, and where we're going. So if you will forgive me, I will get down to business. I'm sorry I'm a little late, but I had to spend an extra amount of time at the DNC, because they had a big crowd there, and I wanted to make sure they were thinking right about the moment. And I feel the same way about you.

In 1991 I asked the American people to give me a chance to be President. And I said, "If you'll vote for me, I'll do my best to change our party, to change our national leadership, to change the direction of our country. I think we need new ideas for the new economy and all of the new challenges in our society and the world at large. But they have to be rooted in old values of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans."

And I asked the American people to give me a chance. And I made an argument for them about what I would do. Then, when the Vice President joined the ticket, we reissued our economic plan and asked the American people to give us a chance to put people first. And I would like to ask you to think about that.

John said we brought the economy back and brought the Democratic Party back to the center. I think we did bring it back to the center, but I prefer to think of it as pushing the Democratic Party forward into the future, by getting out of making what seemed to me to be completely false choices. If you hang around Washington long enough, you learn that putting people and issues into categories—I'm sympathetic with people in Washington because they have to deal with so many people and so many issues—if you put everybody and every thing in a little box, it saves you the trouble of having to think. But it's a very poor way to run a country and to make decisions about the future of the country.

So we said, "Hey, give us a chance. We believe that the Democratic Party can be probusiness and prolabor. We believe we can be for family values and be against discrimination against women or gays or anybody else.

We believe we can be for one America and still celebrate our diversity. We believe you can grow the economy while you improve the environment, not degrade it. We believe that we'll have a better workplace if we also help workers to succeed at home in their parental responsibilities. We believe these things. We believe we can prevent crime and be tough on criminals who should be punished."

And so, we made this argument. And the results speak for themselves. But I want to make just a couple of points. Number one, we've got to take a little longer walk down memory lane, because the economy's been so good now that people can't remember when it wasn't. I saw a poll the other day where people think the economy was good when President Bush was here. I think they think it was good when Herbert Hoover was here. [Laughter] It's been good a long time.

But it's important to point out that in 1980, when the Reagan revolution occurred, the premise of the Reagan revolution—there were two premises. One is Government is your enemy and the cause of all of our problems, and you should dislike it and make it as small as possible unless it's building defense or pouring concrete. That was the first one. The second was the way to have a strong economy forever and a balanced budget forever is to increase spending and cut revenues. Let me repeat that. You don't have to laugh, but I want to make sure you heard it. [Laughter] The way to balance the budget and have a strong economy is to increase spending and cut revenues. That was their whole deal, and we proceeded to try it for 12 years, and it got him elected and then reelected and then got President Bush to become only the second Vice President in American history to become directly elected after the President.

But did it work for a while? As I told the DNC today, my former senior Senator, Dale Bumpers, in talking to the Reagan years used to say, "Of course it worked. If you let me write \$2 billion of hot checks, I'll show you a good time, too." [Laughter] So it worked.

But by the third incarnation of it, between '88 and '92, the quadrupling of the national debt put us into a position of permanently high interest rates, which gave us stagnant growth, high unemployment, stagnant wages, and the longest, deepest recession since the Great Depression. That was the reality we confronted. And we kept getting out of these recessions, but every

time we'd get out, we'd go right back in because of the high interest rates.

So Al Gore and I said, "Hey, give us a chance. We're going to try this other thing here." And we went in. And it was an argument in the beginning; that is, the ordinary voters couldn't know who was right because they hadn't tried our way. And then we got in and we found the most partisan atmosphere in modern American history, and my economic plan passed with not a vote to spare and not a vote from a Republican. The Vice President broke the tie in the Senate. And we had only a two-vote victory in the House, which means if one had changed it would have been even and it wouldn't have passed.

Now, we've been through several incarnations. We also put our crime program through. And we passed the Brady bill, which the previous President had vetoed. We passed the Family and Medical Leave Act, the first big leg in our work and family bill, which the previous President had vetoed. We proceeded to clean up toxic waste dumps, clean the air, clean the water, make the food safer. The economy kept getting better, not worse, in spite of their fears.

And they said—when we passed our economic program they said the world would come to an end. They said, "We're going to try it the other way. We're going to cut expenses and increase revenues, until we get this deficit out of our hair." And they said, "Oh no, this is a terrible idea. It will bankrupt the country."

When we passed the crime bill and said we were going to put 100,000 police on the streets, they said, "You'll never do it. Even if you did, it won't bring the crime down." And when we said we could ban assault weapons and do background checks on handgun buyers, and we would keep more guns out of the wrong hands, they said, "Oh, the criminals will have guns, and all you're going to do is unduly burden hunters and sports people."

You remember all these debates. We did one thing; they said another. And so, now, after 6 years and 8 months, we're not having an argument anymore. We can still fight, but it's not an argument over the facts.

Our economic plan has unleashed your energies with low interest rates, and we now have the longest peacetime expansion in history, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare, and a 26-year low in the crime rate. We have the highest homeownership in history;

the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded. And each year, we've set a record for new small business startups.

But the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We have done away with 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as they did in 12 years and set aside more land in perpetuity protection than any administration in history except those of the two Roosevelts.

Along the way, we got 100,000 young people to serve their communities in AmeriCorps and immunized 90 percent of our kids against serious childhood illnesses for the first time, and opened the doors of college to all with the HOPE scholarship. It's been a pretty good run, but it's not an argument anymore. There are facts.

I never will forget—and the voters returned us to office in 1996. But let's look at these elections, and this one in connection with the others. So in '92 we won because people thought times were tough and they gave us a chance. In '94 we got beat bad. Why? Well, they ran with this contract on America, and they had a plan and a message and it sounded good. And they said that we had raised everybody's taxes, although we hadn't. We raised all of yours, but we didn't raise everybody's taxes. [Laughter] Over 90 percent of the people didn't have their taxes raised.

One of my friends who runs a Fortune 100 company—endangered species in that crowd; he's a Democrat—is going all over New York saying, "If you paid more in taxes than you made out of low interest rates in the stock market in the last 7 years, you ought to be for George Bush, but if you didn't, you ought to stick with us." It's a pretty good argument, isn't it? You might try it. [Laughter]

So anyway, in '92 they took a chance on us. In '94 we lost big. Why? Because people were told we'd raise their taxes, even when we didn't, and they hadn't felt the good economy yet and because we had just passed the crime bill and they terrified everybody saying we were going to take their guns away and because we didn't pass anything on health care, so the people who wanted something done were disappointed, and the people who believed their propaganda that we were trying to have the Government take over the health care system believed it. It was the worst of all worlds and election results showed it. And our obituary was written. Remember that now when you read the papers

in the next few months. Our obituary was written: hopeless, helpless, terrible situation. But in '96, we roar back in, bigger victory than '92. Why? Because there was no argument anymore. People had evidence.

And then in '98, we had a plan. In a midterm election, we said, "Hey, we're not tired. We're not burned out. Vote for us, and we'll give you 100,000 teachers. We want to save Social Security and Medicare before we spend the surplus. We want to pay the debt down. We want to pass a Patients' Bill of Rights. That's our national plan." And all over America we said it.

And you know what they said in '98. And they said and all the experts said, "Well, are they going to lose five, six, or seven Senate seats? Are they going to lose 20, 30, or 40 House seats?" And instead, while we were being outspent by \$100 million—\$100 million—in 1998, we lost no Senate seats in the worst year I can remember for Democrats, in terms of whose we had up and whose was vacant, and we picked up five House seats. And it's the first time since 1822 that the party of the President had gained House seats in a midterm election in the sixth year of the Presidency. And only the third time since the Civil War it happened in any midterm election. Why? Because we decided what we were for. We decided ideas matter. Because we put them in, and they made a real difference in people's lives. And people who make the real decision, the voters out there, once they got a chance to take a look at our crowd said, "I think they care more about me than the other guys do."

And one real problem almost all people have sooner or later, if they stay in politics long enough, is they spend so much time with other people in politics, and commentators and experts and pollsters and people writing articles, that they forget that this is not about any of us. Most of you are going to be all right, no matter what; otherwise you couldn't afford to be here. This is about the great mass of people. And I hope that you're here because you believe, as I do, that all of us do better when the country as a whole does better.

You know, my economy has made it possible for those Republicans to give George Bush all that money. [Laughter] Al Gore told me the other day, he said, "If I'd known this economy was going to make so much money for Bush, I'd have voted against your economic plan."

[Laughter] I may start listing that as one of the achievements of my administration. [Laughter] See, it just depends on how you talk about this stuff—[laughter]—and how you think about it. We're all laughing, but I have a very serious purpose here.

So now we come to 2000. And we're first in this year. I believe that the Democratic Party has gotten a long way by being willing to work with the Republicans to get something done. We worked with them in '96, passed the welfare reform bill that's given us the lowest welfare rolls in a generation, but we didn't let them cut off medical care and food to those poor kids. And we made them come up with more child care so that when people go to work, they can still take care of their kids.

I believe we were right when we worked with them in '97 on the balanced budget bill, because it's continued this remarkable low interest rates and recovery of the economy. And I think we still ought to work with them, if they'll work with us, to save Social Security and Medicare and modernize Medicare with prescription drug coverage, to continue to invest in education, to invest in giving people—here's a tax cut I'm for: I'm for giving people the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas around the world, so that we can go national with the empowerment zone program that the Vice President's done such a brilliant job of supervising in Mayor Archer's city of New York and other places.

But we need to take care of business. We need to do that. And if my plan were adopted, we would have the ability to save Social Security and Medicare, invest in education, defense, and the other things we need to invest in, still have a tax cut we can afford, and get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, which would give us a generation of low interest rates and long-term recovery for our children.

Now, that's why I vetoed their tax bill. And once again, I did the Republican candidates for President a favor. Every one of them running on the other side is for this Republican tax bill, and if I had signed it, it would have made a lie to of every campaign speech they're going to give between now and the election about what they'll do, because they wouldn't have any money to do it.

I noticed one of them yesterday said, "Vote for me, and I'll give you new weapons and higher paid soldiers, and everything the Defense Department wants I'll spend more money on," ignoring the fact that we're just about to pay a big pay increase and build new weapons. And I thought to myself, this is a nice speech, but if I sign this tax bill that he's for there won't be any money for the promise he just made. I need to quit helping these Republicans this way.

But anyway, I vetoed the tax bill because, if their bill passes, it wouldn't add a day to Social Security, not a day to Medicare, not a day. So when the baby boomers retire, all those risks would still be out there. It would force big cuts in education. We'd never get the debt paid off. It really had no special effort to get economic growth into the areas that have been left behind by our prosperity. So I vetoed it. But I still want to get things done, and I still want you to help us going forward.

And here's the point I want to make—I just want to make two or three points. Number one, the American people say they want a change. Guess what? I agree with them. If they polled me in all those polls, and said, "Do you think we ought to change?" I'd say yes. This country only works when it's in a perpetual state of creation and recreation. That's how it works. That's why we're still around here after all this time.

Why do you think I worked so hard so that we could just fix this country again so then we'd be free to look at these big, long-term challenges and seize the big, long-term opportunities, none of which were possible to deal with in the shape we were in, in 1992. So I'm for change, too. The question is going to be, what kind of change are you for?

Are we going to build on all the good things that are going on now to deal with the outstanding big problems and to seize the outstanding big opportunities, or are we going to turn around and go back to the approach that got us in so much trouble in the first place? That's the question before the American people.

Do you want to save Social Security, or privatize it and worry later what happens to the people that lose in that deal? Do you want to save Medicare, or force everybody into a managed care plan even though you won't pass the Patients' Bill of Rights? Do you want to keep on with this program that's given us the lowest

crime rate in 26 years, until we have the safest big country on Earth? Or do you want to give crime policy back to the NRA?

These are the questions we have to face. Meanwhile, there is a lot we can do now. But there are big questions. Do you really believe America's diversity is its strength and we can come together in our common humanity? Or do you agree with them that we shouldn't pass the hate crimes bill or the employment non-discrimination act? You've got to decide. There are big issues here.

And these economic issues—would we be better off if their tax bill passed, or would they be better off if my modest bill passed and we took care of Social Security, Medicare, our investments in our children, their education, and got the country out of debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President? Because even if we voted for everything I want now, it could all be revisited next year.

So these are decisions worthy of a great nation. And I just want to say two or three things about the politics of this. Number one, what you do is terribly important. It's okay if they have more money than we do if we have enough. I will remind you they outspent us by \$100 million last time, if you take all their third party committees and all that stuff, and we won anyway. Why? Because we had enough, because the people out there knew what we stood for, because we had clear, sharp, unambiguous message, and people heard it.

Number two, it's very important that you stay in the right frame of mind. You know how to talk about this. My philosophy, all the years I ran for office—now, I can say this since I'm not running anymore; I get to sound like a wise man. I've had a lot of young people come up to me and say, "Mr. President, I want to run for office. Have you got any advice?" And I always say one thing. I say, "You know, every time I was on the ballot, my goal was to make sure that every single person who voted against me knew exactly what he or she was doing." Now, you think about that.

That's why your role is important. Because in a free society, if the people who vote against you know exactly what they're doing, you have no beef. None of us have a right to be here, for goodness sake. And the reason the money is important is so we can get the message out and to have enough. But you need to make sure when you go home and you start talking

to other people, that people that aren't for us know exactly what they're doing and why.

You know, the American people nearly always get it right if they know. One of my favorite stories of what's happened to me, I went back to New Hampshire to run for reelection in '96. You know, I love that little place with all my heart. They kept me alive when the Republican Party and the pundits told them I was dead, and the voters of New Hampshire said, "I don't think so. We're not letting you tell us how to run our lives, thank you very much."

And then I went back in '96, and they gave Al Gore and me a majority of the vote in '96—unheard of. Both Republicans and independents, I believe, have larger numbers of registered voters than the Democrats do there. They've been real good to us. But in '94, they participated in a whipping we took, and they beat one of their Congressmen because he voted for the crime bill.

So I go back to New Hampshire in '96, and I want you to think about this when you read all about this election, now, and all the experts, and what all they're telling you about. And we got a big crowd of people in Manchester. And I said, "Get me a bunch of redneck hunters there." And we had a bunch of big muscle-bound guys, in their plaid shirts, you know, waiting for deer season. [Laughter] And so we had them all up there, and I said, "Listen, guys. In 1994, your Congressman voted for the crime bill, which banned assault weapons, and voted for the Brady bill. And you beat him because of it." They all started kind of nodding their heads and shuffling their feet, you know. And I said, "Here's what I want you to know. I feel terrible about it, because he did it for me. And he did it because I needed his vote, and I pleaded with him to do it." So I said, "If a single person here has suffered any inconvenience in hunting or sport shooting in any way, if all the stuff they told you about how we're going to come get your guns and mess with your lives, if it was true, then I want every one of you who experienced that to vote against me, too, because that guy did it for me." But I said, "If that didn't happen, they lied to you, and you need to get even." [Laughter]

And so in Republican New Hampshire, we got a majority of the vote. Why? Because people got to think about what they really felt and what really counted and what had really happened. So I want to remind you of something

else as you read the paper as happily for the next few months. This is September of 1999, a year and 6 weeks before the election.

In June of 1992, 3 months before the election, on June 2d I won the primaries in California, New Jersey, and Ohio and became the first-round—the certain nominee of the Democratic Party. And the next day, the only thing in the press was, "But who cares if he won all these things. We polled in the exit polls the voters in the California primary, and they're really for Perot. They don't care anything about this guy. We told them that he was no good, and the voters agree with us. We laid it out to them, and they ate it, and they're doing exactly what we tell them to do." That's what they said. This was 3 months, 2 or 4 months before the election. I was in third place, not second, third. It's not a horse race; you don't get any money if you show. [Laughter]

Let me tell you something. They're thinking about this race in Iowa, and they're thinking about it in New Hampshire, and they're thinking about it in the headquarters of all the candidates. At the sale barn at Conway, Arkansas, they're still thinking about the price of cattle. And both parties would do well in Washington to remember that if most people still think they're giving us a paycheck up here and they want us to keep working for them for a little while longer, instead of dissolving into political indulgence.

But don't you believe all these people who write our epithet because of the money they have or because of what they say about this, that, or the other thing. I'm living proof that they can chisel a lot of tombstones for you before you have to lay down. [Laughter] And you don't understand, half of this stuff is designed to break your heart and your spirit anyway.

Now, here's what I want to tell you. Who knows what's going to happen next year? My gut is we win because we've done a good job for America, because we had an argument over ideas and we turned out to be right and because I know what the differences are going to be for the issues going forward, and I think we're right about that. That's what I think.

But what I really want you to believe is the American people nearly always get it right. And they have an extraordinary sense of enlightened self-interest. And if sometime during this whole process their minds will kick in and then their hearts will kick in and they'll do what they really

believe is right. And they'll give everybody that wants a vote a fair hearing. They'll try to be fair.

And what we owe to them is to make sure that however they vote, they know what they're doing. And then whatever happens, none of us have any gripes. But people who get caught up in politics as an end in itself, who want the power, the position rather than the purpose, forget that no matter how much power you have and no matter how long you serve—and I've laughed at people, I said I'm glad we've got this two term limit because if I could run three or four more times, I probably would; that's true—but no matter how long you serve, in the grand sweep of things, it's like a minute or two.

I went to a memorial service for Lane Kirkland yesterday. He was over 75 years old; he seemed like a young fellow to me, because he kept his spirit young. But none of us are around here for very long. We don't get to live very long. We don't get to serve very long. And we need to remember that this is all about the people that served us lunch today. This is all about children that Hillary and I were with this morning who got adopted because we used the power of the Federal Government to end the rules and the bureaucratic snarls that kept foster children from moving quickly into adopted homes.

This is really all about the American people, and it is a gift to be able to serve. And I believe it's a gift to be fortunate enough in this country to have resources to give. And I think we should walk out of this room, thanking our lucky stars that we could be here today, thanking God we got the chance to serve and test our ideas, and being absolutely determined that we are going to be of good cheer, of strong confidence, and we're going to make absolutely sure the American people know why we stand for what we stand for and exactly what we intend to do in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the York Room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to John Merrigan, chair, Democratic Business Council; Mitchell Delk, vice chairman, Federal Home Mortgage Corp.; former Mayor Jan Laverty Jones of Las Vegas; Beth E. Dozoretz, national finance chair, Fran Katz, national finance director, Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Lottie Shackelford, vice chair, and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Lou Weisbach, chief executive officer, HA-LO Industries, Inc.; Janice Griffin, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum; and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit.

Statement on Signing the Organ Donor Leave Act *September 24, 1999*

Today, I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 457, the "Organ Donor Leave Act," which would enhance the Federal Government's leadership role in encouraging organ donations by making it easier for Federal employees to become donors.

Currently, more than 65,000 Americans are awaiting an organ transplant. Last year, almost 5,000 Americans died while waiting for an organ to become available. This amounts to an average of 13 citizens each day. Many of these deaths could have been prevented if there were a sufficient supply of donor organs. H.R. 457 is a valuable tool to help address the needs of Americans waiting for organs by encouraging donations by Federal employees.

In 1997, my Administration launched the National Organ and Tissue Donation Initiative, which included new efforts by the Federal Government to increase awareness among Federal employees of the need for organ and tissue donation. The Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management, has implemented a Government-wide campaign to encourage Federal employees to consider organ donation and, as the country's largest employer, to set the example for the private sector as well as other public organizations.

H.R. 457 builds on my Administration's longstanding commitment to increasing organ donations nationwide. Under current law, a Federal

employee may use up to 7 days of paid leave each year, other than sick leave or annual leave, to serve as a donor. Recent surveys of doctors and hospitals indicate that the current 7-day limit is clearly insufficient for recovery from organ donation surgery. This bill increases the amount of paid leave available to Federal employees who donate organs for transplants, providing up to 30 days of paid leave, in addition to annual and sick leave, for organ donation.

In addition to our current efforts, my Administration will go forward in the coming weeks with the framework for an organ allocation system that will serve patients better. Our approach, which has been validated by the Institute of Medicine, calls for improved allocation policies to be designed by transplant profes-

sionals, not by the Government, and would ensure better and fairer treatment for patients. We need an organ allocation system that is as good as our transplant technology, and it is time for sound allocation policies to go into effect.

It gives me great pleasure to sign H.R. 457 into law. I welcome the opportunity to help Federal employees participate in this life-saving effort.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 24, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 457, approved September 24, was assigned Public Law No. 106-56.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner *September 24, 1999*

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, you can see I'm a little hoarse tonight. I lost my voice coming back from New Zealand; then I got it back today, and I'm losing it again. It's 10 o'clock on Friday night, and you've heard me give this speech before. [*Laughter*]

I'll never forget, once I went to hear Tina Turner, that great political philosopher—[*laughter*—in a concert, and she sang all of her new songs since she made her comeback, about 10 years ago. And then at the end she started singing "Proud Mary," which was her first hit 25 years ago. And everybody went nuts—25 years ago or 10 years ago—everybody went nuts. And they were clapping, and she walked up to the microphone, and she said, "I've been singing this song for 25 years. And it gets better every time I sing it." [*Laughter*]

So I won't keep you long. But let me join the Vice President in thanking Bob and Arlene, Bob and Clarice for hosting this dinner. I always love to come back to this beautiful home; I've been coming here for years. I would never tire of it. I thank Lieutenant Governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend for being here, for being our friend, and for being, I believe, by any measure, the finest Lieutenant Governor in the United States, for her ideas and her actions.

I thank Joe Andrew, Roy Romer, Beth Dozoretz, Andy Tobias, my good friend Mayor Archer, all the officials of the Democratic Party. And most of all, I thank you.

Now I want to give a brief but, maybe, unconventional speech here. I want to sort of unpack where we are, what the Vice President said, what Bob and Bob said, all the nice things they said about our record and all that, what it really means for where we are and where we're going, because that's what matters.

When I asked Al Gore to become my Vice Presidential partner, we put out a book called, "Putting People First." And a lot of experts said we were crazy. They said, "This whole thing is crazy; these two guys are the same age." I look 100 years older than him now. [*Laughter*] They said, "These two guys are the same age; they come from States that border each other; they more or less think alike. This is nuts. Why are they doing this?"

Then we put out this book. And as evidence of the sort of cynicism of the political process, people said, "Now this is really nuts. Here they put out this book; they've given all these specific commitments to the American people; and, you know how politics is, they're not going to do any of this. Then this book will be used to beat them over the head with."

You never hear about our book, do you? Do you know why? Because a respected scholar of the Presidency says we have kept a higher percentage of our commitments than the last five administrations, even though we have given far more than any. Now why is that? And not because—is it because we're more honest than they were? No. It's because we thought through what we believed, and analyzed where we thought the country was; and said, okay, if this is true then, therefore, we have to do these things.

We've got to get rid of this deficit; we've got to expand America's business; we've got to bring opportunity to people who don't have it; we've got to invest in education. We had ideas, and we were following on 12 years of the Reagan/Bush era, which was premised on two great ideas. One was that the Government was the problem. You remember all those speeches: America's in trouble because the Government is the problem—1980? The second was the interesting proposition that we would balance the budget and grow the economy forever if we just cut taxes and increased spending. Shall I say it again? *[Laughter]* That's what they thought. So we didn't believe that. We just said, let's go back to arithmetic and get America ready for the modern world; and it worked, and you've talked about that.

Now, in 1998—I want to talk about a little more arithmetic—we won seats in the Congress in the midterm elections for the first time since 1822, in the sixth year of a Presidency, because people like you gave us enough money to get our message across, even though we were outspent \$100 million. Doesn't matter how much money they have, if you've got enough. *[Laughter]* Right? We had enough.

We need your help now. And what I want to say to you is, that's all that matters now. We've got to have enough. Because when young people come up to me and say, "I'm interested in politics, Mr. President. What should I do, and how should I do it?" I always say, "Well, if you run, try to make sure that on election day, everyone who votes against you knows exactly what they're doing."

And if you think about it, that's what democracy should be. If everybody knows what they're doing, and you lose, you can't gripe. You are making sure, with your contributions, that when people vote, they'll know what they're doing.

The other thing I want to tell you is, you should be of good cheer. You should be optimistic. You should be confident. Why? Because we've got a good record—you just heard we've got good plans for the future—and because most Americans aren't thinking about this yet, and all the pundits that want you to believe it's all over are the same crowd that have buried me 9 or 10 times already. *[Laughter]* You should be of good cheer.

Normally, at a time like this, you would expect a reasonably close election, and I believe it will be reasonably close. And I believe we'll win. And that's what I really believe is going to happen, because we've got a good record, good ideas, and because right now, people think they want change. And what they need to understand is, we want change, too. I would vote against the Vice President if he said, "Vote for me, and I'll do everything that Bill Clinton would do." I would say, "I'm sorry, Al; I can't vote for you."

This country's still around here after 223 years because we keep changing. We're constantly re-imagining ourselves and exploring new possibilities. That's why we're still here. So that's not the question. The question is not, are we going to be for change? The question is, what kind of change are we going to be for? And you need to go tell people that.

Are we going to build on what we have done, that's brought all these good things in America, and deal with the aging of America? Are we going to deal with the fact that in 30 years we'll have twice as many people over 65, when all the baby boomers retire—two people working for every one person drawing Social Security—and use this period to fix Social Security and Medicare?

Are we going to deal with the global economy and what it means for us, and not squander this money until we pay down the debt? We could have this country debt-free in 15 years for the first time since 1835 and leave all the borrowing for the private sector—lower interest rates, more jobs, higher incomes, lower car payments, home mortgage payments, college payments. We could do that.

The Democrats are supposed to be the liberal, progressive party. Why should they be for a debt-free America? Because average people are better off if the interest rates are lower and inflation's lower and growth is higher.

He's got ideas that would make this the safest big country in the world. It's really important. I'm proud, you know—I'm on my way out, so I tell everybody we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. And that's good; it makes me sound good. But the truth is, about all we have done is to restore this country to basic sanity. The country is still too violent. There's still too many crazy people out there with guns killing innocent people, walking into churches, and doing all this stuff that's going on.

We've got a plan to put more police where they ought to be, take reasonable measures to keep guns out of the wrong hands. They'll turn our crime policy back over to the NRA. And it'll get worse. That's just one example.

So the issue is not—and you need to talk to people about this—the issue is not, are we going to change? The issue is, what kind of change are we for?

I'm really proud that we thought ideas were important and that we worked to implement them. The Vice President's votes will become famous as the election wears on, and everybody will know that, as he points out, every time he votes, we win. And he voted, and we won the economic plan. And he voted, and we won in the Senate the right to close the loophole in the Brady bill affecting the gun shows.

But he also ran our technology policy, that led to the Telecommunications Act, which has produced already over 300,000 high-wage jobs. He managed our empowerment zone and enterprise community program, which is—well, ask Mayor Archer about it. Ask Mayor Archer. Detroit—don't take my word for it; on the way out of here, before you go out, just go ask him. Detroit's unemployment rate today is one-half of what it was on the day we were elected in 1992. One-half. Part of it's their brilliant mayor, but part of it is the empowerment zone program.

Now, I say that to say ideas matter and making sure people know about them matter. And I want you to go out there and talk about them.

But I think our ideas are right. I think we ought to stay out of debt and pay this debt down. I think we ought to keep trying to improve the environment and grow the economy. I think we were right with the family and medical leave law; we ought to keep working to help people balance work and family.

I think we ought to keep trying to build a community and be for this employment non-discrimination act and be for the hate crimes legislation, because I think that when everybody who's law-abiding can work together, we do better in a global society, and people are happier, and life is more interesting. And that's what we're for. And you need to be in a good humor about this.

I thank you for giving this money. We can make sure that everybody who votes knows what they're doing. But you need to go out and repeat these arguments and be of good cheer.

Let me tell you one other thing. Except in Iowa, New Hampshire, and Washington, DC, most people aren't thinking about the Presidential election yet. In Conway, Arkansas, they're worried about the price of cattle.

But they will worry. Their minds and their hearts will kick in. And almost every time, the American people get it right. If we do our job, they'll get it right. That's why we're still around here.

So trust them. Stay with us. Consider it a privilege to give; we consider it a privilege to serve. We're going to give this country its best days in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Robert and Arlene Kogod and Bob and Clarice Smith; Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Roy Romer, former general chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Andy Tobias, treasurer, and Mayor Dennis W. Archer of Detroit, general co-chair, Democratic National Committee.

The President's Radio Address September 25, 1999

Good morning. With only 5 days left in the current fiscal year, Congress still has a lot of work to do. For almost 7 years now, Vice President Gore and I have pursued a new economic strategy that focused on fiscal discipline, expanding trade in American products and services, and investing in our people and new technology.

The results are now clear. The past 6½ years have produced the longest peacetime expansion in history: more than 19 million new jobs; rising wages; the lowest unemployment, welfare, and crime rates in a generation; the highest levels of homeownership ever; a balanced budget; and the largest surplus ever. It has given the American people more money in their paychecks, lower interest rates for homes and cars, more help through efforts like the HOPE scholarship to open the doors of college to all. We're on a path of progress and prosperity. The American people want it to continue.

That's why 2 days ago I vetoed the Republicans' risky \$792 billion tax plan. It was just too big, too bloated; it would place too big a burden on our economy and run the risk of higher interest rates and lower growth. Also, it didn't add a day to the Social Security Trust Fund or a dollar to Medicare. And it would have forced cuts of nearly 50 percent in everything from education to health care to the environment to veterans programs to national security, even in air traffic safety.

It would have created an untenable choice for the Congress: these irresponsible cuts on the one hand; or on the other, diverting ever more funds from the Social Security surplus and from debt reduction. We said, all of us did just a few months ago, that we shouldn't spend the Social Security surplus anymore.

Today I say again to the congressional majority, we don't have to do that. I gave them a plan to expand the life of the Social Security Trust Fund 50 years, to extend Medicare over 25 years, and add prescription drug coverage, to invest in education and other priorities, to provide an affordable tax cut, and still to pay down the debt and make us debt-free as a nation for the first time since 1835.

But the congressional majority continues on a track that doesn't adequately fund America's

real priorities, while already spending large amounts of the Social Security surplus, instead of preserving it for debt reduction. A month ago their own Congressional Budget Office estimated they'd used \$16 to \$19 billion of the surplus for Social Security, and steps they've taken since then have only made it go higher. They have used what the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and others have called budget gimmicks to give the impression that they have simply created \$17 billion out of thin air.

At the same time, they're still not providing nearly enough for education and other vital priorities. In fact, the very same day I vetoed their budget-busting tax plan, they passed a bill out of committee that would seriously undermine our efforts to strengthen education. It would eliminate our effort to hire 100,000 quality teachers and reduce class size, something they themselves endorsed last year at election time. It would deny hundreds of thousands of young people access to after-school programs. It would eliminate our mentoring program, which is designed to get poor children into college. It doesn't improve or expand Head Start. It cuts the successful America Reads program, which now involves students from a thousand colleges going to tens of thousands of our young children to make sure they can read. It cuts our efforts to connect all our classrooms and schools to the Internet by the year 2000. And, again, there's not any funding for our plan to build or modernize 6,000 schools. All this at a time when we need to be doing more, not less, to prepare for the 21st century, for what is now the largest group of schoolchildren in our history.

There's a better way. The Republicans should work with us to create a budget that pays for itself with straightforward proposals like our tobacco policy. They should work with us to create a real Social Security lockbox that would devote the entire surplus to debt reduction from Social Security taxes and extend the life of Social Security until the middle of the next century, something their plan doesn't do.

Thursday I asked the Republicans to work with me on bipartisan Medicare proposal to

modernize Medicare and provide voluntary prescription drug benefits and keep it solvent until 2027. Following a meeting with my advisers, the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Bill Roth, has agreed to engage in serious discussion on meaningful Medicare reform.

I'm reaching out to the Republicans to engage with us on Medicare. I want to do the same on education, on Social Security, on paying down our debt. We owe it to the American people to give it our best efforts. The results

could make the 21st century America's best days.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:27 p.m. on September 24 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks on the National Economy and an Exchange With Reporters *September 27, 1999*

The President. Good morning. In a few moments I will be leaving for Louisiana. But before I depart, I want to say a few words about the course we're charting for America's future.

Seven years ago, when I ran for President, it was a time of low growth, high interest rates, and high unemployment, a vicious cycle driven by deepening deficits. Irresponsible policies had quadrupled our national debt and risked our future. Vice President Gore and I took office determined to change all that. We put in place a new strategy for the new economy, one founded on fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investment in our people and modern technology.

The success of that strategy now is clearer than ever. By balancing the budget, we put in motion a virtuous cycle of budget surpluses, low interest rates, and low unemployment. For business, this makes it easier to invest, to create jobs, wealth, and opportunity. And for working people, lower interest rates makes it easier to own a home, afford a car, send a child to college.

Today we received more good news that our strategy is working. According to the Office of Management and Budget, this year's budget surplus will be at least—I'm going to write this in; enjoy it—at least \$115 billion. This triple-digit surplus is larger than projected, larger than last year's, and larger, in fact, than any dollar surplus in the history of the United States. It is a landmark achievement for our economy. And when you consider where we were just 7 years ago, it's as great an American comeback

as the Ryder Cup was yesterday. It is further proof that we're on the right road to prosperity.

Our Nation has come a long way in a short time. In 1992 the budget deficit was \$290 billion, projected to rise above \$400 billion this year. Instead, as you can see, we have posted back-to-back surpluses for 2 years in a row, and believe it or not, that's the first time this has happened since 1957. Now, in 1957, well, that was the year John Lennon first met Paul McCartney, and the Braves won the World Series—not the Atlanta Braves, the Milwaukee Braves.

Our prosperity now gives us an unprecedented opportunity and an unprecedented responsibility to shape America's future by putting first things first, by moving forward with an economic strategy that is successful and sound, and by meeting America's long-term challenges. In that spirit, I have asked the Republicans in Congress not to throw in the towel but to work with me and congressional Democrats to do the work the people elected us to do: to save Social Security with a lockbox that extends in solvency until 2050, to strengthen and modernize Medicare with a long-overdue prescription drug benefit, to invest in world-class education for our children, and to protect important priorities, from national security to the environment and agriculture to medical research and modern technology to investment incentives for rural and urban areas that have not yet been touched by our prosperity.

We can do all that and still have an affordable tax cut for the middle class and pay down our

debt so that by 2015, we are debt-free for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President. I will work with members of both parties to fulfill these fundamental obligations to our people and to our future. I hope they will work with me.

Thank you very much.

Appropriations Legislation Veto

Q. Mr. President—

Q. Will you veto Republican spending bills if they exceed the caps?

The President. Well, I gave them a budget, of course, that did not break the caps, but it would require them to raise some revenues from tobacco. But the main thing that I would say is, I want them to work with me to meet our fundamental priorities. We can give the American people an honest, credible budget that extends the life of Social Security and Medicare, meets our responsibilities in education and other important areas, and leaves us free to pay down that debt and to put America on a target to be debt-free in the next 15 years. I hope they will work with me in that spirit.

We have to come together and work together to get anything done, and we can do that. I cite these examples over and over again, but the Welfare Reform Act in 1996, coming on top of the initiatives we had taken in the previous 3 years, has now given us the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years; and the Balanced Budget Act completed the work of the economic package of 1993, and we now have this \$115 billion surplus. So the American people know we can do things together, and that's how we're going to have to do this.

Social Security

Q. Do you still plan to offer a plan to reform Social Security? The White House had promised more than a year ago that there would be one after the last election.

The President. We have met several times, as you probably know, at various levels with Members in the House, and we have tried to get close to an agreement on that. The reason I said what I said today is that if they would just agree to my plan on paying down the debt and then dedicating a few years of the interest savings by locking up the Social Security taxes, which would happen a few years in the future, but if they would agree to do that, then that, alone, would extend the life of Social Security

to 2050, which would take us out beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers. So I would hope that at least we could do that.

Obviously, I would like to do more, and we're still working on that. But at the minimum, we could do this.

Working With Congress

Q. Sir, there's every indication Republicans will not work with you. But in the meantime, where does the American taxpayer stand in this battle between your rock and their hard place?

The President. Oh, I think if the past is any measure, one way or the other, the taxpayers are going to be all right, because we can do pretty well by conflict, I suppose, and eventually drag this out to where we've at least got a decent education budget and we're still paying down the debt. But they have to work with me if we're going to extend the life of Medicare and Social Security and do some of these other very important things.

I'm not pessimistic; we've still got plenty of time. I know it's almost the end of the fiscal year, but they know how to extend that; they've done that several times by passing a continuing resolution, and there's still plenty of time to do this, and I hope they'll do it with me.

Indonesia-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, will our relations with Indonesia remain the same while they're torturing the villages?

The President. Will their what?

Q. Will relations with Indonesia remain the same as the villages are being tortured—torched, torched, sorry.

The President. They've already been somewhat altered, as you know, by the cessation of military cooperation, and obviously our relationships with them will have to be dictated by the course of their conduct. As you know, they have a somewhat unusual system where they have elections. They had elections several weeks ago, but they still haven't settled on who the new leader of the country will be.

This is a time of great instability and uncertainty for them. We should stand against those actions which violate human rights and which are wrong, but we should also hope that both stability and humane policies will be returned to Indonesia as soon as possible. It is a very

large country with 200 million people, the largest Muslim country in the world and capable, as we have seen periodically over the last few years, of enormous progress and capable of playing an important, positive role in the future of Asia, and that's what I hope and pray will happen. But it will require responsible leader-

ship from Indonesia, as well as appropriate responses from the United States and others.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:11 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Beatles Paul McCartney and the late John Lennon.

Remarks at Sophie B. Wright Middle School in New Orleans, Louisiana *September 27, 1999*

Thank you. Thank you so very much. My good friend Congressman Jefferson—I want to say more about him in a minute—and to his wonderful wife, Dr. Andrea Jefferson. Senator Landrieu, thank you for your friendship and support. Mayor Morial, you were very kind to talk about the role that we play in helping to lower the crime rate in New Orleans, but it never could have happened if we hadn't had a visionary mayor down here who made the most of the policies that were there.

Colonel Davis, thank you for taking on the challenge of educating the children of this parish. To Gail Glapion, thank you very much for what you said. And Scott Shea, thank you. And Brenda Mitchell, the leader of our teachers, and especially to our principal, Charlotte Matthew, thank you for leading this school and for making me feel so welcome here.

And I want to say a special word of thanks to all the people of Louisiana. As Congressman Jefferson said, in 1992 and 1996 you gave your electoral votes to Bill Clinton and Al Gore, and we are profoundly grateful, and we've tried to be worthy of them.

I also want to thank the McDonogh High School Band. I want to thank them for being here. The rest of you are hot; they're in those band uniforms. I used to be in one, and I know how hot they are. And I want to thank them for being here.

One other thing I'd like to say about this school, I want to compliment this school on your school uniforms. I like them, and I'm glad so many schools in this parish have them. I've been trying to promote them all across America for years now, and I thank you for that.

You know, folks, I may have visited more schools than any President in history. I've certainly tried to. And I have never met a child that couldn't learn or a school that couldn't do better and be turned around. There is a student standing behind me—and I don't want to embarrass her, but I want her to raise her hand—named Nonya Grove, who scored at the 95th percentile on the science portion of the Iowa basic skills test. Good for you.

Let me tell you, too, I have been in schools in all kinds of places—I've been in schools—I went to a junior high school in Chicago in a neighborhood with the highest murder rate in the city, which was, therefore, the highest murder rate in the State. But there was no violence in the school; there were no weapons; there were no problems. Hundreds of parents came to the school every week, and there were no dropouts, and almost all the kids went on to college. Why? Because they had a good plan, and they worked it hard. And they believe that all kids could learn.

Now, the Federal Government does have an obligation to help you. And I want to thank Senator Landrieu and Congressman Jefferson and Senator Breaux and the others in your delegation and our party who have supported what we have tried to do to help the States, to help the States adopt higher academic standards in the Goals 2000 program, to help them crack down on drugs and gangs and violence. And last fall we fought to get a downpayment on 100,000 new highly trained teachers to lower those class sizes in the early grades, as Congressman Jefferson wants to do.

Already 108 more teachers have been hired in this parish, and your parish got \$12 million

under the E-rate program that the Vice President developed—have cut the cost of hooking up every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000.

Now, what we've done in education is a part of an overall strategy to bring America back. We balanced the Federal budget and have a surplus of \$115 billion this year.

When I took office, we were deep in debt 7 years ago, and we had high unemployment rates, high welfare rates, and high crime rates. We were committed to economic reform, welfare reform, reform of the criminal justice system, and education reform. Now we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history, over 19 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the first time we've had two budget surpluses in a row in 42 years, when I was young enough to be in this school.

The question is, what are we going to do with our prosperity? You know we've got a lot of challenges out there. And you know as well as I do that the modern economy requires more education from all people. We've got the largest student population in the history of our country, and we will never do what America ought to do until every child in America can live up to his or her God-given potential.

Last week the congressional majority in the other party in the House unveiled an education budget that was \$3 billion below what I asked for, no money to finish hiring the 100,000 teachers; no money to help modernize or build 6,000 schools. I know you need that now. We need—it can be hot out here, but every school ought to be air-conditioned in Louisiana, and I know they're not. It would deny access to hundreds of thousands of children to after-school programs, so important to improving learning and keeping that juvenile crime rate down—keep kids in school, off the street, and out of trouble; that's very important—and many other programs.

Now, Congressman Jefferson had it right. We have to demand more of our schools and invest more in them. Our balanced budget calls for spending \$200 million to help schools turn around if they're not performing well or shut them down and let parents choose other public schools if they don't turn around. But it is wrong to blame the kid, and it's wrong not to give the schools a chance. And we know these

schools can be turned around if they have the resources and a good plan and they work the plan.

We've got to do better in Washington, and that's my job. But I was, 12 years, Governor of your neighboring State of Arkansas. And I know—I know—how important education is. You know, as President, the future of our children is the most important thing of all. But I have to pursue it in many ways. I have to preserve the national security. I have to work on making sure that we have Social Security and Medicare in a solid way, so that when the baby boomers retire, it doesn't bankrupt our kids and their ability to raise our grandkids. But if you're the Governor, the most important thing you ever have to do is see to the education of our children.

Now, here's why I know Bill Jefferson cares about that. He was too modest to say this, but he was born very poor in a small town, and his parents and his teachers and his school helped him work his way all the way to Harvard University. Then he married a wonderful woman who is even smarter than he is. [Laughter] And they have had five magnificent daughters who have all had brilliant academic careers, four of them already gone through Harvard. Why? Because they had a good plan. They believed in education. They had parents and teachers and schools and students, and they worked at it steadily.

So, no matter what I do as your President, you still need in Louisiana a Governor you know will fight for more teachers, for better teacher training, for better pay, for smaller classes, and for modern school buildings, for high standards and strong support.

I can tell you, he's fought with me every step of the way in Washington. When we had to vote in 1993 to bring down the deficit and increase spending in education, and I said we had to balance the budget, but we weren't going to cut education, we were going to do more, all the members of the other party were against me. The bill carried by one vote. To a major extent, the economic prosperity America enjoys today belongs to one vote, and it carried in one vote. If Bill Jefferson hadn't been in Congress and voted the right way, we might not be standing here today.

So let me say, I don't want him to leave, especially while I'm still in Washington. [Laughter] But he really can do even more good in

Baton Rouge. And remember, twice he was voted the Outstanding State Legislator in the Louisiana Legislature. He's fought for you in Washington; he'll fight for you and our children's education in Baton Rouge. And I am honored to be here with him today at this wonderful school.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the courtyard. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; Col. A.G. Davis, USMC, (Ret.), New Orleans superintendent of schools; Gail M. Clapion, president, and Scott P. Shea, vice president, New Orleans Parish School Board; Brenda Mitchell, president, United Teachers of New Orleans, and Representative Jefferson's daughters, Jamila, Jalila, Jelani, Nailah, and Akilah.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative William J. Jefferson in New Orleans

September 27, 1999

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I've had a wonderful day here. I don't think I've ever had a bad day in New Orleans. [Laughter] And I'm honored to be here with Bill and Andrea, with Vic and Fran Bussie. And Vic, you've done a lot of great things in your life, but you haven't given many better talks. That was very, very good.

I'm honored to be here with your bright young mayor, who has established such a fine record and has recently joined the ranks of the happily married. [Laughter] We're proud of him for that, too.

Let me say to all of you—I was just sitting here listening to what everybody else was saying, wondering if I could offer any unique perspective. I first came to New Orleans 50 years ago. I hate that. [Laughter] I was just a little boy. My mother was in nursing school here. And one of the most vivid memories of my lifetime was seeing my mother kneel by the side of the railroad tracks and cry when I went home with my grandmother, because she had been widowed early, before my father—before I was born. My father died 3 months before I was born. And she came down here to get some education so she could support me.

I came back here when I was 15 and a budding musician. [Laughter] And they wouldn't let me in anyplace to hear anybody—[laughter]—because I was so young. And I saw—I never will forget this—I was walking away from my mother, and I saw Al Hirt sitting there in some big English limousine, reading a newspaper, and he was going to go in and perform. I knocked

on his window, told him who I was, and said I had come all the way down here from Hot Springs, Arkansas, and all I cared about was music. I didn't want to drink anything; I didn't want to gamble; I didn't want anything; I just wanted to go hear him play. He took me in and put me on the front table. It's funny what you remember, isn't it?

I've never forgotten that, and that sort of embodies the generosity that the people of this city and this State have exhibited to me throughout my life. And you did give Al Gore and me, Hillary and Tipper, and our administration the electoral votes of the people of Louisiana twice, and I'm profoundly grateful for that.

I want to say three or four things I think you ought to think about in this election. When I became President, I ran a long, hard campaign. I was written off for dead three or four times along the way, and three or four dozen times since. [Laughter] But Bill Jefferson was one of my first supporters. I remember the first time I came here, when the Jeffersons had me in their home. I met their beautiful, brilliant daughters, and their family members, many of whom are here today. The Congressman's father is here, mother-in-law is here, many others here.

And we went through that campaign, and I found that, to a remarkable degree, we shared the same philosophy. We were proud members of the Democratic Party, but we didn't like the fact that our party had been a part of the leadership of 12 years of Republican Presidents when we had the majority in the Congress, and together they quadrupled the debt of the country;

and that we were in a terrible recession. Interest rates were high. Unemployment was high. Wages had been stagnant for more than a decade. We didn't like the fact that people thought because we believed in the United States Constitution and we were against racial discrimination, that somehow we were soft on crime or we thought able-bodied people shouldn't work instead of being on welfare.

We thought that the Democratic Party, and African-Americans in general, had been twisted and distorted and used as political whipping boys in campaigns. And we thought Washington was divided by gridlock, and we wanted a change.

So I said, give me a chance to change America, to change the direction of the country, change our party, to change our leadership in Washington. I have a simple philosophy: I want America in the 21st century to be a place where every person, without regard to race, creed, gender, or anything else, has a chance to live up to his or her God-given potential. I want America to be a place where we're all coming together, not being driven apart. And I want America to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and justice and prosperity.

And my strategy for getting there is to do everything I know how to do to give opportunity for all, demand responsibility from all Americans, and create a community of all Americans. That's what we said we'd do.

Now, in 1992, it was an argument. And the people decided to give me a chance, even though I was, in the rather disparaging characterization of the incumbent President, just a Governor from a small southern State. *[Laughter]* The people decided to give me a chance. They bought our side of the argument.

By 1996, there was no argument anymore because the results were beginning to pour in. And now, in 1999, I can look back and say with gratitude and thanks and humility that it has worked out. The results speak for themselves. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history; 19.4 million jobs; the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years; the lowest welfare rate in 32 years; the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Today I announced that this year's surplus will be \$115 billion, the first time in 42 years we've had a surplus 2 years in a row.

And I say that to make this point—and along the way, by the way, with the HOPE scholarship and other financial incentives, we've opened the

doors of college to virtually every American. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; 90 percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time; 100,000 young Americans have served in AmeriCorps in their communities all over this country, including this one, and earned some money for college. And we've been a force for peace and freedom throughout the world. And I'm proud of that.

What's that got to do with this? Well, I'll just give you a few examples. And what's that got to do with the Governor's race, even if it has something to do with our record? And I'll give you a few examples of that.

Number one, all this started with one vote in August of 1993. The economy started getting better after the election, as soon as I announced my economic plan. But it did not get voted on in Congress until August, because it was fairly controversial. I had cut hundreds of programs but dramatically increased education. And I asked the wealthiest Americans to pay more taxes, and cut taxes on 15 million Americans who were working for modest wages, lower wages, with children in their home.

And there was a lot of controversy, and the Republican Party in Congress decided that they would vote against this to the person, that they would not give me one vote, and that they would tell everybody it was a just a tax increase, even though they knew only a tiny fraction of Americans were going to have one.

Now, that bill passed by one vote in the United States Senate, Al Gore's vote. And it passed by one vote in the United States House of Representatives. If Bill Jefferson hadn't voted for that, it wouldn't have happened, the recovery probably wouldn't have occurred, and none of us would probably be standing here today doing this. So I am grateful to Bill Jefferson.

I'm grateful to him for supporting our agenda to reach out to other countries—to Latin America, to Africa—to expand trade of American products, to build up the Port of New Orleans, to bring us closer to other people in other countries. I'm grateful to Bill Jefferson for supporting the anticrime agenda that Mayor Morial talks about all the time: Get guns out of the wrong hands; put more community police on the street; give our kids something good to do.

And I'm grateful to Bill Jefferson for supporting my education agenda every step of the way, including our plan to hire 100,000 more

teachers to get class size down in the early grades, something he's running on; our plan to build or modernize 6,000 schools, which would include his commitment to air-condition the schools that don't have it; our plan to triple the number of our young people who are eligible for after-school programs; set high standards for failing schools, and if they don't turn around, let the parents go to another public school with their kid, but help the schools turn around.

We can do that. I've seen that all over America. I'm telling you, I've been in the schools in the worst neighborhoods you can imagine in terms of adversity, and I've seen children learning at a high level because of what was done in the school.

So, yes, I'm grateful to Bill Jefferson. And a lot of what we enjoy today came as a direct result of policies he supported that he played a critical role in bringing to bear.

The second point I'd like to make to you is that I believe I'm the only person in this room who has actually been a Governor. I know something about this. *[Laughter]* And I did it quite a long time. I served 12 years. I served for 12 years and would have served for 14 if the people hadn't elected me President. *[Laughter]* And I'm telling you, I loved every day of it. It is a wonderful job if you love people and if you care about good schools, good jobs, and creating strong, healthy, vibrant communities.

We have done more in the education area probably than any administration, certainly since the Johnson administration. But most of the money for schools and most of the direction for schools, by State constitutional law, comes from the State, in every State in America. So it is very important.

You know, education is very important to me, personally, and to Hillary and to all of our administration. But the President has to protect the American people in many ways; the national security has to come first, and then you have to deal with a whole range of other issues. But a Governor has no more important job, none, than education.

And a Governor also has to be able to get people together to really get things done. What you want in a Governor is somebody who is smart, committed, with a good heart, who is passionate about what he or she believes but is not particularly partisan. And I can tell you, Bill and I—we all came out of State Government; he and I both did. We're both, frankly,

mortified by how partisan that crowd is in Washington. *[Laughter]* I mean, I always tell him there's plenty of things for us to argue about in the next election, but the people give us a paycheck every 2 weeks to show up for work in the meanwhile. And we're not supposed to fight about everything; we're supposed to work out things and get things done. That's the sort of person he is.

And he has a lot of friends in the Congress who are Republicans because they know that he has not responded in kind to the harsh partisanship of their leaders and that he is still willing to work with people of good will to get things done. You cannot be a good Governor unless you are both open to people in both parties but absolutely aggressive in what you believe and what you want to achieve. You need both an agenda and an ability to bring people together. He can do that. And I did this for 12 years; I'm telling you, this is important, and he can do it superbly well.

The other thing that has not been mentioned—Vic talked about his service in the legislature—he was twice voted, twice, the best member of the Louisiana Legislature. So he knows about this job.

The last thing I'll say is this, and I think it's important. I want to thank Anne and Stan and Chris Rice for having us in this magnificent facility. But this facility used to be an orphanage, and I got to thinking, Hillary and I had a very moving event at the White House this week to celebrate our attempts to move people, kids from foster care into adoption, and all the work we've done over the last 7 years—one thing we have done, by the way, on a bipartisan basis—to speed up adoptions. And I got down here today, and when I was over at the school, a woman stopped me and said, "Mr. President, thank you for helping to fix the adoption laws. I just adopted two children." So we've worked on this.

Now, I want to say that I want you to think about this as a place where children once lived who had no family. This man knows what it's like to have a difficult time. He knows what it's like to have the support of a good family. He knows what it's like to build a good family, and he and his wife have five magnificent daughters who have done superbly well because they have good parents and a good home.

In the end, having now served 12 years as a Governor and 7 years as President, I can tell

you, a lot of times you have to make decisions that nobody is smart enough to make. A lot of times decisions come to me that, no matter how smart I think I am, I cannot think my way through. And all you can do is pray to God to give you the wisdom to do it, and listen to your heart, not your head.

So the last thing I'll say is, remember everything—the man has proven he's had the courage to take a tough decision. He cast a decisive vote on the most important bill that brought us the prosperity we enjoy today. He has wide experience in State Government. He has the capacity to get people together. He clearly has the right agenda. There is no more important agenda for Louisiana's future than getting the education up to world-class levels.

But when it's all said and done, what really counts is, do you have a good heart. Keep in mind, 50 years later I still remember my mother loved me enough to kneel down on those railroad tracks and cry when I had to go away. When it's all said and done, you don't remember first and foremost in the last moments of your life the honors you had, the riches you had; you remember who you liked and who you

loved, how it felt when the seasons changed, and what it felt like to be really, really important, to matter in the lives of other people. The people of Louisiana will matter to Bill Jefferson if he is the Governor.

I agree with what has been said. You should only vote for him if you think he'd be the best Governor. But if you think he'd be the best Governor and you let him be defeated, it would be a terrible thing, because the children here, the children of this State deserve the very best person they can get in experience, in mind, and in heart.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Green Velvet Ballroom at St. Elizabeth's Orphanage. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Anne and Stan Rice and their son, Christopher; Representative Jefferson's father, Mose, mother-in-law, Bernice Green, wife, Andrea, and their daughters Jamila, Jalila, Jelani, Nailah, and Akilah; Victor Bussie, president emeritus, Louisiana AFL-CIO, and his wife, Fran; and Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans.

Statement on Action To Fight Global Climate Change *September 27, 1999*

I commend the hundreds of mayors and other local officials across the country who today are committing themselves to the fight against global climate change. The communities they represent understand that the threat of global warming is real. They also understand that we can begin to address this threat through actions that both help our environment and save money for taxpayers, consumers, and businesses. Today's pledge will help encourage other communities across America to do their part to meet this global challenge.

Regrettably, even as ordinary citizens, local leaders, and a growing number of leading corporations are taking action, many in Congress are ignoring the mounting evidence of global

warming and thwarting commonsense efforts to address it. I urge Congress to fully fund my proposed package of investments to accelerate the deployment of clean energy technologies for the 21st century including the proposed clean air partnership fund, which will provide grants to State and local governments for projects that reduce both greenhouse gases and pollutants like soot, smog, and air toxics. Finally, I call on Congress to withdraw all appropriations riders aimed at strangling programs that save energy, save consumers and businesses money, and reduce global warming pollution.

I look forward to working with local leaders to meet this pressing environmental challenge, and I applaud their leadership and dedication.

Statement on the Death of Oseola McCarty

September 27, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the passing of Oseola McCarty of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Ms. McCarty is a true American hero. In 1995 she donated \$150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi for scholarships for needy students. The extraordinary thing about this gift was that Ms. McCarty accumulated the money from working 75 years washing and ironing people's clothes.

I had the pleasure of awarding this extraordinary woman the Presidential Citizens' Medal

for her extraordinary act of generosity. While we mourn her passing, Oseola McCarty's commitment to the dignity of work, her belief in the power of education, and her extraordinary generosity ensure that her memory will live on for generations to come. Our country needs more people like her, who don't just talk about responsibility and community but who live those values everyday.

Statement on Postponing Deportation of Certain Liberians from the United States

September 27, 1999

Today I directed the Attorney General and the Immigration and Naturalization Service to defer for one year from September 29 the deportation of certain Liberians who are present in the United States on that date. This action is aimed at promoting stability in Liberia and west Africa. In particular, I am concerned that a decision by our Government to deport Liberians who have enjoyed the protection of our

country for many years could cause governments in west Africa to deport many thousands of Liberians in their own countries. This would severely burden Liberia and threaten the fragile peace that has been recently achieved in west Africa. Furthermore, this action preserves the status quo for these Liberians while the Congress actively considers legislative relief for them.

Memorandum on Measures Regarding Certain Liberians in the United States

September 27, 1999

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Measures Regarding Certain Liberians in the United States

Over the past 10 years, many Liberians have been forced to flee their country due to civil war and widespread violence. From 1991 through 1999, we have provided Liberians in the United States with Temporary Protected Status because of these difficulties. Although the civil war in Liberia ended in 1996 and conditions have improved such that a further extension of Temporary Protected Status is no longer

warranted, the political and economic situation continues to be fragile. There are compelling foreign policy reasons not to deport these Liberians at this time, including the significant risk that such a decision would cause other countries in West Africa to repatriate involuntarily many thousands of Liberian refugees, leading to instability in Liberia and potentially threatening peace along the Liberian border.

Pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States, I have determined that it is in the foreign

policy interest of the United States to defer for 1 year the deportation of any Liberian national who is present in the United States as of September 29, 1999, except for the categories of individuals listed below.

Accordingly, I now direct you to take the necessary steps to implement for these Liberians:

1. deferral of enforced departure from the United States for 1 year from September 29, 1999; and
2. authorization for employment for 1 year from September 29, 1999.

This directive shall not apply to any Liberian national: (1) who is ineligible for Temporary Protected Status for the reasons provided in section 244(c)(2)(B) of the Immigration and Na-

tionality Act; (2) whose removal you determine is in the interest of the United States; (3) whose presence or activities in the United States the Secretary of State has reasonable grounds to believe would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States; (4) who voluntarily returned or returns to Liberia or his or her country of last habitual residence outside the United States; (5) who was deported, excluded, or removed prior to the date of this memorandum; or (6) who is subject to extradition.

These measures shall be taken as of the date of this memorandum.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Angola (UNITA)

September 27, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the National

Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) that was declared in Executive Order 12865 of September 26, 1993.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 27, 1999.

Remarks at a Dinner for Representative William J. Jefferson in New Orleans

September 27, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. First of all, like everyone else, I want to thank the Davises for having us in this magnificent home. And thank you for the tour through all the art and all the books and all the history of your life. It was fascinating. And I didn't steal any books or artwork. [*Laughter*] And I can't afford the discount price, either. [*Laughter*] But it's really wonderful, and we thank you for having us here.

Q. What about the golf—

The President. I'm getting there. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the mayor for making me so welcome in New Orleans and tell you that he

has done a truly magnificent job. New Orleans has had one of the biggest drops in violent crime of any major city in America under his leadership. And I applaud him for that.

I would like to thank Sheriff Harry Lee, who is back there, for many things, being my friend for a long time. But you should know that he came with a group of people from Louisiana to the White House and stayed 2 days this week and provided good Cajun cooking for the annual congressional picnic, with all the families there, and the annual press picnic. And while he is a strong supporter of mine, he did not taint the food of any of the Members of Congress

of the other party—[laughter]—or any of the hostile press members. [Laughter] He was totally generous to everybody.

I want to thank the people who came from out of town here, Tommy Boggs, my good friend; and my friend Mack McLarty, the former Chief of Staff and Special Envoy to the Americas. We're all glad to be in New Orleans tonight, and we only wish we didn't have to go home.

And I thank Bill for running for Governor. I didn't thank him in the beginning because I didn't want him to leave the Congress. You know, whenever you run for an office like this and you run against an incumbent and times are good, you wonder and worry. But I have seen, myself, a marked movement in the polls and enough to justify your investment here tonight.

So I just want to make some substantive points that have nothing to do with politics. First of all—they have to do with policy more and people—and incidentally, a political campaign.

First of all, my handicap on my home course is a 12. [Laughter] And that's what it is and that's what I play, even—[laughter]—unless I play a strange course from long tees, and sometimes I play to a 14. But otherwise, I normally play to a 12, and that's about what I shoot.

Secondly, I do most of my music in my music room. Hillary built me a music room on the third floor of the White House, in a little end room. And I have saxophones there from all over the world, from China, Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, two magnificent horns from Germany, two from France, three from Japan, and goodness knows where else. Then I've got a bunch of American horns. And I play a 1935 Selmer, and I have a 1915 Buescher soprano saxophone. So I've been into this a long time, and that's where I play, because it's so far away I can't hurt anybody else's ears. [Laughter] So I don't take it on that plane with me when I go. And I do have one at Camp David. And if you have any other questions, I'll try to answer them. [Laughter]

But let me make some points very quickly, and I want you to know why I'm here tonight. Bill Jefferson started with me in 1991, when I was running for President, and nobody but my mother thought I could win; well, my wife did; no one else, those two. And we did it because we thought that the country couldn't go on the way it was, with this sort of gridlock

in Washington where 12 years of the previous administrations had quadrupled the national debt, and they basically had reached an accommodation with Congress where every year we would embody President Reagan's idea that if you cut revenues and increased spending, you would balance the budget. It defied basic arithmetic; it didn't work in 1981, and it didn't work in 1991. And in between we quadrupled the national debt, and we got big, big increases in interest rates and high unemployment. The unemployment rate in Louisiana when I took office was about 7½ percent, I think, and it's 4.2 percent today.

So we said—we had been involved with this sort of New Democratic movement. And we thought the Democratic Party had to prove that you could be pro-business and pro-labor; that you could be for equality and education and for high standards; that you could be for growing the economy and improving the environment; that you could be for respecting individuals and people of all different races and ethnic groups and religious groups, and still believe that what binds us together as Americans is more important than what divides us.

In other words, we felt that American politics had fallen into this sort of liberal/conservative, right/left, business/labor, environment/economy. Everything was one way or the other, and nobody was ever getting anything done, and the country was getting deeper in the ditch. And our social divisions were deepening.

And I know that the previous President, with whom I had a very cordial, personal relationship, vetoed the Brady bill to do background checks because the NRA wasn't for it, and the Republicans had to be with them; and then vetoed the family and medical leave law because some people in the business community said, "Well, that's an antibusiness measure," even though, clearly, one of the biggest challenges that we have is to balance work and family.

So I really believed—and I had some of the same arguments with my friends in our party. If this whole business is about having to make choices between these two things, we're going to leave America the loser. And the evidence was pretty compelling in 1991; we had high unemployment, stagnant wages, terrible recession, and increasing social division. And so I asked Bill and a number of other people in Louisiana to help me run for President, when I was, in the words of my predecessor, just

a Governor from a small southern State. And the people gave us a chance. They gave Al Gore and me a chance. And they basically listened to our argument about putting people first, and they said, "We'll try it." But it was just an argument; they didn't know.

By 1996, we were reelected, and with a much bigger margin of victory in Louisiana—thank you very much—because it wasn't an argument anymore; it was an established fact. You didn't have to argue anymore; you knew whether this was working or not, and it was.

Now we're nearly 7 years into it, 6 $\frac{2}{3}$ years, and the facts make the case. We have almost 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ million new jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rates in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years. This year we announced that this year's budget surplus was going to be \$115 billion, and it's the first time in 42 years we've had 2 years of budget surpluses in a row.

Now, those are facts. And while the economy has been growing, I signed the family and medical leave law, and millions of people have taken advantage of it. Every year we've had a record number of new small businesses. I signed the Brady bill, and 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds or mental health histories haven't gotten handguns. And not a single hunter or sports person has been inconvenienced, but a lot of lives have been saved.

The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We've tripled the number of toxic waste dump cleanups. And the economy has grown, not been hurt, by strengthening our commitment to the environment. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases. And the HOPE scholarship gives virtually a universal tax credit that opens the doors of college to anybody who will work hard enough to go.

This country is moving in the right direction because of the ideas that we shared. And one of the reasons that I would go anywhere for him is that none of this would have happened, in my judgment, if we hadn't enacted the economic plan of 1993, which helped to cost us the Congress in '94 because people knew that it was controversial. We cut spending and raised taxes both, and everybody was mad, and nobody felt the benefits yet. And it passed by one vote.

So if he hadn't been there to vote for it, or if he had said, "You know, I come from

Louisiana; it's a conservative State," and he'd taken a dive, none of us would be here tonight, because I wouldn't have been reelected; the economy wouldn't be in good shape; and we'd all be singing another tune. But he was there because he knew it was the right thing to do. And he supported our crime package and all the other initiatives.

So I think his philosophy is right, and I know he's got the courage of his convictions. That's the first thing.

The second thing that I would like to say is that every election is about where you're going, not where you've been. I love to tell this story, but when I was Governor I used to go out to the State Fair every year and have Governor's day. And I'd just sit there in some little booth in one of the big pavilions. Anybody that wanted to come up could come up and say whatever they wanted. In 1990 I had been Governor for 10 years, and we had an election coming up. So this old boy in overalls, who was about 75 years old, comes up to me, and he says, "Well," he said, "Bill, are you going to run for Governor again?" I said, "I don't know; if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I guess so. I always have." And I said "Well, aren't you sick of me after all this time?" He said, "No, I'm not, but," he said, "nearly everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And I got kind of hurt, and I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Sure, but you drew a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you? That's what we hired you to do." And it was a stunning insight.

So every election is not about yesterday; it's about tomorrow. Yesterday is important because it's evidence of what you'll do tomorrow.

So what are we going to do with all this prosperity? And what's still out there? And what does that got to do with this Governor's race? Number one, I believe with all my heart we need to use this time to deal with the long-term challenges of this country.

What are they? The aging of America: the baby boomers like me—I'm the oldest of the baby boomers; people between the ages of 35 and 53 are in the baby boom generation; we retire—we're much bigger than any other group our age except until these kids that are in school today. Thirty years from now there will be twice as many people over 65—twice as many; two people working for every one person drawing Social Security.

Now, with the surpluses, now is the time to deal with the challenge of Social Security and Medicare, to add a prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program—we'd never start Medicare without prescription drugs today—to lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund until 2050, anyway, to get through the lifetimes of the baby boom generation. That's what we've got to do. It's the first thing we ought to do.

The second thing we need to do is to recognize that not everybody has been a part of this economic recovery. And we need to keep working to get more investment to people and places that haven't had it yet, and to keep this expansion going.

So I want to do two things. Number one, I want to give the same tax incentives to investors to invest in America we give them to invest in the Caribbean or Latin America or Africa or any other place in the world. I like those incentives to invest overseas in poor countries, but we ought to give the same incentives to people to invest in poor neighborhoods, poor communities, the Mississippi Delta, the Indian reservations, the inner cities in the United States of America. That's very important. If we can't bring investment and jobs to these places now, we will never get around to doing it. This country has never had greater prosperity.

And the other thing that we have to do, in my judgment, is not to squander this surplus. We need to save enough of this surplus to lengthen the life of Social Security and Medicare and to pay down the debt. Do you realize that this country could be out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President? Just think about—here in New Orleans, you think about how long ago that is. A guy that got to be President because he won the Battle of New Orleans in 1814, a guy that got to be President because of a battle he won in 1814 was the last person to have this country out of debt.

But in a global economy, it's a good deal. Why should liberals be for a debt-free America? Because money moves around the world in a hurry. That's what happened to Asia. You remember a couple years ago when they all went belly up at once. And if a government is not borrowing money, that means you get to borrow money for lower cost, your interest rates are lower. Lower business rates means more jobs and higher incomes. Lower personal rates means

lower house loans, lower car loans, lower college loans, lower credit card payments, a longer, more protracted, more prosperous future for America. That's important. And all that could be done entirely by the Federal Government.

But the third big challenge cannot be. The third big challenge is doing right by the children of this country, and, specifically, giving them all a world-class education. Do you believe all kids can learn? I do. Do you believe we need to challenge them to do better? I do. Do you believe we need to identify failing schools and require them to turn around and do better, or shut them down and let the kids go to other schools? I do.

I'm not for vouchers because we don't put enough money in the schools in the first place. So if you give vouchers, you take a relatively large amount of money away from the school budget for a relatively small number of people. That's why I'm not for it. But on the other hand, I think to just justify the status quo is wrong.

So I've offered the Congress a plan which would say you can have your Federal money for education, but if you want it, you've got to have a plan to hold schools accountable for the performance of their students, to turn around failing schools or shut them down, but we're not going to blame the kids for the failures of the system. We're going to give you some money to turn these schools around, and we're going to triple the money we give for after-school programs, which will help you keep the crime rate coming down. Won't it?

Now, this is where we come to the Governor's race. No matter what I do, under the American system and the constitution of every State, the primary responsibility for education is vested in the State. And most of the money for education is paid by taxpayers to the State or to the local government. Today, in a global economy, with modern technology, more education is critical. And yet, it is more difficult than ever in America because our student bodies are more and more diverse. I mean, today I saw people from at least four different ethnic groups in that little group of school children you had gathered up for me today—just looking at the faces of those kids.

Believe it or not, in the Alexandria School District, across the river from the White House, in Virginia, there are kids from 180 different racial and ethnic groups whose parents speak

a hundred different languages, in one school district.

Now, that means we have work to do. And there is no more important responsibility for the Governor. If I were a citizen of Louisiana, if I were back home just voting in Arkansas—I hate to ever be a single-issue voter, but I would be almost completely a single-issue voter in a Governor's race, based on the person I thought was most likely to do the most for the schools of my State, because if these kids don't have the education they need, nothing else the rest of us do will matter for their future. It is the most important thing.

Last point—I'm the only person here who has been a Governor, and I did it for 12 years, and I loved it every day. And I did not get tired of it. I didn't get bored with it. And when I left to go be President, I was having more fun being Governor before I started running for President than I had ever had in my whole life. It's a wonderful job.

And if you like it, if you like people, if you like to work hard, if you believe in good schools and good jobs, and if it thrills you to get things done for your State, it's a wonderful job. But to be really good at it, you need to be passionate about your convictions, and you need to have a real vision you'll fight for. But you can't be too partisan and mean-spirited. You've got to be someone who can get people together, work with all kinds of different people, and convince people that your vision is the right one. And when other people have a good idea, then do that, too.

That's the kind of person Bill is. That's why he was voted the "Best Legislator" in the State

legislature two different times when he was a State legislator. And I can tell you as someone who has done this job for 12 years, he has the right temperament. He has plenty of sense. He has a magnificent wife to keep his head balanced and to help remind him that education is his first priority—[laughter]—and he has years and years and years of knowledge and skill in getting things done, including in the Congress, that money can't buy and that you can only get by living the way he has lived.

So I think what you ought to do is go out there and say, listen, to everybody—he hasn't asked anybody to vote for him because of his race. All he has asked is that nobody votes against him because of his race. All he said is he wants to treat everybody the same and give every child the chance to live up to his or her God-given capacities.

But I'm telling you, if you look at a man's life, his record, his personal skills, and what the State needs at this time, and how it fits with what we're doing to move America into the 21st century, I can hardly think of anybody who is as well qualified, remotely, as he would be to be the Governor not only of this State but any State. You're lucky to have him running, and I hope you'll keep helping him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Arthur Q. and Mary Wineman Davis; Mayor Marc H. Morial of New Orleans; Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee; lobbyist Thomas Hale Boggs, Jr.; and Representative Jefferson's wife, Andrea.

Remarks at a Breakfast With Religious Leaders

September 28, 1999

Thank you very much, and good morning. I, first of all, would like to thank you for the invocation and let you know that, as with many other Americans, we have been thinking about you and your people in your church.

Hillary and I welcome you here today. As you know, the Vice President and Mrs. Gore are normally here, but he is often otherwise occupied these days. [Laughter] And I hope you

will forgive their absence. They really wanted to be here.

I would like to thank Secretary Shalala, Secretary Riley, Jack Lew for being here. I would also like to thank Barry McCaffrey, the Director of our Office of National Drug Control Policy. And to those of you who come nearly every year, welcome back. To those of you who are

here for the first time, welcome. We are delighted that you are all here.

I have looked forward to this day every year for as long as I have been President and we have been doing this. All of you know that, if you've come to some of the others, that each one of these days has been special. And, as in the 1990's, as America has grown more involved with the rest of the world and more diverse, because of our history of religious liberty and the way our Constitution has worked, more and more religious convictions and affiliations have flowered in our country. And you can look around this room today—see, it would be very unusual if you could have this kind of gathering in any other country in the world. And for that I am profoundly grateful.

Last year was one of the most difficult years in my life, and this occasion, because it has come to mean so much to me, was a very difficult one. For those of you who were part of that, I want to express my particular appreciation. I'd like to say a special word of thanks to my good friend Reverend Wogaman and to Gordon MacDonald—I think he is here back there—and to Tony Campolo, who is not here, who have kept their word to meet with me over the last year, both to help me and to hold me accountable. And I have kept my word to meet with them and to work with them.

I would like to say only this about that: I have been profoundly moved, as few people have, by the pure power of grace, unmerited forgiveness through grace—most of all to my wife and daughter, but to the people I work with, to the legions of American people, and to the God in whom I believe. And I am very grateful to all of you who have had any role in that, and I thank you.

I also want you to know that we are continuing our work. It is interesting and not always comfortable, but always rewarding. And I hope you will pray for us as we do.

What I would like to talk about today, following up on what Hillary said when she welcomed you here, is what we can do together to deal with the question of violence, particularly against our children. And I would like to talk about it first of all to say we've been trying to work out what the proper relationship is between religious individuals and religious groups, and government activity, since we got started as a country.

We've been working on this for a long time now. It probably will always be a work in progress. We don't want to discourage people who are in public office from pursuing their own religious convictions and from stating them, but we must beware, as those of us who are Christians are warned, of practicing piety before others in order to be seen by them. We must be humble in this endeavor and work together.

We also must recognize that there will always be differences of opinion, honestly held and earnestly pursued, about what is the proper role for the government, what is the proper relationship between church and state, in the well-timed and well-used American phrase. But it seems to me that there is kind of an emerging consensus about the ways in which faith organizations and our government can work together, both at the national level and at the State and local levels, in a way that reinforce values that are universally held, and increase the leverage of the good things that the government is funding.

I could just mention one or two. Some of you are involved in faith-based organizations that have received funding for AmeriCorps slots. We now have thousands of young volunteers who have worked in AmeriCorps through various faith-based organizations rendering community service. I don't think that's a violation of the Constitution's establishment clause, and we sure have helped a lot of people out there. And I feel good about that.

Some of you have worked in organizations which have helped poor families move from welfare to work, in a way that reinforces not only the value of work but the value of family, which is even more important. And that's a continuing challenge for us, but I'm encouraged by the progress that has been made there.

Many of you have been involved with us in our efforts to advance the cause of religious freedom at home and around the world. I don't know if Bob Seiple is here today, but I'm very pleased about what we're doing in that, and I'm grateful for the work that you have—those of you who have helped us with that. And that continues to be a concern of mine in many places throughout the world, and I think it will continue to be something the United States will have to work and work and work on.

If you have followed—and I'm sure almost all of you have—the recent troubling events in East Timor, you know that there is a religious

as well as an ethnic element to what is going on there and to the difficulties.

And finally, let me say that as we move toward the millennium, I have been very moved by the way many faith-based organizations have engaged and challenged those of us in public life to reawaken our responsibilities to poor people, both within and beyond our borders.

A couple of people on the way in today mentioned the global initiative to reduce dramatically the debt of the poorest nations in the world. And I was very pleased by the recent moves that the IMF and the World Bank have made in that direction. The United States has pushed very hard for it. It is an entirely appropriate thing to do. But I have to tell you, I don't want this to wind up being like our dues to the United Nations. Now that we have advocated this and gotten everybody else to agree to it, we have to pay our fair share. So I hope all of you will help us pass the legislation through Congress to do that.

There is also much, much more we need to do here at home, especially for our children. And I think one of the most wonderful experiences I've had as President was taking my so-called new markets tour around the country, to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, to many of our inner-city areas. And I intend to continue to do these for the remainder of my term, to highlight what we can do, what more we can do to try to get investment and opportunity and alleviate poverty among people who have not felt the warm glow of this economic prosperity of ours. And there are still altogether too many of them.

But today I want to just focus just for a few minutes, and then we'll have breakfast, and then we'll have a talk about it. But I wanted to ask you to think about this. And that's why I'm so grateful to our pastor, for his invocation, and for, after what he's been through, for coming here and sharing with us today.

All the rage in Washington today is we finally succeeded in getting, I think, the general public interested in the so-called Y2K problem. You know, we live in a world that is dominated by computers, and now we're trying to make sure we're Y2K ready, and everybody just has all these horrible scenarios of what might happen when the computers turn to 2000 and all the old computers revert back to 1900 and what might happen. We've been working on this

steadily. The United States has worked very hard here, and we've worked very hard to help other countries throughout the world, and especially to avoid any disasters in military operations, in airline operations, things that could really have a profound impact on us.

But I think at this prayer breakfast today I would like to say that there is more to getting ready for Y2K than fixing the computers. And when this kind of seminal event occurs it gives us the opportunity to ask ourselves what it would take to be really ready for the year 2000.

I don't think it's good enough for us to enter the new century as the most prosperous and powerful country in the world, with the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years and the longest peacetime expansion ever. That's all very impressive, but I think it's worth noting, as I have on occasion before, that when Alexis de Tocqueville came here over 150 years ago and traveled around America and he noticed how profoundly religious our people were—even though we had no government religion, and in fact, government could not interfere with it—he thought we were the most religious people on Earth. And after he had done a good deal of his tour, de Tocqueville wrote a powerful sentence. He said, "America is great because America is good." Not rich, not powerful, certainly not perfect, but good.

And the question I think we ought to focus on today is, are we good enough? And if we wanted to be better, what's the most important place to start? I think this is especially important when it comes to children. There's too much trouble in too many of their lives. Even here, the trend lines all look good. You have teen pregnancy, divorce, drug abuse, poverty, all going down in America. That's the good news. The bad news is that by comparative standards, all these problems are still far too rampant, and there are too many children with troubled lives.

We could spend all day talking about those things. But today I would like to ask you to focus on this problem of violence, which has dominated so many of our headlines in the last 2 years. Now, even here, you could say it's a mixed picture. It's true we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest murder rate in 30 years. But it's also true that the crime rate in this country is way too high, much higher than virtually any place else.

It is true that we have seen over the last 2 years a rash of high-profile shootings, often with children as both the victims and the perpetrators. The mass killing of innocent people I think has been the most painful thing that Hillary and I and Al and Tipper Gore have had to deal with in the discharge of our public responsibilities, the bombing in Oklahoma City; the school violence at Littleton and so many other places; the dragging death of James Byrd in Jasper, Texas; the torture death of Matthew Shepard in Wyoming; the murder of Won-Joon Yoon outside his church in Bloomington, Indiana, on the Fourth of July, and the other killings in that spree by a deranged young man who had been a member of a so-called church of white supremacy. There were the office killings in Atlanta and the family killings associated with it; the shootings at the Jewish community center in Los Angeles; the killing of a Filipino postalworker in that spree; of course, the recent murderous rampage at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Now, some of these crimes were motivated by hatred of the victims, because of their race, their religion, their homosexuality. I think we must do more to prosecute such crimes. I hope Congress will soon send me the hate crimes legislation. But some of these crimes do not fit into the category of hate crimes. The murderers were in the grip of some evil force or mental illness.

And, in addition to these high-profile crimes where children were involved, we should never forget a couple of other things. Thirteen children die in this country every day from gun violence. And because they die in ones and twos, in tough neighborhoods and difficult streets, sometimes they're not the lead story; sometimes they're not any story on the evening news. But their numbers add up. And some of you minister to the families of those children.

Beyond that, children die with truly alarming frequency in this country from accidental gun deaths. Yesterday I was in New Orleans, and this whole big neighborhood was just almost groaning with grief over the death of a much-beloved 4-year-old child who shot himself to death playing with a loaded gun he found in his own home.

Now, can we say America is good enough if we still have the highest murder rate in the world and—listen to this—and the rate of accidental shooting deaths for children under 15

in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate for the other 25 industrialized nations in the world combined?

Now, if you go back to what de Tocqueville said, that America is great because America is good, and then you realize somehow we've managed to make the most of this incredibly complex, modern economy, it seems strange, if the murder rate is higher here and the accidental death rate is exponentially higher, why is that? Is that because we're not good, but we're evil? Is it because we're not smart, but we're stupid?

We kind of laugh uncomfortably, but it's worth thinking about. I say the answer to those questions is, of course not. Some people say, well, the reason this happens is we're just not tough enough on offenders, whether they commit crimes with guns or let kids get guns or don't take good enough care of their guns, that we just ought to punish people more. But the truth is we have longer sentences and we keep people in jail longer and we've got a higher percentage of our people behind bars than I think all the countries in the world but one.

So that's not a very good explanation. And I have concluded long since that the truth is we're in the fix we're in because we don't do enough to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children; because we don't do enough to lead our children away from violent paths into positive paths; and because we don't do enough to intervene in the lives of people who are disturbed, angry, unstable, and mentally ill before it's too late.

In all of these areas, I believe that people of faith could do more to help those of us in public life, to give our children back their childhoods. And I will be very brief about that, and we'll have breakfast, and we'll go on with our discussions. I say that because to those who say, well, this is about evil, of course, that's right; but most of you believe that evil is a darkness within us all that just metastasizes and explodes in a few. If America is to be good, at least according to my faith, we must do more to prevent and overcome evil with good.

And so it's not enough to say that shootings in Los Angeles and Atlanta were evil, or the rampage in Fort Worth was evil. Praying and working for peace is good. Starting grassroots campaigns against youth violence, as we're now trying to do all across the Nation, that's good. Putting more uniform community police officers in our most dangerous neighborhoods is good.

These gun buy-back programs that are springing up across the country that we're trying to help finance here, they're good. And I believe passing commonsense gun legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands is a good thing to do.

I am convinced that the faith community can play a major role in protecting our children from violence, in supporting commonsense gun legislation, in participating in our campaign against youth violence, in forming community partnerships to identify and intervene in the lives of people before it is too late.

On this last point, I had a very good talk with the pastor of the Wedgewood Baptist Church just a few days ago. You know, so many of your places of worship and your organizations have good counseling and outreach programs. But they're not necessarily connected to the mental health networks and the social service networks and the law enforcement networks in your community. And I'm convinced a lot of these people are known to be profoundly disturbed by others well before they go out and kill people. And somehow—and also a lot of these people—especially this is true of men, I think—are still really hung up about asking for help. I know about that. That's a hard thing for men to do. I know about that.

And I think there are a lot of people who would maybe be less reluctant to ask for help from someone like you than to show up at the social service office of the government, or walk right through the front door of a psychiatrist's or a psychologist's office. And we need to think about this. There is no big magic national solution for this, but I have examined this.

There are many of you here from New York City. There was a profoundly disturbing article on the cover of the New York Times Sunday magazine a few months ago about the break-

down of the mental health network. It was talking about New York, but it could have been a story about any State in America. It just happened to be about New York. And I think that this is something we need to give serious attention to and something I think we could get strong bipartisan support in Congress to work with you on.

The other day I was talking to Mrs. Gore about this. You all know how interested she is. And I had Senator Domenici from New Mexico in the White House on a totally other, different issue, and I talked to him about it. And I said, you know, we've got to do something about this. And he looked at me and said, "You know, a lot of these people are mentally ill, but we're not reaching them in time, and people know that they're troubled before these things happen."

So I ask you to think about this. I think that we have to do more. We've got to do everything we can and much more than we have to protect our children and to give them back their childhoods. If you think about it, we can hardly do more to make America's spirit Y2K ready.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Byungchill Hahn, pastor, Korean United Methodist Church, Bloomington, IN, whose parishioner, Won-Joon Yoon, was murdered near the church on July 4; Rev. J. Phillip Wogaman, Rev. Gordon MacDonald, and Rev. Tony Campolo, the President's spiritual counselors; Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Robert A. Seiple; and Rev. Albert R. Meredith, senior pastor, Wedgewood Baptist Church, Fort Worth, TX.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters

September 28, 1999

The President. Let me say it's a great pleasure and an honor for me to welcome the Prime Minister here to the White House. I would like to begin by expressing my deep appreciation to Turkey for the outstanding leadership exhib-

ited during the crisis in Kosovo and the role Turkey played working with our NATO Allies there.

But we have much to discuss today, including the progress in dealing with the aftermath of

the earthquake; the improving relationships between Turkey and Greece and the European Union; questions involving Cyprus, human rights, economic reform, many other things. But this meeting is occurring in an atmosphere of hope and a positive atmosphere that recognizes not only our longtime strategic partnership with Turkey but recent developments and this Prime Minister's leadership, and I appreciate it very much.

Oil Pipeline in Turkey

Q. —on the pipeline issue. Are you planning to help Turkey about that?

The President. Well, you know, we feel very strongly about the pipeline. We've made that very clear and unambiguous, and we will continue to support it.

Q. Are you going to give more aid?

The President. You had a question?

Cyprus

Q. Yes, Mr. President. What would you like to see from Turkey to see some progress in Cyprus? Do you need to see some movement from the Turkish side?

The President. Well, what we've been working for all along is the resumption of U.N.-sponsored talks without preconditions. And we hope that somehow we can find a way to get there.

Q. How about more aid?

Turkey and the European Union

Q. Mr. President, Washington watches very closely Turkey's relations with the EU, and from your perspective, what are the major obstacles barring Turkey from having better ties and full membership?

The President. Well, first of all, I believe that there has been some progress. There's been the change in attitude in some of the European capitals about Turkey's integration into EU. I think that the actions that have been taken to

improve relations with Greece have helped. I think some of the actions on human rights have helped. And I think more movement in those directions will eventually get the results that Turkey wants.

You know, the United States—from the first day I got here as President, almost 7 years ago, I have strongly supported Turkey's integration into Europe, into the economic structures of the European Union as well as, obviously, in NATO and other networks. I think it's very, very important to the future of the world, particularly the critical part of the world that you occupy. But we have to make some progress on these other issues, and I think we're moving in the right direction.

Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, if the Kosovars opt for independence, will that be a betrayal of our reason for going in there? And are we supporting independence?

The President. Well, we have supported for Kosovar, and we continue to support—for Kosovo, excuse me—autonomy, which is now protected autonomy because of the conduct of the Serbs and the government of Mr. Milosevic. And that continues to be our position. We need to do our best to implement the agreements that we have made within the policy framework that both NATO and the United Nations have approved, and we intend to do that.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you very much, everyone.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on James D. Wolfensohn's Decision To Serve a Second Term as World Bank President

September 28, 1999

I am very pleased that Jim Wolfensohn will serve a second term as World Bank president. During a precarious period for the world econ-

omy, Jim has shown a true passion for helping people who live in the poorest countries of the world weather the financial crisis and making

sure they have a voice in decisions that affect them.

Jim's hands-on style has served the World Bank well. He has traveled to more than 100 countries to see for himself what is working and what needs to be done to create jobs, improve education, fight hunger, and attack diseases like AIDS. And he has shown an abiding commitment to reinventing the World Bank to

make sure that it is equipped to meet the challenges of globalization. In addition to improving governance and broadening participation, he has been working hard to improve transparency and clamp down on corruption.

His leadership, imagination, and deep moral commitment make him an outstanding choice for the World Bank as it enters the next century.

Statement on Proposed Education Appropriations *September 28, 1999*

Today the Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations committee passed a spending bill that fails to invest in key initiatives to raise student achievement. While its funding levels are better than those of the House version, the Senate bill still falls short of what we need to strengthen America's schools. It does not guarantee a single dollar for our efforts to hire quality teachers and reduce class size in the early grades. It cuts funding for education technology and underfunds such efforts as GEAR UP and after-school programs, and it does not provide funding to turn around failing schools.

To develop world-class schools, we need to invest more and demand more in return. We need accountability from our schools and from our Congress, too.

In addition, the reduction in funding for the social services block grant could severely under-

mine State and local efforts to provide child care, child welfare programs, and services for the disabled. By failing to fund the family caregiver initiative, the bill also withholds critical aid to families caring for elderly or ill relatives. The legislation also shortchanges public health priorities in preventive and mental health and underfunds programs that would give millions of Americans improved access to health care.

If this bill were to come to me in its current form, I would have to veto it. I believe, however, that we can avoid this course. I sent the Congress a budget for the programs covered by this bill that provided for essential investments in America's needs, and that was fully paid for. I look forward to working with Congress on a bipartisan basis to ensure that this bill strengthens public education and other important national priorities.

Statement on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia *September 28, 1999*

H.R. 2587, the "District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2000," approves local funding and provides for targeted Federal funding for the District of Columbia that we all support. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the DC Offender Supervision Agency and makes some progress towards providing requested funds for a new tuition as-

sistance program for District of Columbia residents.

However, I have decided to veto this bill because Congress has added a number of unacceptable riders that prevent local residents from making their own decisions about local matters. Congress has interfered in local decisions in this bill in a way that it would not have done to any other local jurisdiction in the country. For

example, this bill bars the District from spending its own funds to seek voting rights for the citizens of the District of Columbia. Congress should not impose such conditions on the District of Columbia. And it is wrong for some in Congress to threaten to cut funding that

would fight crime, expand educational opportunity by providing tuition assistance, and improve children's health simply because they are unwilling to let the people of the District of Columbia make local decisions about local matters, as they should under home rule.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia September 28, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval, H.R. 2587, the "District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2000." Although the bill provides important funding for the District of Columbia, I am vetoing this bill because it includes a number of highly objectionable provisions that are unwarranted intrusions into local citizens' decisions about local matters.

I commend the Congress for developing a bill that includes requested funding for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and goes a long way toward providing requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. I appreciate the additional funding included in the bill to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs.

However, I am disappointed that the Congress has added to the bill a number of highly objectionable provisions that would interfere with local decisions about local matters. Were it not for these provisions, I would sign the bill into law. Many of the Members who voted for this legislation represent States and localities that do not impose similar restrictions on their own citizens. I urge the Congress to remove the following provisions expeditiously to prevent the interruption of important funding for the District of Columbia:

- *Voting Representation.* H.R. 2587 would prohibit not only the use of Federal, but also District funds to provide assistance for

petition drives or civil action that seek to obtain voting representation in the Congress for residents of the District of Columbia.

- *Limit on Access to Representation in Special Education Cases.* The bill would cap the award of plaintiffs' attorneys' fees in cases brought by parents of District schoolchildren against the District of Columbia Public Schools under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In the long run, this provision would likely limit the access of the District's poor families to quality legal representation, thus impairing their due process protections provided by the IDEA.
- *Abortion.* The bill would prohibit the use of not only Federal, but also District funds to pay for abortions except in those cases where the life of the mother is endangered or in situations involving rape or incest.
- *Domestic Partners Act.* The bill would prohibit the use of not only Federal, but also District funds to implement or enforce the Health Care Benefits Expansion Act of 1992.
- *Needle Exchange Programs.* The bill contains a ban that would seriously disrupt current AIDS/HIV prevention efforts by prohibiting the use of Federal and local funds for needle exchange programs. H.R. 2587 denies not only Federal, but also District funding to any public or private agency, including providers of HIV/AIDS-related services, in the District of Columbia that uses the public or private agency's own funds for needle exchange programs, undermining the principle of home rule in the District.

- *Controlled Substances.* The bill would prohibit the District from legislating with respect to certain controlled substances, in a manner that all States are free to do.
- *Restriction on City Council Salaries.* The bill would limit the amount of salary that can be paid to members of the District of Columbia Council.

I urge the Congress to send me a bill that maintains the important funding for the District

provided in this bill and that eliminates these highly objectionable provisions as well as other provisions that undermine the ability of residents of the District of Columbia to make decisions about local matters.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 28, 1999.

Remarks on Presenting the Arts and Humanities Awards September 29, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you so much, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome. I want to welcome all of our honorees here: Bill Ivey and all the people from the National Endowment for the Humanities; Bill Ferris and all the people from the National Endowment for the Arts; the people from Library and Museum Services; Members of Congress. I have seen Senator Wellstone and Congressman Houghton, Representative Morella and Nadler. There may be others here.

I want to thank the people of our shared homeland, the Irish band and the step dancers, for doing such a wonderful job today. I thought they were great. If George Mitchell doesn't get us over the final hump in the last steps of the Irish peace process, I may just send them back until everybody—[laughter]—is smiling so much they can't think of anything other than ending the conflict.

I'd also like to thank the wonderful strings from the Marine Corps for doing such a great job for us here today.

In one of his final speeches, President Kennedy said he looked forward to an America which rewards achievement in the arts as we reward achievement in business; an America which commands respect throughout the world not only for its strength but for its civilization. Today we recognize an extraordinary group of Americans who have strengthened our civilization and whose achievements have enriched our lives through the songs they sing, the stories they tell, the books they write, the art they share, the gifts they share.

Eighteen women and men, one educational institution, all having defined in their own unique ways a part of who we are as a people and what we're about as a nation as we enter a new century in a new millennium.

First I present the National Medal of the Arts winners.

Irene Diamond, one of America's leading patrons of the arts, has dedicated her life to discovery. As an early Hollywood talent scout, she discovered Burt Lancaster and Robert Redford. For that alone, some people think she should get this award. [Laughter]

As one of the movie industry's first female story editors, she discovered the script that became "Casablanca." I believe when the film industry issued its list of 100 greatest films, "Casablanca" only ranked second, Irene, but some of us voted for it number one. [Laughter]

As the president of the Aaron Diamond Foundation, she helped fuel the pathbreaking research that led to the discovery of protease inhibitors, which are now helping people with HIV lead longer and healthier lives. As a generous supporter of the arts, she has given more than \$70 million to help more Americans discover the magic of theater, dance, and song.

It has been said that discovery consists of seeing what everyone has seen and thinking what no one has thought. We are all far richer for the vision, the insight, and the discoveries of this most precious Diamond.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lt. Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. The Reverend C.L. Franklin, then pastor of Detroit's New Bethel Baptist Church, was a powerfully emotional preacher. But one Sunday in 1954 it was the heavenly voice of a 12-year-old that brought the congregation to its feet. The voice belonged to his own daughter, Aretha, the woman now idolized throughout the world as the Queen of Soul.

No matter where she has traveled, she has never left behind the sound of those Sundays in church. You could hear it ranging over four full octaves when she sang Dr. King to heaven and in electrifying performances at our Inaugural celebrations. You can hear it in every one of her nearly 50 albums, and I am so grateful that she has allowed me to hear it time after time here at the White House.

Aretha's voice once was designated a natural resource of the State of Michigan. [Laughter] She will probably never know how many people whose lives she has enriched, whose hearts she has lifted, how many people she gave a spring in the step that would not have been there, and brought sunshine to a rainy day and tenderness to a hardened heart.

Today we honor her for all she has given with the magnificent talent God gave her.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. Michael Graves is a rare individual who finds equal wonder in things both large and small. As one of our century's most important designers and architects, he has said he gets as much pleasure planning a large building as he does designing a spatula. [Laughter]

So it's little wonder that Michael Graves' work can be found from our shopping malls to our National Mall, from an award-winning office building to a tea kettle to the creative scaffolding around the Washington Monument—which, I might say, has enriched the lives of every person in Washington, DC—[laughter]—and made those often stuck in what is now America's most crowded traffic-patterned city have their time pass a little better; Michael Graves has created art that surrounds our lives.

He calls himself a great practitioner, but in some ways his challenge is more daunting than that of a physician. As Frank Lloyd Wright once said, "After all, the doctor can bury his mistake,"—[laughter]—"but the architect can only advise his client to plant vines." [Laughter] The

only thing that grows and covers Michael Graves' work is our admiration, appreciation, and respect.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. When it comes to training in the performing arts, the Juilliard School stands alone. Juilliard has cultivated the genius of artists of world renown. We hear it in the flawless voice of Leontyne Price, in the virtuoso violin of Itzhak Perlman, the narrative jazz of Wynton Marsalis, the uninhibited humor of Robin Williams.

But Juilliard does more than develop the skills of gifted artists. It instills in every student the obligation to share that talent with others through performances in hospitals, nursing homes, hundreds of free shows every year at the Lincoln Center.

In honoring the artist in society, Juilliard opens the doors of art to the world. We honor it today for all it has done and all it will do in taking the best and making them even better.

I'd like to ask Dr. Joe Polisi, the president of the Juilliard School, to come forward, and I'd like to ask the Colonel to read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. Norman Lear has held up a mirror to American society and changed the way we look at it. From Archie Bunker's living room in Queens to Fred Sanford's junkyard in Watts, he has employed the power of humor in the service of human understanding. His departure from traditional, two-dimensional television characters was risky. It showed the enormous respect he has for the judgment, the sense, and the heart of the American people.

He gave us something real. He tackled issues head on. Archie Bunker, after all, was the best argument against his own bigotry. By laying it out unvarnished, Norman Lear took it apart and, in the process, made us laugh out loud. His commitment to promoting understanding and tolerance extends far beyond the screen. As founder of People For the American Way and the Business Enterprise Trust, he continues his work to deepen freedom, defend liberties, and reward social responsibility.

The first time I ever met Norman Lear was in early 1981, shortly after the Presidential election of 1980, in which I became the youngest former Governor in American history. [Laughter] Norman Lear invited me to come talk about a project with him in New York, and he took me to a play on Broadway that he produced. We went to opening night. It closed 3 days later. [Laughter] We are here today because the intervening years have been kinder to both of us. [Laughter] I'm not sure Archie Bunker would approve, but Meathead would be proud and so are we.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. When she was 7, Rosetta LeNoire broke both her legs; actually, doctors broke them for her. She was born with rickets; it was the only way the bones could grow in place. Her godfather Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, said that dancing could strengthen her legs and took her on the road.

She moved on to success: Broadway, film, and, of course, television, where we remember her as Mother Winslow on "Family Matters" and Nell Carter's mother on "Gimme a Break." But with all her talent and drive through the years, discrimination was never far behind. So Rosetta did more than dream of a theater with no color bar, she actually built one.

For more than 30 years, the AMAS Musical Theatre in New York City has been a place where performers are judged by the caliber of their skills, not the color of their skin. As a courageous child, Rosetta learned that sometimes you have to break things to put them in the right place. Today America thanks her for breaking barriers to set our Nation right.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. In 1967 Harvey Lichtenstein was given an impossible task, to breathe life into the Brooklyn Academy of Music, a neighborhood relic on the verge of being razed for tennis courts. Not only did he save the academy, he turned it into one of the most important avant-garde institutions in the entire world.

In his 32 years as a charismatic impresario, visionary, and father of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, he sparked the stunning careers of

Twyla Tharp, Philip Glass, Mark Morris, so many other artists Manhattan had overlooked. He launched the wonderful new Next Wave festival and the BAM Opera. He proved that art challenges can also be wildly popular.

He truly changed the way we think. Although he just made his curtain call at the Brooklyn Academy, we know he will continue to be New York's stellar steward of the arts.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. Lydia Mendoza's unique musical career spans most of the entire course of the 20th century. She recorded her first song in a San Antonio hotel room in 1928. More than 70 years and a thousand songs later, her legacy is as wide and deep as the Rio Grande valley.

Lydia learned much from the oral tradition of Mexican music that her mother and grandmother shared with her. In turn, she shared it with the world, becoming the first rural American woman performer to garner a large following throughout Latin America.

With the artistry of her voice and the gift of her songs, she bridged the gap between generations and cultures. Lydia Mendoza is a true American pioneer, and she paved the way for a whole new generation of Latino performers, who today are making all Americans sing.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. In late 1949, in the coffeehouses of San Francisco, a young classically trained singer named Odetta fell in love with folk music and found her true voice. Soon she began recording unforgettably soulful albums and touring the world's great stages. In the words of one early admirer, "She has such a strong voice and presence that I am left with the irreverent but irresistible feeling that if she had been the captain of the Titanic, the ship would not have sunk." [Laughter]

For 50 years now Odetta has used her commanding power and amazing grace not just to entertain but to inspire. She has sung for freedom with Dr. King, lifted the pride of millions of children, shaped the careers of young performers like Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, and Tracy

Chapman. She is the reigning queen of American folk music, reminding us all that songs have the power to change the heart and change the world.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. It started out as just another odd job for this aspiring artist, researching the artistic possibilities of plaster used to cast broken bones. "I had my wife cover me head to foot in the stuff," he said. "Once it dried, I broke out of it, breaking the mold in the process; then I put it back together. It was white, spectral, full of elusive potential, just what I had been after."

George Segal's art may be inanimate, but more than a few of us have had to look twice just to be sure. [Laughter] His silent creations speak volumes about the human condition and give life to the spaces where they are displayed. His sculptures at the Franklin Roosevelt Memorial of the Depression breadline and the fireside chat transport us back to that time and place.

Through all of his work, George Segal has brought elegance to the everyday and mystery to the commonplace. Decades after his first experiments with plaster, he continues to break the mold.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. George Balanchine once told audiences not to analyze ballet. "Words cannot describe it," he said. "You cannot explain a flower." So it's impossible to explain the radiance and grace of Maria Tallchief.

She leapt from Oklahoma's Osage Indian territory to the center stages of the world. Her partnership with Balanchine transformed the ballet world for the ages. She was his inspiration for the title role in the "Firebird." She was the first Sugarplum Fairy.

A reviewer once said that hers will always be the story of ballet conquering America, but also, I would add, the story of America conquering ballet.

Maria Tallchief took what had been a European art form and made it America's own. How fitting that a Native-American woman would do that. With magic, mystery, and style, she soared above all.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. And now, ladies and gentlemen, for the National Humanities Medals.

Patricia Battin is saving history. The high acidic content of paper threatens to destroy millions of old books, but she has led the national campaign to raise awareness about this challenge and preserve the genius of the past.

As the first president of the Commission on Preservation and Access, she has helped to spur America's libraries and archives to transfer information from so-called brittle books to microfilm and optical disks. As a result, more than 770,000 books have already been preserved. She's also one of our Nation's leading authorities on changing learning patterns of the digital age. From 19th century books to 21st century technology, Patricia Battin is strengthening our storehouse of knowledge for the future.

Thank you for saving the knowledge of the past for the children of tomorrow.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. When it comes to the struggle for peace, justice, and freedom, Taylor Branch literally has written the book. With vivid prose and clear-eyed detail, his two volumes on the Martin Luther King years recount a man and a movement that changed America for good. As Taylor has said, "It is really the story of ordinary people who took risks to enlarge freedom. And we have a much better country for it."

Those aren't just Taylor Branch's words; they also reflect his life. Growing up in segregated Atlanta, Taylor Branch saw discrimination everywhere he looked. But through it all, he also saw something else, an America where we heal our racial wounds, celebrate our differences, and move forward together.

We grew up in the same sort of South, affected by the limits, the longing, and the language of race, in all of its myriad manifestations. I met Taylor Branch 30 years ago this month. I knew then he was a remarkable young man. And I must tell you, I am very proud of the gifts he has given America in the years since.

In an early sermon, Dr. King said, "After one has discovered what he is made for, he

should seek to do it so well that no one could do it better." Anyone who has read the work of Taylor Branch knows, no one does it better.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. More than two decades ago, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall explained to an elderly woman why she wanted to tape her memories. After listening closely to all of Professor Hall's words, the senior citizen looked up and said, "I understand. You don't have to be famous for your life to be history." That became the motto of the Southern Oral History Program directed by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, and the rest is truly history.

The program, centered at the University of North Carolina, rings with the voices of millworkers who have lost their jobs, civil rights leaders marching for freedom, ordinary folks building their communities. And I might add, there is a young person from Arkansas by the name of Clinton whose voice is on one of those tapes who was on the verge of something really big, losing his first election. *[Laughter]*

Anyone who grew up in the South knows that no book can capture the color and the vibrancy that you hear in the everyday conversations on Main Street, in general stores, on the front porches, and the backyards. So all of us, whether we are from the South or not, can say thank you, Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, for capturing that unique and wonderful voice, for recording history through the lives of ordinary people, and, in so doing, for making history.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. He was born in Anoka, Minnesota, but we know him as the man from Lake Wobegon: a town with a name derived, he tells us, from the Native-American phrase meaning, "We sat in the rain all day waiting for you,"—*[laughter]*—a place he confesses, settled by pioneers who had stopped a little short, having misread their map but refused to admit it. *[Laughter]* Well, Garrison Keillor has never stopped short. Just ask the Governor of Minnesota. *[Laughter]*

Millions of listeners plan their weekends around his "Prairie Home Companion." It's always blaring on the radio in the White House.

No one wants to miss a minute of his homespun humor, homegrown music, and stories of hometown America. And he never leaves it behind.

Today when I shook hands with Garrison he said, "Well, I understand that you had a cancellation and had to put me in at the last minute." *[Laughter]* I didn't have the heart to tell him how sorry I was that Rush Limbaugh couldn't make it today. *[Laughter]*

With imagination and wit, but also with a steel-trap mind and deep conviction, Garrison Keillor has brought us together and constantly reminds us how we're all connected and how it ought to keep us a little humble.

We all have a little Lake Wobegon in us, and our homes will always have a place for Garrison Keillor, our modern-day Mark Twain.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. While studying to be a newspaperman in a small Texas town, Jim Lehrer worked nights at a bus depot calling out departures and arrivals over a microphone. You might say that's what he had to do for politicians after he assumed his position on television. *[Laughter]* He learned to speak clearly, be polite, stick to the facts, traits that would become his signature style as one of the most respected and beloved figures in American broadcast journalism.

When sound bites and sensationalism began taking over TV news in the early 1970's, he teamed up with broadcaster Robert MacNeil to start a nightly newscast that offered the opposite: long, in-depth stories and interviews on the serious topics of the day; a show where guests are treated as guests; viewers are treated as intelligent; viewpoints are treated with respect.

Novelist, playwright, journalist, moderator of Presidential debates, asker of hard and probing questions—*[laughter]*—in a deceptively civilized way—*[laughter]*—Jim Lehrer is a modern man of letters who has left us a gift of professionalism and civility, of true learning and the enlargement of our citizenship by his work.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. John Rawls is perhaps the greatest political philosopher of the 20th century. In 1971, when Hillary and I were in law school, we were among the millions moved by

a remarkable book he wrote, "A Theory of Justice," that placed our rights to liberty and justice upon a strong and brilliant new foundation of reason.

Almost singlehandedly, John Rawls revived the disciplines of political and ethical philosophy with his argument that a society in which the most fortunate helped the least fortunate is not only a moral society but a logical one. Just as impressively, he has helped a whole generation of learned Americans revive their faith in democracy itself.

Ladies and gentlemen, Margaret Rawls will accept the medal on behalf of her husband.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. Any time we look at all that Steven Spielberg has managed to create on film, we know that that is what God put him here to do. Like Orson Wells, he was a true cinematic prodigy. He shot his first movies at the age of 12. By the ripe old age of 35, he was already one of our most gifted storytellers, with "Close Encounters," "Raiders of the Lost Ark," and "E.T." But when his insatiable moral and imaginative hunger drove him to create such resident masterpieces as "Schindler's List," one of the most important movies of the 20th century, and the remarkable, "Saving Private Ryan," we saw that he was an astonishing historian, as well.

On top of his creative mastery, Steven has devoted enormous time and resources to preserving Holocaust testimonies, supporting righteous causes, unleashing the power of entertainment and technology to help seriously ill children to heal.

Steven Spielberg could have gotten the National Medal of the Arts, but I think he would want most to be remembered for his contributions to humanity. I also want to thank him for all the many times that he and Kate and their wonderful children have enriched our lives and all the things he tells me that keep me thinking.

Today I was talking to Steven, and he said, "How are you?" And I said, "I'm doing pretty good for an older guy." He said, "Yes, but did you see that article that says that our children, certainly our grandchildren will live to be 150?" And I got to thinking that—Hillary talked Steven into making the movie that we will show

at the American millennial celebration on The Mall on New Year's Eve, as we see the turning of the millennium. And Steven has agreed to create this 18-minute movie of the century, 100 years in 18 minutes, so we'll feel like we're 150. *[Laughter]* He always finds a way to make it work.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. Long before "Fences," before "Seven Guitars," before "Two Trains Running," before his two Pulitzers, August Wilson wrote an essay. He was in high school, and his teacher refused to believe that a black student could have produced something that good. Disgusted by the low expectations of his teacher, August Wilson took refuge in the library. This is what he said: "I found books by black writers and realized I could do that. I could have a book on a shelf."

From the dimly lit library stacks to the bright lights of the stage, he has chronicled the African-American experience throughout the 20th century, decade by decade, with epic plays of dreams and doubts, humor and heartbreak, mystery and music.

Years ago, August Wilson asked a friend and fellow writer, "How do you make your characters talk?" His friend replied, "You don't; you listen to them." America is richer for the listening voice, and the landmark drama of August Wilson.

Colonel, read the citation.

[Lieutenant Colonel Everhart read the citation, and the President presented the medal.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, we thank you for sharing in this celebration and being a part of this last arts and humanities awards ceremony of the 20th century. On behalf of our Nation, I thank our honorees for all they have done for us, and I thank you all for supporting their work, for helping to shape our society, lift our spirits, expand our boundaries, and share our gifts with the world.

Thank you, and goodbye. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. at Constitution Hall. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; and Mr. Spielberg's wife, actress Kate Capshaw.

Remarks at a Meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank

September 29, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary Summers, President Wolfensohn, Chairman Acharya, Director Camdessus, Vice President Fall, Secretary Anjaria.

Let me begin by saying how very grateful I am to be here with all of you. I appreciate the generous introduction. Some of you may have heard me say this before, but the introduction that Secretary Summers just gave me is an illustration of one of my unbending laws of political life: Whenever possible, be introduced by someone you have appointed to high office. [*Laughter*] It is much easier because he's done such a superb job, and I thank him.

Let me say, all of you know that a year ago we were here in a time of crisis, perhaps the most severe financial crisis in the global economy since the end of the Second World War, a grave challenge to the IMF and the World Bank. Thanks to the hard work that you and your countries have done, economies that were sliding down are rising again.

We have also worked hard, as Secretary Summers said, in the wake of these crises to prevent future ones, to respond more quickly and effectively, to lessen the toll they take on ordinary citizens. We have intensified our efforts to construct a global financial architecture that is stable and strong in the new conditions of the new economy.

Still, those who were hit by this crisis were hit very hard, and many are still reeling. People lost jobs and businesses and dreams. So this can only be considered a continuing challenge for us, certainly not a time for complacency. We have more to do to restore people's faith in the future and to restore their faith, frankly, in the global economy and in global markets. Therefore, we have more to do to reform the global financial foundation upon which the future will be built.

As we approach the 21st century, we must also ask ourselves, however, is it enough just to fix the market that is? Should we accept the fact that, at a time when the people in the United States are enjoying perhaps the strongest economy in their history, 1.3 billion of our fellow human beings survive on less than

a dollar a day? Should we accept the fact that nearly 40 million people—after the green revolution, when most of us discuss agriculture and food as a cause for international trade conflicts because we want to fight over who sells the most food, since there are so many places that can produce more than their own people need, are we supposed to accept the fact that nearly 40 million people a year die of hunger? That's nearly equal to the number of all the people killed in World War II.

Are we supposed to accept the fact that even though technology has changed the equation of the role of energy in the production of wealth, even though technology has changed the distances in time and space necessary for learning and for business as well as educational interchanges, are we supposed to face the fact that some people and nations are doomed to be left behind forever?

I hope we will not accept that. I hope we will start the new millennium with a new resolve: to give every person in the world, through trade and technology, through investments in education and health care, the chance to be part of a widely shared prosperity, in which all the peoples' potential can be developed more fully. This is the challenge of the second half-century of the life of the IMF and the World Bank. And for me, it is a personal priority of the highest order.

Open trade already has improved the prospects of hundreds of millions by marketing the fruits of their labors and creativity beyond their borders. In this way, both the IMF and the World Bank have played a vital role in helping more nations to thrive. We need you to work with the WTO to build a rules-based framework for global trade. We need you to help developing countries provide education and training to lift wages and to establish social safety nets for tough transitions.

I applaud the strong commitment you've made at these meetings for concrete manifestations of support. We all must work to keep the economies we have influence over open and trade growing for developing and industrial powers alike.

In 2 months, I want to launch a new type of trade round in Seattle at the WTO ministerial. I want this round to be about jobs and development. I want it to raise working conditions for all. I want it to advance our shared goal of sustainable development. By breaking down barriers to trade, leveling the playing field, we will give more workers and farmers in those countries that are struggling for tomorrow and in leading industrial nations as well more opportunities to produce for the global marketplace.

In Seattle, I hope we will pledge to keep cyberspace tariff-free, to help developing countries make better and wider use of technology, whether biotechnology or the Internet. I hope we will pledge to open markets in agriculture and industrial products and services, creating new activities for growth and development.

I hope we will also work to advance the admission of the 38 developing countries who've applied for WTO membership. And I hope we'll keep working to give the least developed countries greater access to global markets. Here in the United States, I am working hard to persuade our Congress to pass my trade proposals for Africa and the Caribbean Basin this year.

But the wealth of nations depends on more than trade. It also depends on the health of nations. Last week at the United Nations I committed the United States to accelerating the development and delivery of vaccines for AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and other diseases which disproportionately afflict poor citizens in the developing world.

At the same time, we must help these nations avert the health costs and pollution of the industrial age, using clean technologies that not only improve the environment but grow the economy. Institutions like the World Bank play a special role here. Your energy strategy is a very good start, and I thank you for it. I urge the Bank to continue setting aggressive targets for lending that promotes clean energy. It is no longer necessary to have industrial-age energy use patterns to grow a modern, powerful economy. In fact, those economies will emerge more quickly with more sustainable development strategies.

Some of you in this room, a minority still, are nodding your heads "yes" as I say this. If you believe it, we must work together to achieve it. These efforts must be part of a broader approach that ensures the integrity and openness of emerging economies. Last Saturday the G-

7 finance ministers outlined specific safeguards for Russia and called for comprehensive review by the World Bank and the IMF to make sure that funds are used appropriately in high-risk environments. The United States will continue to insist on such accountability.

For many developing countries, however, there is a greater obstacle in the path to progress. For many of them, excessive and completely unsustainable debt can halt progress, drag down growth, drain resources that are needed to meet the most basic human conditions like clean water, shelter, health care, and education. Debt and debt relief are normally subjects for economists, but there is nothing academic about them. Simply put, unsustainable debt is helping to keep too many poor countries and poor people in poverty. That is clearly why the Pope and so many other world leaders from all walks of life have asked us all to do more to reduce the debt of the poorest nations as a gift to the new millennium, not just to them but to all the rest of us, as well.

Personally, I don't believe we can possibly agree to the idea that these nations that are so terribly poor should always be that way. I don't think we can, in good conscience, say we support the idea that they should choose between making interest payments on their debt and investing in their children's education. It is an economic and moral imperative that we use this moment of global consensus to do better. I will do everything I can to aid this trend. Any country, committed to reforming its economy, to vaccinating and educating its children, should be able to make those kinds of commitments and keep them.

In June, at the G-7 summit in Cologne, the world's wealthiest nations made an historic pledge to help developing nations. The debt relief program we agreed upon is a big step in the right direction, dedicating faster and deeper debt relief to countries that dedicate themselves to fundamental reform. This initiative seeks to tie debt relief to poverty reduction and to make sure that savings are spent where they should be, on education, on fighting AIDS and preventing it, on other critical needs. It will help heavily indebted poor countries to help themselves and help to build a framework to support similar and important efforts by the IMF, the World Bank, and international financial institutions.

More than 430 million people could benefit from this effort. In Bolivia, for example, debt relief could help the Government nearly double the people's access to clean water by 2004. In Uganda, it could allow health and education spending to increase by 15 percent between 1998 and 2001—50 percent, excuse me. Rural development expenditures there would more than double. That's why we all must provide our fair share of financing to global debt relief.

Last week, to make good on America's commitment, I amended my budget request to Congress and asked for nearly \$1 billion over 4 years for this purpose. We must keep adequate assistance flowing to the developing countries, especially through the International Development Association. I'm encouraged by the financial commitments made by some of the other donor countries this past week. And I call on our Congress to respond to the moral and economic urgency of this issue and see to it that America does its part. I have asked for the money and shown how it would be paid for, and I ask the Congress to keep our country shouldering its fair share of the responsibility.

Now, let me make one final commitment. Today I am directing my administration to make it possible to forgive 100 percent of the debt these countries owe to the United States when—and this is quite important—when needed to help them finance basic human needs and when the money will be used to do so. In this context, we will work closely with other countries to maximize the benefits of the debt reduction initiative.

We believe the agreements reached this weekend will make it possible for three-quarters of the highly indebted poorest countries, committed to implementing poverty and growth strategies, to start receiving benefits sometime next year, actually receiving the benefits sometime next year.

If we do these things as nations, as international institutions, as a global community, then we can build a trading system that strengthens our economy and supports our values. We can build a global economy and a global society that leaves no one behind, that carries all countries into a new century that we hope will be marked by greater peace and greater prosperity for all people.

We have before us perhaps as great an opportunity as the people of the world have ever seen. We will be judged by our children and grandchildren by whether we seize that opportunity. I hope and believe that we all will do so.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:07 p.m. in the main ballroom at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to James D. Wolfensohn, President, World Bank Group; Mahesh Acharya, Chairman of the Board of Governors, Michel Camdessus, Managing Director, Cheikh Ibrahima Fall, Vice President and Corporate Secretary, and Shailendra J. Anjaria, Secretary, International Monetary Fund; and Pope John Paul II.

Statement on Signing the Extension of the Airport Improvement Program Act

September 29, 1999

I am pleased to sign S. 1637, the "Extension of the Airport Improvement Program Act," releasing the final \$290 million of FY99 funds for the Federal Aviation Administration's Airport Improvement Program (AIP). These funds will help communities across the country finance critical projects to enhance airport safety and capacity and reduce noise. Some \$71 million of the AIP funds will go to help lessen the growing problem of airport-related noise, by in-

sulating nearby schools and residential neighborhoods and other noise mitigation efforts. These and other efforts by the Federal Government will mean that, by next year, only 600,000 Americans will be adversely affected by aircraft noise, compared to the 2.3 million Americans who faced that problem in 1995. A significant portion of the funds released today will go to help smaller airports, which have fewer financial resources and are more dependent on Federal assistance

to meet their capital requirements than are larger airports.

NOTE: S. 1637, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106-59.

Statement on Signing the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000

September 29, 1999

Today I signed H.R. 2490, "Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000", a bill that contains several important improvements in family planning and child care. This bipartisan bill will give people who work for the Federal Government access to more affordable child care and flexibility in family planning. It will require health plans participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) that provide prescription drug coverage to provide prescription contraceptive cov-

erage as well, while providing an exception for plans that object to this requirement on religious grounds. The bill also gives Government agencies new flexibility that will allow them to make child care more affordable for lower income Federal employees. While this bill is not perfect, it does show that we can make progress when we work in a bipartisan fashion.

NOTE: H.R. 2490, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106-58.

Statement on Signing the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000

September 29, 1999

I have signed into law today H.R. 2490, the "Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000," which provides \$13.7 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs in the Department of the Treasury, the United States Postal Service, the General Services Administration, the Office of Personnel Management, the Executive Office of the President, and several smaller agencies. I commend the Congress for producing a bipartisan bill that allows us to continue the IRS reform effort and the national youth anti-drug media campaign and to fund important law enforcement efforts and other programs.

The bill provides \$12.4 billion for the Department of the Treasury, including \$132 million for violent crime reduction programs. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is funded at \$8.2 billion. I believe that these funds will strengthen the IRS's ability to provide timely and accurate data for American taxpayers. The bill also includes \$144 million for the Earned Income Tax Credit compliance initiative and \$250 million for Year 2000 conversion requirements for IRS

computer systems. Law enforcement bureaus within the Department of the Treasury are funded at \$3.4 billion. I am pleased that the Congress has fully funded my request for the expansion of the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative.

The bill provides \$185 million for the Office of National Drug Control Policy's (ONDCP) national youth anti-drug media campaign. This money will enable ONDCP's national media campaign to continue its effort to change youth attitudes about drug use and its consequences. The campaign is a model public-private partnership, exposing 90 percent of all 9- to 17-year-olds to anti-drug messages at least four times a week.

I am pleased that the enrolled bill requires health plans participating in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program that provide prescription drug coverage to provide prescription contraceptive coverage as well. I am also pleased that the enrolled bill allows agencies to use appropriated funds to support day care centers at Federal facilities. This provision

should improve the affordability of child care for lower-income Federal employees.

Several provisions in the Act purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court's ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

Section 622 of the Treasury/General Government Appropriations Act prohibits the use of appropriations to pay the salary of any employee who interferes with certain communications between Federal employees and Members of Congress. I do not interpret this provision to detract

from my constitutional authority and that of my appointed heads of departments to supervise and control the operations and communications of the executive branch, including the control of privileged and national security information.

I urge the Congress to complete action on the remaining FY 2000 appropriations bills as quickly as possible and send them to me in an acceptable form.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 29, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2490, approved September 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106-58.

Remarks at the Arts and Humanities Awards Dinner September 29, 1999

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. A special welcome to all of our honorees of the National Medals of Arts and Humanities. The nice thing about this evening, apart from being here in America's house slightly before we celebrate its 200th birthday, is that there are no speeches and lots of entertainment—[laughter]—unless, of course, Mr. Keillor wants to substitute for me at this moment. [Laughter] I'll be living down that crack I made about him for the rest of my life. [Laughter]

I want to say again, as I did today and as Hillary did, that this is one of the most enjoyable and important days of every year to us, because it gives America a chance to recognize our sons and daughters who have enriched our lives, made us laugh, made us think, made us cry, lifted us up when we were down. In so many ways, all of you have touched so many people that you will never know. But in all of

them accumulated, you have made America a better place; you've made the world a finer place.

And as we look to the new century, I hope that as time goes on we will be known more and more for things beyond our wealth and power, that go to the wealth and power of our spirit. Insofar as that happens, it will be because of you and people like you. And it was a privilege for all of us to honor you today.

I would like to ask all of you here to join me in a toast to the 1999 winners of the Medal of Arts and the Medal of Humanities.

[At this point, the participants drank a toast.]

The President. And welcome. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to National Humanities Medal recipient humorist Garrison Keillor.

Statement on Signing the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2000

September 29, 1999

I have signed into law H.R. 2605, the "Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 2000," which provides \$21.4 billion in discretionary budget authority for the programs of the Department of Energy, the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several smaller agencies.

The Act provides necessary funding to maintain my Administration's commitment to ensuring the safety and reliability of our Nation's nuclear weapons stockpile without nuclear testing. The Act also provides funding to develop and protect the Nation's water resources.

I am disappointed that the Congress has not included full funding for my request for the Spallation Neutron Source, for additional safeguards and security reforms at the Department of Energy laboratories, or for research and development of renewable energy sources. I am also disappointed that the Congress has provided no funding for the Next Generation Internet and Information Technology Initiatives. Also, I

note that the bill contains language that prohibits the Army Corps of Engineers from studying the full range of options for salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest. I will continue to work with the Congress on this important national priority. Finally, I am disappointed that the Congress has not enacted my Harbor Services Fund proposal, which would provide a stable source of funding for port and harbor activities and free up funds for other priority projects and programs. My Administration will work with the Congress on options for financing and increasing support for these initiatives in the future.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
September 29, 1999.

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Remarks on Signing the Continuing Resolution and an Exchange With Reporters

September 30, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. I wanted to talk to you before I leave for New York about two developments affecting our economy and the progress we are making to build a stronger one.

Today we have further evidence that our economic strategy of fiscal discipline, investment in our people, and expanded trade is working. In the 12 years before I came to Washington, irresponsible policies here quadrupled our debt. That led us to high interest rates and high unemployment, stagnant wages, and low growth. The Vice President and I came here determined to change all that, to put the American people first and give them the tools to turn around the American economy.

Over the last 6½ years, the results speak for themselves: the longest peacetime expansion in history, more than 19 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, the largest surplus and the highest homeownership in history.

Today I am pleased to announce another economic milestone in the implementation of this strategy. In its annual study on income and poverty in America, the Census Bureau reports that a typical household income rose \$1,304 in just one year, from \$37,581 in 1997 to \$38,885 in 1998. That's a 3.5 percent increase in a year, tied for the largest since 1978, allowing American families more money for things that matter,

sending their children to college, buying a home, purchasing a car, saving for retirement.

The report also shows that since we launched our economic plan in 1993, median family income is the highest it has ever been, increasing from \$41,691 in '93 to \$46,737 in '98. That's over \$5,000 more that hardworking families can put to good use. But the best news is that these gains finally are being shared with all groups in America, from the wealthiest to the poorest.

In the 1980's, most working families saw their incomes stagnate, with the worst performance at the bottom of the economic scale. In the last 5 years, finally, we have stemmed the tide of rising inequality, and this new report documents the strong income growth among all groups of people.

This broadbased growth has helped to lift millions of hardworking families out of poverty. The report shows that the poverty rate fell to 12.7 percent. That is the lowest poverty rate since 1979, the lowest rate in 20 years.

While we still have room for improvement, the African-American poverty rate is now at its lowest level on record; the Hispanic poverty rate its lowest level in 20 years. And we know that 4.3 million Americans were lifted out of poverty last year because of our expanded earned-income tax credit, which was a critical part of the economic reform plan in 1993. It is now, inexplicably to me, under attack by some in Congress.

Our economy is now working for all the American people, and it has to continue. That brings me to my second point.

Today is the last day of the current fiscal year. Because the Congress has not finished its work, it must send me a continuing resolution, a temporary spending measure to keep the Government working for 3 more weeks. But it should be sending me spending bills that meet the great challenges and opportunities before us, that protect and strengthen Social Security, that strengthen and modernize Medicare with prescription drug coverage, that make vital investments in education, national security, the environment, medical research, and other critical areas, and that enable us to pay down the American debt so that we can pay it off, for the first time since 1835, over the next 15 years.

Now, a few minutes ago, just before I came out here, I signed that continuing spending bill, not because I wanted to, but because it was the only way to prevent another Government

shutdown. Months ago I presented a responsible budget plan that pays for itself, invests in education, saves Social Security and Medicare, puts us on the path to paying America out of debt by 2015*. Regrettably, the majority in Congress, the Republican majority, has chosen to disregard the way I put this budget together and to disregard the path of fiscal discipline.

Instead of making the difficult choices to finish their work and crafting a responsible budget, they've resorted to gimmicks and gamesmanship, like using two sets of books and designating the fully predictable census, for example, as emergency spending.

But they're doing something else that troubles me more. To disguise the fact that they're spending the Social Security surplus, the congressional majority wants to delay earned-income tax payments to nearly 20 million families. Now, the income and poverty figures I announced earlier show that 4.3 million Americans were lifted out of poverty last year, twice the number that were lifted out of poverty by the earned-income tax credit before we expanded it in 1993.

We've worked hard to eliminate barriers to families who are working their way out of poverty. We've got record numbers of people moving from welfare to work, often at very modest wages, eligible for this earned-income tax credit. Delaying their EITC payments would put one more roadblock in their way.

So let me be clear: I will not sign a bill that turns its back on these hardworking families. They're doing all they can to lift themselves out of poverty, to raise their children with dignity. I don't think we should be putting more roadblocks in their way. Delaying the earned-income tax credit payment is more than a gimmick. It is an effective tax increase on the most hard-pressed working Americans.

Now, one of the most interesting developments of the last week in this budget fight, which as I said I was hoping would not be a fight and I still hope will be resolved, but one of the most interesting things to me about this last week is that the Republican majority actually launched an ad campaign that plays the worst kind of politics with this issue. Instead of spending their time creating an honest budget, they're spending millions of dollars creating phony ads to accuse the Democrats in Congress,

* White House correction.

who are in the minority, of doing what the Congressional Budget Office, their own Congressional Budget Office, says they are doing: that is, spending the Social Security surplus.

In fact, just yesterday, the very day they were announcing these misleading and unfair ads, their own Congressional Budget Office sent them a letter that shows they are spending \$18 billion from the Social Security surplus. Now, I can't help noting that these are the same people who told us they could spend all this money and cut taxes \$792 billion and never touch the Social Security surplus.

Let's back up and look at where we are here, really. I had a lot of difficult decisions in my budget. I had a cigarette tax; I had a tax on polluters to clean up toxic waste dumps. Why did I put that in there, knowing it would be controversial? Because there was a general consensus here that with the second year of a budget surplus, we ought to move as quickly as possible to divide the surpluses, if you will, the Social Security from the non-Social Security, and that we would move this year to try to stop spending Social Security funds that the Government had been spending since 1983, at least since 1983, when the revenues were raised.

And so we all said, "Okay, let's try to do it this year." And so, I knew it would be hard, but I said, "Okay, I'll do my part. I'll try to do this. But we're going to have to make some tough decisions here if we're going to meet the need of people in both parties: the investment priorities."

Then they said, "No, we don't want to do that." The Republican majority said, "No, we don't want to do that. We don't want a cigarette tax, and we don't want to ask the polluters to pay more for the toxic waste." Once they said that, to be fair, there was no way they could avoid at least one more year of spending Social Security funds.

Now, that's where we are on this. That's really what's going on. And there is another way. We don't have to do this. We don't have to get into an ad war where they accuse us of doing what they're doing, that their own Congressional Budget Office says they're doing. And they don't have to act like if they get caught doing it, they've, in effect, committed a felony.

There was a decision they had to make. When we decided we were going to try to get out of spending Social Security funds this year, instead of next year, they had to make a decision.

And the decision was to close corporate loopholes, deal with the toxic waste dumps by asking polluters to pay more, and raise the cigarette tax. If they weren't willing to make that decision, they were going to be in the pickle they're in now. Now, that's what happened.

It doesn't have to be this way. We can work together. We can fashion a budget that builds on our economic prosperity and eliminates the public debt by the year 2015 and extends the life of the Social Security Trust Fund to 2050, past the life expectancy of the baby boomers, rendering this momentary debate completely irrelevant by dealing with the long-term security of the country. And that is what we ought to do.

I also would say it is profoundly important that we fund the right kind of education budget that has 100,000 teachers, that supports our efforts to mentor poor kids and get them to college, that supports our efforts to help young people read, and that gives our kids access to after-school programs; that doesn't undercut our efforts to connect all the classrooms to the Internet next year, that helps us to build or modernize 6,000 schools, that helps us to have some real accountability so we get what works and we stop funding what doesn't.

That's the other big, outstanding question in this budget debate that has nothing to do with what the ads are about: What kind of education policy we're going to have; what kind of future are we going to give our kids? Then there's the whole criminal justice issue which we've argued about since 1994, that we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years, but it's still too high, and I want to fund another 50,000 police to go out there in the most dangerous neighborhoods to prevent crime from happening in the first place, through the community policing program.

So that is what I wanted to say. We don't need gimmicks in the budget, and we don't need gimmicks on the airwaves. What we need to do is to roll up our sleeves and go to work together and make decisions and tell the American people why we made them and what they are and what the long-term consequences are.

The Congress now has 3 weeks to finish the job the American people sent them to Washington to do. I will work with Congress on a budget that honors our commitments, that protects Social Security and Medicare. If we work together to meet these objectives—keep in

mind, if we work together to meet these objectives, we could pass a long-term budget that not only gets us out of debt by 2015 but actually has an affordable program for middle-class tax relief.

But this argument that's being held now, and this sort of ad war is, I think, the worst kind of—first of all, it's misleading. And secondly, it's a waste of time and money. What we need to do is to roll up our sleeves and do the job the American people sent us here to do.

So, thank you.

Korean War Massacre

Q. Mr. President, what's your reaction to the Associated Press report of a massacre of hundreds of refugees by American servicemen during the Korean war? There is—a dozen veterans of that war are quoted as corroborating this account. Do you think there should be an investigation?

The President. Yes. The most important thing you need to know about that is—I was briefed on it this morning—is that Secretary Cohen has said that he wants to look into this. He wants to get to the bottom of it. He wants to examine all the available information and evidence. And he has assured us that he will do that. And that was his immediate instinct, too. And I appreciated it.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, the Vice President seems to be in some political trouble, despite the good economic numbers that you cite. Mr. Bradley, former Senator Bradley, has out-raised him in the last quarter. I would like to know whether you counseled him to move his headquarters, whether you thought he panicked, and why you think that people like Senator Moynihan say that he can't be elected—Senator Moynihan who, of course, backs Mrs. Clinton?

The President. I gave you enough time to put all of your little twists in there, didn't I? [*Laughter*]

First of all, let me say I think it's a good decision, the decision he made to move his headquarters to Tennessee. I suppose I think that because I had such a good experience when I stayed home and close to my roots. We discussed it a long time ago. But I can tell you I'm absolutely—he called me yesterday morning, he said that he had made a decision to do this. And we had not discussed it in, I don't know,

a good while. I'm absolutely—he told me a week or so ago that he was thinking about some things that he thought would help his campaign and make it more consistent with the kind of message that he wanted to convey to the American people and the kind of campaign he personally wanted to run. And he announced those three decisions yesterday, and I approve of all of them. I think they were good decisions. And I think they'll get good results. And the most important thing is, he made them, and he believes in them. And that's all you can do in one of these campaigns.

Q. What's the problem? Has it been you? Has it been the record of the administration?

The President. Well, first of all, I think he's, by all reports I get, he's personally doing quite well out there, and I think he will continue to do well. So I don't have the same take on it you do. I'm not a political analyst anymore. I have to stay here and do my job. But the only thing I would say is, when you run for President, you need to know what you want America to look like, and then you need to have good ideas, and you need to try to share them with people in a way they can relate to. And I believe he'll be—I believe he'll do quite well.

Keep in mind, we're a long way from the end of the road here.

Tax Policy and Federal Spending

Q. On the budget, if the Republicans won't give you the taxes you want, what's the alternative? Cut back on the spending you want? How do you get out of this pickle?

The President. Well, the alternative is, just mechanically—if they won't raise money, the alternative is, you either have to say—well, let me say what the alternative is not, first. The alternative is not their gimmicks, and then we'll come up with our gimmicks, and we'll all see who can out-gimmick someone else. That is not the alternative.

The alternative should be that we decide we're going to cut back on the spending for a year. Or if it's too severe—and from what we hear out there in the country from—and what we know about the needs of education, what we know about what we both want to do to help restore our ability to recruit in the military and help our military families with a pay increase there, what we know in a number of other areas—if we decide to spend this

money together, if we jointly agree on it, and it won't allow us to have a divided surplus, which keep in mind, we want to do this year, then both parties need to agree on that.

Now, I strongly prefer to go on and get out of the Social Security surplus this year. And what I proposed is not all that onerous—I mean, dealing with—the corporate loopholes I proposed to close, the cigarette tax, and the toxic waste dump fees. That's not all that bad. You could always compromise. You could raise less and spend a little less.

But my point is, the most important thing is, we should be straightforward with the American people about this, and we shouldn't try to get them all tied up in knots and pretend that something is going on that isn't. We know we are going to now have, in the future years, a surplus that will—except when we have economic downturns—but on average, a surplus that will be large enough, projected, that we can meet the future needs of education, the environment, national security, out of non-Social Security revenues.

Now, this is a—let me remind you all, this is a new development. When we were in the deficit spending mode all during the eighties—all of you know this; you wrote about it a lot—the deficits were made to seem smaller than they were because Social Security revenues were in surplus over Social Security payments. They are still in surplus over Social Security payments, but now other revenues are in surplus over other spending this year.

But the '97 budget caps were very tight. They were for the teaching hospitals; they were for a lot of other things; they were—when it comes to continuing to improve education—and we do need to spend some more on national defense, as all of you know. At least I feel that way and the Republicans do, too, because of the problems for the military families and some modernization problems. So this whole question that there is just so much agitation on and all these ads filling the airwaves, it's really about the fact that when they started looking at their budget, they couldn't get out of the Social Security funds until next year either unless they were willing to raise some money this year from the cigarette tax, from closing corporate loopholes, or the toxic waste dumps.

So all I'm suggesting is, we need to sort of stop misleading the American people—they need to—with their television ads; and we need

to sit down and work this out and figure out what's right for the people, make the right disciplined choices and go forward.

Q. Mr. President, you said you need to sit down and talk, and yet there are some Republicans on the Hill who make it clear that that's the last thing they want to do, is to sit down with the White House and start negotiating. What is the status—

The President. That's the last thing they want to do.

Q. Right.

The President. Yes, that's right.

Q. So what is the status of communication right now, and how can you get out of this if you all don't start communicating?

The President. Well, I don't think we can if we don't start communicating. But all I'm telling you is they've had a debate, apparently, within their caucus in both Houses about whether we ought to join hands and do the, evidently, right thing for the American people and also be candid about this budget problem that they have, because they're philosophically opposed to raising the cigarette tax, and they don't want to close any corporate loopholes right now. We've just got to figure out if there is a resolution to that. And then there are those who believe that they can somehow create this whole other issue, spending the Social Security surplus, and then say that they're not doing it, we're doing it, even though they're in the majority and they approve all the money; or they can say, well, I made them do it somehow. That's what's going on here.

So there are people who believe in their caucus that somehow they can make some big political issue out of this. And then there are those who want to get something done. I had a long talk with a committee chairman yesterday, and I won't identify him for fear of hurting him. But we talked a long time about how we need to make an honest effort to resolve the differences between where they are and where we are on the areas within his jurisdiction.

So I think there is a difference of opinion. I think a lot of them would like to just show up for work tomorrow. And that's what I hope we'll do.

Nuclear Accident in Japan

Q. Has Japan asked for American help in dealing with its nuclear accident? And how would the United States treat such a request?

The President. Well, first of all—and I should have said this the very first thing—we are all very concerned, and our thoughts and prayers are with the people in Japan today because of this uranium plant accident. You can only imagine how difficult this must be for them, quite apart from whatever the facts are. This is going to be a very hard day for the people of Japan.

And we are doing our best to determine what, in fact, has happened and what assistance we can give. And we will do whatever we possibly can that will be helpful to them. And we will try to be as comprehensive and prompt about it as possible.

Mortgage for New York Residence

Q. Mr. President, what about your mortgage, sir? Do you now understand why some people felt that it was improper for you to arrange a mortgage with a loan guarantee from Mr. McAuliffe? And are you now planning to get a different kind of mortgage?

The President. Well, I will stay with what Mr. Lockhart has told you about that. We had just a day or two to get that house; a lot of people wanted it for the same reason we liked it. A lot of people like the house. It's a nice place. We liked it. So we did what was necessary to secure it.

Now, we're going to close on it in a little more than a month. And if we change the financing between now and then, we'll let you know as soon as we do. But we did not do it before we got an opinion from the Office of Government Ethics about the mechanics of it, and that it did not constitute a gift under Federal law.

Q. Why wouldn't Bowles and Rubin help?

The President. They were—I don't have anything to say about that. McAuliffe called me the first thing when I was talking to him, and he said, "Look, if you can get somebody else

to do it, fine." I think because everybody thought it was a legitimate business arrangement. No one thought there was anything wrong with it, all the people I talked to about it and all the people anybody else talked to about it.

I think some people didn't want to do it because they know they live in a world where they live in the Larry Klayman political press world in which what's true is not as important as whether you can be dragged around; you have to spend a lot of money you don't have or you'd rather not spend for reasons that have nothing to do with anything that's real.

It's like this television ad campaign, to go back to the budget issue. There is the rest of the world and the way it works and the way people view things, and then there is the way a lot of things around here work. And so I don't—anybody that's ever been through it knows that's true.

You're all smiling because you think, I wonder if the President made a mistake by committing the truth in that last remark. I can see you all smiling and thinking that. [Laughter] So all I can tell you is, I feel good about where we are on it. We're going to close on it in a month, and we're excited about it. And if we change the financing, we'll let you know.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Larry Klayman, chairman, Judicial Watch, Inc.; former Chief of Staff to the President Erskine B. Bowles; former Secretary of the Treasury Robert E. Rubin; and Terence McAuliffe, loan guarantor of the First Family's residence Chappaqua, NY. H.J. Res. 68, "Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2000," approved September 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-62.

Remarks at the National Education Summit in Palisades, New York September 30, 1999

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, Governors, education leaders, business leaders. I am delighted to be here. I thank my good friend Governor Hunt for his remarks. This year marks the 20-year anniversary from the time you and

Secretary Riley and I started working together on education.

I want to thank Governor Thompson for his interest in this and so many other issues. Tommy Thompson is the first Governor who

told me that he thought that he could really move, literally, every able-bodied welfare recipient in Wisconsin to work. And I think they've had a 91 percent drop in the rolls. He nearly got it done. Congratulations; that's an amazing achievement.

And I want to especially thank Lou Gerstner and all the business leaders here, because you kept the idea of the summit alive and understood the importance of consistent and systematic followup with the Governors, with the educators. I am very grateful to you for doing this. Most people like you do a project like this for a year or two, and then they forget it and go on to something else. And you haven't done it, and I'm very grateful.

And for all of you who were here 3½ years ago, who stayed involved in this, I thank you.

Governor Hunt—I was watching him on the monitor outside—talked about the issuance of the "Nation At Risk" report 16 years ago, the meeting we had 15 years ago. The first National Education Summit was in Charlottesville 10 years ago this week. And some of us were there then. President Bush, his Education Department, education leaders from around the country, we were all together. And we came together to embrace the concept and specifics of national education goals.

At the second summit, here in Palisades 3½ years ago, we supported the idea that every State should set standards. At this third summit I hope we will embrace with equal fervor the idea of accountability, for only by holding educators, schools, students, and ourselves accountable for meeting the standards we have set will we reach the goals we seek.

We have made significant progress, particularly in the ideas governing the way we look at this. More and more we're leaving behind the old divisions between one side saying, "We need more money," and the other side saying, "We shouldn't invest any more money in our public schools, it's hopeless." By and large, there is a new consensus for greater investment and greater accountability, greater investment and higher standards and higher quality teachers to help students reach the standards; holding the schools accountable for the results. That's the agenda of Achieve, the agenda of our administration, clearly the right agenda for the United States.

I think it is another mark of progress and something that many of you in this room can

feel profoundly both proud of and grateful for, that 10 full years after Charlottesville and now more than 16 years after the issuance of the "Nation at Risk" report, there is still a passionate sense of national urgency about school reform and about lifting education standards. And there are people who get up every day full of energy about it, not cynical, not skeptical, not jaded, not tired, still eager to learn, people in Governors' offices, people in the schools of our country, business leaders, education leaders of all kind.

This is quite an astonishing thing. You cannot think of a single other issue that has had this long a life at this level of intense commitment. And I think it is a tribute to the love of the American people for their children, a tribute to the understanding of the American people of the importance of education in the global economy, and a sense that we know that we have both the largest and the most diverse student population in our history.

But if you just think about how people get tired of political issues, how everybody is supposed to want to read something new in the paper or seeing something new on the evening news, month-in and month-out, and you think about how long ago it was when Governor Caperton there decided to make all of his elementary students computer literate; how long Governor Engler has been in office; how long ago it was that Secretary Riley and Governor Hunt and I started fooling with all this—and the country is as hot to do the right thing, to improve the education of our children today as it was the day after the "Nation At Risk" report was issued. And that's a great source of comfort to me, and reassurance. And the business leaders, the educators, and the political leaders here in this room and like-minded people throughout this country deserve a lot of credit for that.

When I came to Washington 6½ years ago, all of you knew that the number one problem I had to deal with was the deficit, because we quadrupled the debt in 4 years, interest rates were high, the economy was stagnant. We had to cut hundreds of programs, and we were determined to try to do it in a way that would increase our investment, not decrease our investment in education at the national level, and to do it in a way that, spearheaded by Secretary Riley, to give you more flexibility, but also to

focus on the pressure points of reform that would likely give us the greatest returns.

I am very grateful that we have seen our deficit of \$290 billion turn into a surplus of \$115 billion. This year we'll have the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And today we learned we have the lowest rate of poverty in America in 20 years. I am very grateful for that. But I'm also grateful that during this period we were able to early double the Federal investment in education, to help you provide your children and your schools with more of the tools they need. We've increased early childhood investment through Head Start. We've opened the doors of college wide by basically modeling a national version of Georgia's HOPE scholarship and providing tax credits for beyond the first 2 years of high school.

We have increased Pell grants and established education IRA's. We've begun to organize an army of tutors. We now have a thousand colleges and universities, I believe in every State in the country, involving themselves in America Reads, to try to make sure all 8-year-olds can read when they finish the third grade.

We've made an enormous amount of progress, and a lot of you have been active on this, in hooking up every school and library in the country to the Internet and with the E-rate making sure that the poorest schools can afford to participate in the information superhighway.

Last fall we fought for and won a big bipartisan consensus to make a downpayment of 30,000 teachers, on getting 100,000 more teachers out in the country to lower class sizes in the early grades. And we have supported a huge increase in the number of charter schools in America. When I became President in January of '93 there was only one charter school in the whole country, in the State of Minnesota. There are now 1,300.

We're in New York; the New York Legislature, I think, just authorized the establishment of the first charter schools here. In California, they just took the cap off the number of charter schools that they could have. We still have a lot of interest in magnet schools and other public school choice initiatives along with the other debates on this subject. But I think that we are well on our way to having 3,000 charter schools in the United States by next year, which is the goal that I set for our administration when we started down this path 6 years ago.

Now, in addition to what we've done, what's more important is what you've done and what the country's done. We have made truly remarkable progress in the standards movement, thanks in no small measure to the leadership of Governors and those of you who gathered here 3½ years ago. Our Goals 2000 legislation and the reforms in Title I we made have supported that. Today, almost every State has standards for what children should know in English, math, science, history, social studies. Next year, virtually every State will be testing students to see if they're meeting the standards.

Now, that is all very good news. My friend Hugh Price, who is sitting back there to my left, leader of the Urban League, recently observed that people didn't talk much about standards and test scores 50 years ago because the output of the schools, whether it was good, bad or indifferent, more or less matched with the demands of a blue collar economy that needed strong backs more than well-developed minds. The problem now is that the economy has changed much faster than the schools.

People used to say, "You know, the schools just aren't what they used to be." The problem may be that too many of our schools are too much like they used to be, but the world the children move out into is not at all as it used to be. And that, of course, is what a lot of you are trying to help to change.

Now, as we move into this period of not only having standards but having accountability—that is consequences for the failure to meet them—there will be people who will, first of all, be elated at the evidence of improvement, which you can see all over the country where such things have been done from California to Houston to Chicago to Dade County to many other places in the country. Then there will be those who will want to shrink back because they fear the adverse consequences of failure and many people really don't believe all kids can learn. I think it would be a mistake to give in to those fears.

And one of the things that I would hope will come out of this summit, Lou, is that all of you, in encouraging accountability, which is, I know, something you believe in, ask people not to be afraid when there are consequences.

I just saw the results in New York City, where the first group of children have gone—didn't score at the appropriate level. They went to summer school. Many that went to summer

school are being prompted, but a few that went to summer school aren't, and all the ones that refused to go aren't.

And there may be some mistakes made. But as long as we send the message to these kids that "We're doing this for you. This doesn't mean there's something wrong with you, but we'll be hurting you worse if we tell you you're learning something when you're not. We'll be basically participating in a fraud which, ultimately, will cost you more personally, psychologically, and of course, eventually financially, than any pain that comes in the moment."

But in order to do this, this whole issue will have to be really taken out of and kept out of the closet. Governors will have to look dead in the eye of some child that was held back and say, "That's okay; you can do it," and lift them up. We won't have to pretend that there will never be a moment of pain for anybody in any of this.

And similarly, business people and Governors will have to know that we have done everything we absolutely can to give every kid we can the chance not to be taken down by the system. It's one of the things that I liked about Chicago, where the summer school now for the children that don't make the grade is now the sixth biggest school district in the entire United States of America—the Chicago summer school, the sixth biggest school district in America. Why? Because they don't want to brand the kids as failures when the system didn't do for them what it should have.

And Secretary Riley and I have met with parents whose children have been through the system there, including parents of children who were held back and had to go to summer school. I have been into a poor neighborhood there where virtually all the kids had to go to summer school in a couple of the classes. And because they believed the system is honest and because they believe that the purpose of what is being done is not for some politician or educator to look tough or run up numbers in the polls or, say, have some easy sloganeering answer, but the purpose is to make sure these kids learn what they need to learn to have good lives, they support it. They support the standards. They support the mandatory summer school. They support what's being done in the after-school programs.

And it will happen everywhere in America. But we all have to commit the truth about this.

And we can't pretend there will never be any painful consequences. But where there are painful consequences, all the Governors can do a world of good by going into those schools and say, "I'm doing this because I want you to have a good life. I'm doing this because it's not too late for you. This is just the beginning of your life. I'm doing this because your teachers and your principals and your parents and the business leaders in this community, we care about your future, and we're going to make this work." And I hope we can do that.

Let me just say very quickly, I think we have to have these basic standards in every State, and we have to make it possible, as Achieve has recommended, not only know whether the standards are being met but to give the parents some comparative information about how children in other States and other nations are doing. I think we have to recommit ourselves to extra support.

And Congress, when—I sent this education accountability act to Congress, saying that school districts accepting Federal money must ensure that teachers know the subject they're teaching, have reasonable discipline codes, empower parents with report cards, have a strategy—and I think this is very important—to turn around failing schools or close them down, and finally, a strategy to end social promotion that empowers children who aren't making the grade through the after-school programs, the summer school programs, and all the rest.

Now, we're having a big argument in Washington on the budget today. I don't want to get into a partisan rerun of that, but let me just say this: We can have the kind of budget we need that will help you to do what you need to do without—and we can meet the budget targets without coming up short in education, whether it's for Head Start or more teachers or the initiative to help States build and modernize 6,000 new schools or the American Reads program or this GEAR UP program, all of which the Congress supported last year, by the way, to help mentor kids that are in trouble in junior high school, to try to get them into college by getting them over that rough patch. So I hope we can get that done.

I also wanted to say, emphasize something that I think is very important, our budget would provide \$200 million to help you turn around low-performing schools. I believe that it is not

enough to say, no social promotion, strict accountability, and even summer school and after-school programs for kids, unless there is a strategy to turn around the low-performing schools. And I know that in North Carolina and in several other places where this has been done—I mentioned them earlier, Houston, Dade County, Chicago, and there are other places—but there is evidence now—we don't have to question this either—there is a lot of evidence that these low-performing schools can be turned around.

I went to an elementary school in Chicago, in the Robert Taylor housing project, where the reading scores had tripled and the math scores had doubled in 2 years. Were they on a low base? Yes. Were they where they ought to be? No. But does it prove you can turn things around, even in the most adverse circumstances? Absolutely. So I think that if we're going to have genuine accountability for standards, it is important that we have something to turn the schools around.

And again, I say—a lot of people in Congress don't want to adopt this accountability standard for Federal funds because they say that we shouldn't impose that on you. But I think all of you know that the five elements in the Federal bill were basically ideas we got straight out of local school districts and States. They weren't something that Dick Riley cooked up. It was something that the Education Department developed based on the proven experience and results of local school districts and States.

Finally, let me just give you something to feel good about again, at the end. In 1996, there were only 14 States with measurable standards. Today there are 50. That's the good news. Here's why you ought to focus on accountability. In 1996, there were only 11 States with systems that identify and sanction low-performing schools. Today there are only 16. This is the hard part.

But again, I say, we've got to give the schools the tools they need to do the job. And the Federal Government has an important role to play. We don't provide an enormous amount of the total funds for schools, but that amount was slipping for a while, and we got it going back up now. And I feel very strongly, as the Secretary of Education, that with the largest student population in history and with all this educational evidence about the benefits of smaller classes and with the imperative of ending the

practice of social promotion, finishing the work of 100,000 teachers, helping you to build or remodel 6,000 schools so they'll be modern, and doing these other things are quite important.

Now, let me just make one other point. I'm encouraged by the movement to standards in the 3½ years since you had your last summit here, and you should be, too. That's a rather astonishing move. And it shows what can happen if you meet in an environment where you've got business and education and the political leadership working together, and Republicans and Democrats leave the party labels at the door, and everybody just works on what's good for the kids.

But this is the hard part. It's not an accident that we've gone from 16 to 50 standards and 11 to 16 in genuine accountability. It's hard. But you also can take a lot of pride in the fact that you have evidence, even in big urban areas with a lot of trouble, where this has worked. And the consequences are good.

Now, last February when the Governors were in the White House, I just noted that it took 100 years for laws mandating compulsory, free elementary education to spread from a few States to the whole Nation. When it comes to this accountability agenda, will we follow the model of the last 3½ years with standards and go from 16 to 50 in a hurry, or will we go back to the model of the earlier time? I think all of you know what we ought to do.

And I will say again, I think the fact that we have the largest number of children in our public schools in history, I think the fact that they are more diverse than ever before in terms of their backgrounds and their languages is a godsend for us for the 21st century in a global society if, but only if, we prove not only that they can all learn but that we can teach them all. We know they can all learn from—you can do a brain scan and determine that. That's always been—that's the wrong question. The question is can we teach them all, and are we prepared to do it, and are we prepared to have constructive compassion for their present difficulties by having genuine accountability and also heartfelt support?

The reason that there is still so much enthusiasm for all this after—10 years after the Charlottesville Summit, 16 years after the "Nation at Risk," 20 or 30 years after all the Southerners figured out that it's the only way to lift our States out of the dirt is that everybody knows

that deep down inside it's still the most important public work.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the Watson Room at the IBM Palisades Executive Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred

to North Carolina Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr.; Wisconsin Gov. Tommy G. Thompson; Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer, IBM Corp.; former Gov. Gaston Caperton of West Virginia; Gov. John Engler of Michigan; and Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League, Inc.

Remarks on the Nuclear Accident in Japan and Social Security and an Exchange With Reporters

October 1, 1999

The President. Good morning. This morning before I leave for California, I would like to talk about two issues briefly; first, the tragic nuclear accident in Japan. I have just spoken with Prime Minister Obuchi to express our sympathy to those who have been affected, and our readiness to help in any way we can.

He told me the Japanese authorities have been able to bring the situation under control, and he thanked me for the outpouring of support from the United States. Over the last day we've been providing information to Japan on our experiences in dealing with similar incidents in the United States, and making available our experts in atmospheric monitoring and any other areas that might be useful.

Secretary Richardson has been meeting with his counterparts in Russia and discussing ways we can all coordinate our assistance with them. Japan has been our friend and our ally, and we're ready to work together to address the situation and to prevent future accidents.

I would also like to talk about a new important step we're taking to help more Americans make their retirement years more secure. Through war and peace, from recession to expansion, our Nation has always fulfilled its obligation to older Americans. Thankfully, it's hard to remember the time when growing old usually meant growing poor. It seems impossible to believe, but in many cases, retirement before Social Security meant being sent off to long, lonely years of dependence. The normal aches of aging were accompanied by the unbearable pain of becoming a burden on one's children. That's why Social Security means so much to the life of our Nation. For almost 65 years now it's been an unshakable covenant among genera-

tions, between workers and retirees, between the disabled and the able bodied.

But too many Americans, when planning their retirement, take too little account of Social Security. Of course it's hard to fully plan for tomorrow if you don't know where you stand today. Most Americans receive annual statements of their earnings, their savings, and their private pensions. Until today, however, they've never received annual statements on Social Security, the largest source of income for many, many elderly Americans.

I am pleased to announce that today the Social Security Administration is launching a new effort to help workers know what they can plan on, what they can count on, and if need be, what they can rely on during retirement. One hundred twenty-five million American can now look forward to annual estimates of their Social Security benefits. The first half million mailings go out today. This new Social Security statement will help more Americans understand what Social Security means to them. It will form a vital part of any family's financial planning and help more Americans chart a course to retirement that is clear and secure.

For many Americans Social Security, along with savings and pensions, is the foundation of retirement security. It's a rock-solid guarantee. In this time of prosperity we have our best chance yet to see that it remains so. I hope we will do so and extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. I will continue to do all I can, not only to strengthen Social Security but also to strengthen and reform Medicare for the next century, to fulfill our obligation not

only to our older Americans but to their children and their grandchildren. Thank you very much.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

Q. Mr. President, do you believe the FBI is being operated professionally, and what makes you think that?

The President. Well, do you already know the answer? [Laughter]

Q. You made a comment about it the other day.

The President. No, I think—I made a comment, I believe, in the context of the Waco situation. And there is now a provision for Senator Danforth to look into it. I think that was the appropriate thing to do. That was, of course, agreed on by both the Attorney General and Director of the FBI. And I think that is the way that it should proceed.

Several years ago, as you know, the FBI director was set up in a different way by Congress, given a term of years, and essentially, I think, it was designed to insulate it more from the executive branch generally, although the Attorney General clearly still has supervisory responsibilities there. And I think that under these circumstances what I have said is all I should say. And I think that both Mr. Freeh and the Attorney General did the right thing in asking for this independent review. I don't think there is much more to say about it.

Republican Budget Proposal

Q. Mr. President, what do you make of Governor Bush's comments that House Republican leaders should not balance the budget on the backs of the poor?

The President. Well, I was delighted to see that he, or that any prominent Republican, finally had joined our position on this. We've been saying this since the proposal was first floated. What they propose to do is unconscionable, and basically, instead of those people getting their tax returns on time like other Americans do, they would get it once a month, and it would cost them a lot of money not only in—they would actually lose some money and then the rest of the money they would get much later in the year. I think it's wrong, and I intend to do everything I can to stop it. And I believe I can stop it.

But I will also say, as I said yesterday, that this is a difficult thing for the Republicans be-

cause unlike us, they don't want to provide reasonable offsets so that we can begin this year to segregate the Social Security surplus from the general revenue surplus and not dip into the Social Security surplus any more. That requires good, firm decisions with reasonable offsets, and we've given them to the Congress. And I hope that the reaction across the country to their idea to raise taxes on the poor will provoke them to reconsider the offsets we have offered.

Let me emphasize again, however, that this only underscores my judgment that I did the right thing in vetoing their tax cut. They can't even pay for this year's spending without getting into the Social Security surplus. They certainly couldn't pay for this year's spending, the spending it will necessitate in the years to come, and the tax cut on top of that.

Japanese Nuclear Accident

Q. Mr. President, are you confident that the kind of accident that happened in Japan can't happen here in America, or do you think that some additional steps need to be taken?

The President. Well, I've asked our people to look at that, the appropriate authorities, to take a look at that. We had a similar incident in this country, I was informed yesterday, I think about 30 years ago. I think that's right. I wish I had the specifics. But we had a general conversation about it, and I said that I thought that we ought to have all of our people learn everything we could about what happened there, analyze our systems here, and make sure we've done everything we can to protect ourselves.

There was a pretty good level of confidence that we had done that, yesterday. But I think that when something like this happens we realize we live in a world where perfection eludes us, and we've got to keep working on this. So that's what I've asked to be done.

I also think, by the way though if I could just reemphasize, that this should again sensitize us to the importance of issues of nuclear safety. And if I could just mention one; once again I'm in a dispute with a majority of Members of Congress over this Yucca Mountain Facility in Nevada. And my feeling that at the time it was selected, there was some science in there but perhaps some politics, too, since Nevada is a small State and I have wanted not to see this issue politicized but to bend over backwards to make sure we do everything we can to deal

with the nuclear safety issue before we adopt this course. I still feel that way.

I hope that generally all Americans will want to see us proceed in every area where we're dealing with nuclear safety.

Social Security and Federal Spending

Q. Mr. President, given the political cross-fire over dipping into the Social Security surplus fund why don't you take the lead and invite GOP leaders down to the White House to discuss reasonable offsets and, as a last resort if need be, agree to spend money together?

The President. Well, I am certainly willing to talk to them, and we are, as I'm sure you know, we're trying to keep the lines of communication open. And I hope that there will come a time when we can get the leaders of both parties in Congress together and agree on a future course. I think that is important.

But they have to be also willing to have that sort of discussion first, and we're working on it. I'm very hopeful that they will decide that, as is usually the case in the United States, that doing the right thing for the American people is the best politics.

They have decided that the right thing to do is to spend money that goes beyond the budget caps of '97, which is certainly understandable, particularly in the Medicare area, that they are too tight and that it would go beyond what the non-Social Security surplus is. As I said yesterday, that has been the case at least since 1983 when the last Social Security reform was done and the revenues of Social Security came in, but no one really noticed it because we were always running a deficit.

Then the Congress decided, and I agreed, that it would be a good thing, since we now project surpluses, to segregate out these two. That's a good thing. But they found out that they had committed to do it a year before they could do that and meet their spending goals.

So, there are three choices here. Either really do harm to the country by not making some of these investments, which they don't want to do and I don't either; or cut some things that I think would be a big mistake, like education or our responsibilities around the world; or find reasonable offsets; or otherwise make a principled agreement and tell the American people what we're doing; or look for the gimmicks.

And I think they've got to move away from the—they chose the third alternative, gimmicks plus television ads, to try to blame us for doing what they are, in fact, doing. And I just think that's a mistake. I am perfectly willing to work with them and talk with them and tell the American people, whatever decision we wind up making, what we did and why if we can reach a principled agreement.

Yesterday, at least, it looked to me like they wanted to stick with the course they're on. I think it's a big mistake, and I think eventually we'll get where we need to go and do the right thing. And they will find when we do, that politically it's almost always the best politics to do the right by the country.

Florida A&M Bombings

Q. You've been sounding out against terrorism, and there is a quiet story coming out of Florida, Florida A&M. Have you heard about the bombings at Florida A&M? And there is supposedly a conclusion today to that situation. What are your thoughts? There have been several bombings at Florida A&M.

The President. Well, I would like to know more about the source of them, whether they're racially motivated, whether they're politically motivated. When I do, then I think I should make a statement. Obviously we deplore violence of any kind and bombings, by their very nature, are terroristic. But I would like to know more about what the roots of it are or what we believe they are, and then I will be glad to say more.

Q. Were you made aware of the incidents before this week?

The President. Just in the general way that you've described them, but no more.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:59 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for Las Vegas, NV. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; former Senator John C. Danforth, Special Counsel investigating the Justice Department's role in the 1993 siege in Waco, TX; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. A portion of the exchange could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Luncheon in Las Vegas, Nevada

October 1, 1999

Thank you very much. Senator Bryan, Senator Reid, Senator Baucus; Mr. Mayor, Mayor Jones, and Senator Bernstein—that sounds pretty good, doesn't it? *[Laughter]* Sounds pretty good. *[Laughter]* And my good friend Arthur Goldberg—I had a wonderful day with him in his home in New Jersey, and now he's brought me to Paris.

I went to Paris for the first time 30 years ago this year as a young man. And not very long ago, on my way to Bosnia to talk about our humanitarian efforts there to save the people of Kosovo from ethnic cleansing, I stopped in Paris for a day to see the President of France and the Prime Minister, and I had a chance to walk again as I did a young man, along the Tuileries and look again at the Eiffel Tower. I've already had more dreams fulfilled than I could have asked for in 10 lifetimes, but I never dreamed I'd actually get to give a speech in the Eiffel Tower. *[Laughter]* So I thank you, Arthur, for one more milestone in my life, and I congratulate you on this magnificent creation and the success it's enjoying.

I was thinking about all of you here today, and I was thinking, one of the things that I like about Arthur Goldberg and a lot of the others of you who have been my longtime friends here, is that you have a sense of enlightened self-interest. You're intelligent enough to support Democrats so you can continue to live like Republicans. *[Laughter]*

And I told someone the other day, I saw how much money Governor Bush had raised—you know, I'm thinking of putting that down as one of the economic achievements of my tenure in office—*[laughter]*—that we didn't discriminate; we allowed the Republicans to make money, too, in this economy. And it's not our fault if they decide to spend it in a way different than we would like.

Let me say, just seriously—I'll be rather brief, but I want to first thank you for coming here; and second, to try to give you some sense of what is at issue in this coming election year in all of the elections, and certainly in these elections for United States Senate, every one of which is of genuine national significance.

First, when Al Gore and I moved to Washington in 1993, into the White House, and we started our administration, we had a few very definite ideas about how we ought to change our policy, how we ought to change our economic policy, our crime policy, our welfare policy, our education policy, what our priorities in foreign policy ought to be, and we generally were trying to prepare America for the global economy and the global society in which we're living for the post-cold-war world, with a view to give every person in this country a chance to live up to his or her God-given abilities; trying to bring an increasingly diverse country closer together, instead of allowing it to become more and more torn apart and fractionalized, as so many countries in the world are today, over differences of race, religion, and other things. And we wanted to try to maintain America's role for peace and freedom and prosperity in the world.

And after 6½ years, the results, I think, speak for themselves. We do have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years and the lowest crime rates in 26 years. We just had back-to-back surpluses in our budget for the first time in 42 years. And yesterday we learned that we have the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the longest peacetime expansion, and the highest homeownership in history. These are things we can be proud of. And I am grateful that I had the chance to serve and to be a part of these historic developments. And for all of you that had anything to do with that, I thank you.

But every country must always have its eyes pointed toward tomorrow. And it may seem strange to you, since I can't run again, but I almost wish that the theme song of this year's election—the millennial election next year, I mean—were the one that we used in 1992, that great old Fleetwood Mac song, "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow."

The question is not whether America will change; it is how America will change and whether we will build on what we have done that is working to meet the large, long-term

challenges the country faces in this new millennium or whether we will basically veer off and go back to an approach that got us in an awful lot of trouble before. The economy has been good so long, most people have forgotten what it was like in 1992. Most people forgot what it was like to have year in after year out of crime rates rising, welfare rolls rising, and intensifying social divisions.

So I say to you, the question—and I hope you'll keep this in mind between now and November of 2000—the issue for every citizen, without regard to party, is not whether we will vote for change. The issue is what kind of change we will embrace. That is, America is always changing. That's why we're still around here after over 220 years, because we've always been in the business of recreating ourselves based on our bedrock principles. And what difference does it make who's in the Senate? It will determine whether we use this moment of prosperity to save Social Security so that the baby boomers don't, in effect, bankrupt our children with our retirement. It will determine whether we lengthen the life of Medicare and add a prescription drug coverage, which is of pivotal importance to millions of Americans. Three-quarters of the retired people in this country today do not have access to affordable prescription drugs, and a lot of the hospital bills that they run up are because they did not have the preventive medications that they need.

It will determine whether we make a commitment to what is now the largest, most ethnically and religiously diverse group of people we've ever had in our schools, and whether we really believe that they can all learn and we're determined to give them a world-class education.

Yesterday I went to New York, to the IBM Center, to meet with Governors and business leaders of both parties to talk about the absolute imperative of having world-class standards and genuine accountability for all of our school children; the need to end social promotion but to give our children the schools they need; to turn around failing schools or shut them down; to give kids the after-school and summer school and mentoring support they need; but to keep pushing for higher standards in education. These are just three big questions.

I have asked the Congress to adopt a plan that would take Social Security out to 2050, beyond the life expectancy of all but the most fortunate baby boomers. I'd like to be around

then, but it seems sort of unlikely. I have asked them to add more than a decade to the life of Medicare and to deal with the prescription drug issue. I have asked to adopt some truly groundbreaking educational reforms, and I have asked them to do it in a budget that would allow America over the next 15 years to pay down the debt, so that by 2015 we'd be debt-free for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. Now, those are changes worth fighting for.

Now, in every case, there are differences among the parties on this. I also have to tell you that there are differences in other areas. I'm fighting now to get the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty ratified in the Senate. Virtually all the opposition we have is coming from the other side of the aisle. A dream that was first embraced by Dwight Eisenhower, a Republican President, and proposed by John Kennedy, a Democrat, who gave us the first temporary test ban treaty.

It is profoundly important because we are trying to stop countries that do not have nuclear power now, and terrorist groups who do not have nuclear power now, from getting it. And it will help us not only to restrain people who have nuclear weapons from using them ever in the future but from seeing the proliferation of these things. Every Senator's vote makes a difference. The treaty has to be ratified by two-thirds of the Senate.

I'm trying to get the funds from the Congress to implement the agreement I made with former Prime Minister Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat, with the help of the late King Hussein, at the Wye peace accords. It's absolutely imperative that America do its part if we want the Israelis and their partners in the Middle East to keep making peace. It could have a huge impact on the life our children lead in the 21st century. And the congressional majority so far has been unwilling to fund it. Every Senator's vote makes a difference.

And I can go on and on and on. You know this; you've seen it. But it's easy to forget. This State has been profoundly well served by Dick Bryan and Harry Reid. And Arthur said he wished I could run again; I wish Dick would have run again. *[Laughter]* I told him, I said, "He's too young to quit. He doesn't even have gray hair, unlike some people."

So when you pick someone to succeed him, you have to think about this. The person you

pick to succeed him is going to lengthen the life of Social Security or try to let it wither on the vine, hoping that it will be privatized, not really thinking about what's going to happen not to the baby boomers; most of us will be fine. What happens to our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren if we leave a significant percentage of our people who are my age and younger, in the baby boom generation, unable to sustain themselves in retirement?

What if we don't continue to push to raise standards in education? You know, our children have picked up nearly a full grade in reading levels in the last 2 years. It didn't happen by accident. Four years ago only 16 States had enforceable standards; today, 50 do. Four years ago only 11 States had real accountability—that is, for schools, teachers, and students; today, only 16 do.

Now, I can tell you, the Democrats are more likely than the Republicans, by a factor of five or six, to continue to push to raise standards in education. It could change the whole future of America. We are more likely to push for things like the hate crimes legislation and other things that are designed to bring us together across all the lines that divide us, and certainly more likely to think about our responsibilities in the world.

You know, people come here to Las Vegas, from all over the world. And I know that for many Americans, maybe people living in small towns in this State, they'd just as soon, just thinking about it for 30 seconds, that we not invest any money anywhere else in the world. But with the end of the cold war, a modest investment in our diplomacy can keep American men and women in uniform out of wars for decades to come. It will save lives; it will give us a more peaceful world. It will also protect the international economy, on which our own prosperity depends.

All this will be determined not only by the Presidential race but by the races for the Senate and the races for the House. And it seems to me, when you think about the things everybody used—not everybody, at least our friends in the opposition—the Republicans used to say about the Democrats that they were weak on crime, weak on welfare, weak on the budget, weak on foreign policy, all those things they used to say about us—“you can't trust them to run the country.” Our crime policy has helped communities have the lowest crime rate in a generation.

Our welfare policies have given us the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, without doing what they wanted to do, which was to cut the kids out of federally guaranteed food and medical care and to give more child care so people can succeed at home and at work. Our economic policies have benefited not just those of us in this room who can afford to be here, but we've also got the lowest poverty rates in 20 years.

And our continued commitment to fulfilling our responsibilities in the world have given us a safer world and will give us a safer world in the 21st century, which means a more prosperous world, which is critical to a more prosperous America.

I'd just leave you with this thought: We are 4 percent of the world's population; we have 22 percent of the world's income. We cannot sustain 22 percent of the income with 4 percent of the people unless we have a constructive relationship with the other 96 percent of the people in the world. It is of pivotal importance.

So it is not only for humanitarian reasons that I have sought to end the slaughter in Kosovo and Bosnia, to try to bring peace from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, to try to deal with the test ban treaty. It's also very much in the immediate daily interest of the people of this city, this State, and this Nation. This is a different and a better country than it was in 1992, and I'm grateful that I had a role to play in it. But don't be deceived here. It wasn't because of me; it was because what we did was the right thing to do. It is the ideas, the policies, the direction, the conviction of where we're going—that's what counts.

And you can keep America changing in the right way with the right decisions in all these elections in 2000. After those elections, I'll just be a citizen again, but I look forward to bearing this message for the rest of my life. And I thank you for being here to help make America work.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. in the Eiffel Tower Restaurant at the Paris Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Oscar B. Goodman and former Mayor Jan Laverty Jones of Las Vegas; Senatorial candidate Ed Bernstein; Arthur M. Goldberg, president and chief executive officer, Park Place Entertainment; President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel;

and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Statement on Vouchers To Provide Rental Assistance

October 1, 1999

The Department of Housing and Urban Development yesterday released \$280 million in rental assistance vouchers to help 50,000 families in 35 States move from welfare to work. These housing vouchers are an integral part of our efforts to reform welfare, reward work, and provide affordable housing for low-income families. They will help families move close to a job, reduce a long commute, or secure more stable housing that will help them get or keep a job.

Today, our economy is strong, incomes are up, and poverty is at the lowest rate in 20 years. But there are still more than 5 million low-

income families who need affordable housing. That is why I have asked Congress for an additional 100,000 rental assistance vouchers to meet the critical housing needs of families moving from welfare to work, the homeless, and the elderly. As Members of the House and Senate meet in conference to debate this year's budget for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, I want to underscore my strong commitment to this initiative. Congress should not turn its back on families that are playing by the rules and moving from welfare to work. A budget without new vouchers would shortchange the American dream.

Statement on the Fire at the Department of Commerce

October 1, 1999

I am relieved that today's fire at the Department of Commerce was extinguished quickly and apparently without any serious injuries. The DC Fire Department and all those who worked to put out the fire deserve credit for ensuring the safety of the Department of Commerce em-

ployees who work at the Herbert Hoover Building. I hope that the damage can be repaired quickly and that Secretary Daley and his entire team can be back to full speed as soon as possible.

Statement on Proposed Legislation on Nuclear Waste

October 1, 1999

Yesterday's nuclear accident in Japan is a tragic reminder that we must do everything in our power to ensure safe, responsible handling of radioactive materials. Upon reviewing Senate bill 1287, regarding potential nuclear waste disposal at Yucca Mountain, I have determined that it would not adequately ensure the protection of public health and safety. If this bill is presented to me in its current form, I will veto it.

I am encouraged that this latest Senate bill, the "Nuclear Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1999," does not seek to authorize interim storage of nuclear waste at Yucca Mountain before a thorough scientific analysis of the site has been completed. That would be an unconscionable mistake, and I have consistently opposed such proposals in the past. However, the bill would take away the existing authority of the Environmental Protection Agency to protect public

health and safety. It is vital that this authority be preserved.

I urge the Congress to join with me in opposing this legislation and ensuring that we fulfill

our responsibility to protect this and future generations.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception in Palo Alto, California

October 1, 1999

Thank you. You know, Tom cracked that joke about the White House. [*Laughter*] I'm a Southerner. What I thought sitting here watching him is we have reversed all the roles in "Gone With the Wind." [*Laughter*] We're about to remake the whole movie, and it's going to be better this time. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, first of all, I am delighted to be here. I thank Tom and Jeanne for opening their beautiful home and bringing their beautiful family together, and their larger family, for this event. I thank my dear friend Senator Boxer for being here and for her leadership. I want to thank Governor and Mrs. Romer for being here; and Beth and Ron Dozoretz, and Joe Andrew, for all their work; and Art Torres, the chairman of the California Democratic Party; and I thank Steve Westly and Chris Larsen and everybody else who had anything to do with this event.

There are people here tonight who started with me in 1991 and 1992, and there are people here tonight I've never met before. And that's sort of a metaphor for what's happening to the economy and the society of Silicon Valley and the whole, what I hope is happening to our Democratic Party.

I want to take a few minutes to sort of put all these specific issues that are flying back and forth across the airwaves and over the Internet into some larger context, if I might. Our economy has been strong for so long now a lot of people have forgotten what it was like in 1992, when we had high unemployment, high interest rates; we quadrupled the debt in 12 years of this country. We had had stagnant wages, and the society was beginning to fray rather badly. We had escalating crime rates, escalating welfare rolls, increasing racial tensions. We had a lot of problems.

And we had people who believed that they could get elected by driving deeper wedges into our American society instead of by bringing us together. And when I first came out here—and Larry was one of the first people I met with when I came out—when I first came out here, I knew that a big part of making America work and preparing America for the 21st century would be to model and learn from what was happening here.

You know, this whole technology-based economy here is about 8 or 9 percent of the American economy now directly, but it has accounted for 30 percent of our growth since I've been President. That's a stunning statistic that all of you should know, if you don't. And if you think about how it works, it's the way America ought to work. You know, ideas matter. If you've got good ideas, there are supplies of capital. Teamwork is terribly important. And where you come from and what you did before and who your father was and what your race is or what your gender is or what your sexual orientation is, they don't matter; ideas matter. Can you do something that makes the world a better place, that provides something that other people want that they can hook into? That's very important.

I think—let me just give you one example that I had no earthly idea about until Steve told me tonight. It's a big joke in the White House that when I picked Al Gore to be my Vice President, I was trying to balance the ticket because he was technologically adept and I was technologically challenged. [*Laughter*]

I'll never forget the first time I heard about eBay. I thought it was such a neat deal. I thought, now, that's something I'd like to do; that's my kind of deal. I like to buy and sell and swap and give things and do things. I'd love that. Steve told me tonight there are now 20,000 Americans who do not work for eBay

who make a living doing transactions through eBay, 20,000 Americans, including all kinds of people who can now work at home, people who used to be on welfare, people—and he said that one of the people said this is capitalism for the rest of us.

So with that background, let me say, when I started in 1992, it seemed to me that the problem with national politics was that it was frozen in time, but everything else was terrifically dynamic; that it was designed to take a bunch of people and politics in Washington, which is a long way from Palo Alto and a long way from everywhere else, a long way from Beltsville, Maryland, on some days—[laughter]—where there were lots of layers between the people there and real voters, and to structure voters' choices in such a way that they hoped would help the politicians, but had almost nothing to do with solving the problems of America. So you had to be a liberal or a conservative, or you had to be left or right, or you had to be for this position or that one or you weren't politically correct.

We basically had a whole string of paralysis, and we found ourselves after 12 years of so-called supply-side economics having quadrupled the debt. We were economically paralyzed, and nobody wanted to raise taxes, and nobody wanted to cut spending. And as a consequence, we were slowly sort of squeezing the lifeblood out of our public life. No one could set priorities; nobody could make decisions; nobody would take chances. And it seemed to me that if you look at the things that worked in America, where we were leading the world in private sector endeavors, or if you looked at classrooms that worked that I had visited in the poorest places in America with high crime rates, and they still—there were classrooms in the early nineties that still had no dropouts, no violence, 100 percent of the kids going on to college, everybody performing well. They were different from most places like it, but they were working. They all rejected all those false choices.

It seemed to me that's what America had to do. We had to say, "Look, we believe that we can reduce the deficit and balance the budget and still continue to invest in education and technology and the environment. We believe that we can help business and lift up working people at the same time. It's not an either/or thing. We believe we can grow the economy while we improve the environment. We don't

think it's an either/or thing. We believe we can punish criminals who ought to be punished and prevent more crime and reduce the crime rate. We believe we can require able-bodied people on welfare to work, but do it in a way that helps them to become better parents, not worse parents, through medical care and nutrition and child care." And on and on and on.

You can take any issue, but basically, what I wanted to do was to make America work the way the best of America was already working. And I wanted to hook America up to the future that so many of you are doing so much to make. And I wanted to clean out a lot of the sort of dead wood, accumulated dead wood of ideas and procedures and practices that were weighing Washington down.

I remember—I think Bill Gates said once what I thought was kind of funny. He said, "You know, our world works three times faster than normal business, and Washington works three times slower." [Laughter] "That puts them behind by a factor of nine." There's a lot of truth in that. And so we set about to try to change the whole way Government works.

And after 6½ years, you know the economic statistics. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years; the lowest welfare rates in 32 years; the lowest crime rates in 26 years; the lowest poverty rates, we learned yesterday, in 20 years; the lowest African-American poverty ever recorded. The first time we've had 2 years of budget surpluses in 42 years. We also have—but some other things you ought to know. With the HOPE scholarships and the other additions to student aid and the changes in the student loan program, virtually anybody in America who is willing to work for it can get a college education. We have, thanks to Senator Barbara Boxer, begun to offer large numbers of young people the opportunity to go to after-school programs to stay off the streets and out of trouble and learn more. And that's very important.

And during this time, we've raised the standards for clean air, for clean water, for safe food. We've cleaned up more toxic waste dumps, and the economy has gotten better, not worse, under what the sort of politically predictable right says is an unconscionable burden on the business community of cleaning up the environment.

We have, as all of you know, a more activist Government, but the size of the Federal establishment, thanks largely to technological innovations spearheaded by the Vice President, is the

smallest it has been since John Kennedy was President in 1962. The Federal Government is the smallest it's been since 1962.

So what I would like to say is, I feel that in the last 6½ years, we have at least prepared America for the 21st century. We've gotten things going again in the right direction. But the atmosphere in Washington is still entirely too partisan and entirely too ideological, driven largely by the majority party in Congress. Now, I would never say that any of us are totally blameless, but that's where most of the pressure is. And so we have a lot of things that don't make any sense to me going on there now.

And let me say, what I think we should be doing is to build on what is happening now and ask ourselves, "Okay, what are the biggest challenges out there, and how can we set in motion a framework that will allow the American people to meet those big challenges?" And I'll just give you four or five real quick that I think are important and compare that with what's going on, and that will illustrate why it's important that you're here tonight.

Number one, the number of people over 65 in this country is going to double in 30 years, as we baby boomers retire. I turn 65, if the Lord lets me live that long, in the year 2011, and I am the oldest of the baby boomers. So the baby boomers will all turn 65 between 2011 and 2029. Now, when they do, at present participation rates in the work force, there will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. For most of us, it's no sweat because we'll have other ways of supporting our retirement. But Social Security still is responsible for lifting about half of our seniors out of poverty, even if they have other sources of income as well. So we have to make sure that when we retire, the cost of the baby boomers' retirement, since we're such a big generation, does not burden our children. This is not about older people; it's about our children and our grandchildren. I'm telling you, everybody I know my age is worried about this.

So I asked the Congress to save the Social Security taxes but, as we pay down the debt, to give the interest savings that we get from saving the Social Security taxes, instead of spending them, to give the interest savings to the Social Security Trust Fund so we can run it out to 2050 and get it beyond the life expectancy of most of the baby boom generation, when things will right themselves again. This is a big

deal. And if we can't do it now, when we're in such good shape financially, we'll never get a way around to doing it.

The second thing we've got to deal with is Medicare. We're all going to be living longer. Any person that lives to be 65 today has a life expectancy of 82. The younger people in this audience, it is literally conceivable that those of you who are 35 or younger will have children who will have a life expectancy of nearly 100. That is literally true. By the time we get all the mysteries of the human genome decoded and we know how to raise children from infancy with adjusted diets for them and their genetic structure and all those things, and we have all the medical care and all the pharmaceuticals and all the research we're making into cancer, these kinds of things will happen.

Now, in the meanwhile, we don't want Medicare to go broke. And interestingly enough, because Medicare was developed 30 years ago, when the world was a very different place, there is no prescription drug coverage for Medicare patients. Now, out here where biotech is a big deal, that must strike you as fundamentally absurd. You would never orchestrate, set up a program like that today without that. But three out of four seniors in this country don't have access to affordable prescription drugs. And the consequences are pretty catastrophic for some of them and enormously difficult in terms of burdens on the health care system. So I proposed a plan to fix that.

The third thing we have to recognize is, we have the most diverse student body in the history of our schools in terms of race and religion and culture, and it is a godsend in a global economy if, but only if, they can all get a world-class education. And so we have to do that. But we know how to do that. I am telling you, I have been to schools in this country that have solved every problem you can mention in American education. But we have not systematized it. And the trick is how to have a system that has the right rewards and sanctions—just like the marketplace does—with enough creativity, just like your companies do, to let people solve these problems at the grassroots level. That's what we're trying to do.

And let me just say two other things. The next big problem that particularly those of you who are younger will face—and I predict to you that for the next 30 years, we will be obsessed with trying to find a way to deal with

the challenge of climate change and to deal with—to get the world to give up another bad idea. We gave up supply-side economics now; nobody thinks that was a good idea anymore. We're all back to basic arithmetic. It's wonderful. It didn't have anything to do with the digital economy. We went back to arithmetic. [*Laughter*]

But there is still all over, in America, in the Congress, in the business community, and all over the world in emerging societies, in China, India, other places, there are people that honestly believe you cannot have a modern economy without industrial age energy use patterns which are a prescription for environmental disaster in this country and around the world. And we have to abandon it. And a lot of the solutions will be found by people out here.

But we have offered a market-oriented response to the challenge of climate change that I think is very important, and there are two more issues that I think are big deals because—and keep in mind, every one of these issues that I'm mentioning, there is a profound difference between where we stand and where the other party stands—two more issues. We've got to find a way to bring the benefits of free enterprise to people and places that haven't been touched by this recovery, and then we have to find a way to show people in other countries how to do the same thing. We know a little about this, but not a lot.

But if 20,000 people can make a living trading on eBay, then we ought to be able to find a way to cure the 73-percent unemployment rate on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, even though they're physically separate from other people. We ought to be able to find a way to get all those poor communities in the Mississippi Delta that never recovered from the collapse of the agricultural culture that followed the impact of the Great Depression, to find economic opportunities that will reach those people. We ought to be able to find a way to get into Appalachia. We ought to be able to find a way to get into the inner cities, not just for this or that or the other individual but a critical mass of people that can create a real economy, a real market economy in these places.

And finally, on the economic issues, I think we need a long-term commitment to setting an environment that will free you to do what you want to do. That's why I have said any tax

cut we have should not interfere with our effort to pay off the publicly held debt of this country over the next 15 years to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President.

Now, why would the allegedly more liberal party—and I say—or the actually more liberal party—be for paying the country out of debt? It's the progressive thing to do. Why? Because in a global economy where interest rates are set by global markets as well as by central banks, our ability to grow depends upon your ability to get money. And our ability to give people a good life depends upon their ability to finance their homes, their cars, their businesses, their college loans for their kids.

And if we can get America out of debt, then, number one, we won't be crowding our own people, and interest rates will be lower here, which will mean higher growth and lower living costs for people; and, number two, when our friends get in trouble, as the Asian societies did a couple of years ago and we need to help them get back on their feet, they'll be able to get money at lower costs.

This is a huge, big idea. For 30 years, everybody in my generation was taught in college that a country had to have a good deal of debt; it was a healthy thing. There's not a soul here over 35 years old that took any number of economic classes that wasn't told that in economics. And it was right, under the model that existed at the time. But in a global economy with global capital markets, if we can get this country out of debt, we ought to do it so you can continue to borrow to grow the economy and create opportunity for a generation. It will change the whole future of America for 30 years.

The last thing I want to say is this. We must believe that all of America can be like this crowd of people standing in this yard tonight. That's why I'm for the employment non-discrimination act. That's why I'm for the hate crimes legislation. That's why I started that—I've got a Presidential office on race now.

I've spent so much of my time trying to make peace in the Middle East, trying to make peace in Northern Ireland, trying to stop the Bosnian Muslims and the Kosovar Albanians from being slaughtered, trying to give the Africans the capacity to avoid the future Rwandas. And all over the world, I see people in this so-called modern world where we're celebrating all of your modern ideas and your modern achievements—what

is the biggest problem in the world in America? We are dragged down by the most primitive of hatreds. It's bizarre. It's bizarre.

We celebrate all these companies that are here, and we read about Matthew Shepard being strung up in Wyoming and James Byrd being dragged to death in Texas, and a crazy guy that belongs to a church—alleged church that believes not in God but in white supremacy—goes out and starts killing people of color in the Middle West, and another crazy guy goes and shoots a bunch of kids at a Jewish school and then guns down a Filipino postman in California. You think about it. It is unbelievable that at the dawn of a new millennium, where technology is changing the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world more than at any time in history by far, opening vistas of human possibilities no one could have dreamed of a few years ago, we are being paralyzed by primitive hatreds.

And, therefore, I say to you the most important thing of all—more important than the economic policy, more important than anything else—is that our Nation stand for the proposition that we believe in the innate dignity and equality of every human being, and anybody who is law abiding and hard working has a place at the American family table. That is the most important thing of all.

So what are we fighting about in Washington? The Congress—first, they wanted to have a tax cut that would give away the entire non-Social Security surplus, which they said they could do without cutting anything. I vetoed that because it wasn't true and it wasn't responsible. Now, their own Congressional Budget Office says they've already spent \$18 billion of the Social Security surplus this year, which proves that the tax cut couldn't be financed. And all they're doing, instead of coming and trying to work it out with me, is running television ads trying to say we're doing it even though we don't have a majority vote in Congress.

Meanwhile, today Barbara Boxer spent all of her time fighting to keep our commitment to give the funds to the States and the school districts for 100,000 teachers so we can get class size down in the early grades, with the biggest student population we ever had in 1998. When

the Congress passed it right before the election, all the Republicans went out and said, "This is our kind of program: no bureaucracy, no problems, great things, smaller classes." Now they're trying to kill it because they don't want the Democratic administration to have any achievement that is demonstrable and tangible that changes the lives of people. It is the smallest kind of politics. And who cares what happens to the kids?

So if you believe we have changed America for the better, then you should know—a lot of you have been my friends; you were there for me in the beginning, and I'm not on the ballot in the year 2000—but I want you to understand something. All I feel about this is gratitude. I am grateful that I had a chance to serve. I am grateful that I had a chance to play some role in this. But the reason we're around here after over 220 years is that principles and ideas are more important than individuals.

And that's why this Presidential race, that's why every Senate race, that's why every House race is so important. That's why your presence here is so important. So I implore you—I thank you for being here. I thank you for your contributions. It's a long way between now and the year 2000, but I'm telling you, every time you nodded your head tonight on every single issue I mentioned, there is a difference between where we stand and where they stand. So you stand with us and stand with us all the way until November 2000, and then we can make all of America more full of the things that you celebrate here in your own backyard.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts Tom Adams and Jeanne Lavan; reception cochairs Steve Westly, chief executive officer, eBay, and Chris Larsen, founder and chief executive officer, E-Loan; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, former general chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Governor Romer's wife, Bea, and Ms. Dozoretz's husband, Ronald; Larry Stone, assessor, Santa Clara County, CA; and Bill Gates, chairman and chief executive officer, Microsoft Corp.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Palo Alto October 1, 1999

Thank you very much. I am delighted to be here in this beautiful home and this beautiful tent. I think I should tell you Eric and Wendy and their daughters have opened their home to us; they have also opened their swimming pool to us. We're on top of the swimming pool; I say that not to make you nervous—[*laughter*]*—because we all know that this is a community where technology reigns supreme. There will be no failure of the technology here.*

You might be interested to know that the White House press room, where you sometimes see me answering questions at briefings, that's also on a swimming pool. The President used to have a swimming pool there. And when President Nixon got in, he thought that he should do something for the press and give them closer access to the White House, so he covered up the swimming pool and gave it to the press, which resulted in his getting a lot of really good press as a result of that great and generous gesture. [*Laughter*] I said that because I always like to see the reporters laugh, and they're over there. [*Laughter*]

I am delighted to be here. I thank Joe Andrew and Beth Dozoretz and Governor and Mrs. Romer and all the people from the Democrat Party for being here. I'm glad Congresswoman Anna Eshoo got home. I don't know when she got back, but they have been voting like crazy for a long time. I want to thank John and Ann Doerr and Sandy Robertson and Scott Cook for their help on this event tonight, as well.

Let me say, what we're going to do tonight is what I prefer to do, which is after we have dinner, we're just going to have a little conversation. And so I won't speak very long. I want to thank Eric for what he said. I have tried to be a good President, to support the growth and opportunities of this community, although it is not true that I'm not technologically challenged; I am. But I understand a lot of things I can't do. Most of you do, too. So I try to understand well enough to be a good President, and I've had an enormous amount of help from the Vice President, from others, and from many people here.

I think that a lot of people in this community who have been working with us since 1991 would genuinely be surprised at how very much influence and input you have had in the decisions that we've tried to make for America over the last 7 years. And you've also had very articulate voices speaking up for you, including Anna Eshoo, Zoe Lofgren, Ellen Tauscher, and others, and I thank them all.

The other thing that I would like to say is that I am very grateful for the opportunity I've had to serve as President, to have a chance to help to give you the chance, and people like you all over America the chance to do all the marvelous things which have occurred in the last 6½ years. I especially feel that way about the technology community which represents—the high tech community represents about—directly; not indirectly, but directly—about 8 percent of our economy, but 30 percent of our growth since 1993. And it's something that you can be very proud of.

So what I tried to do for this community—I also was very mindful—was something we were doing for all of America, that it would benefit all of America, that it would lift our country and broaden the horizons and possibilities of the future for our children.

The last point I would like to make is this, and I hope we can talk more about it inside. The central issue for the American people as citizens, as we head into a new election season, and the first one in a long, long time I haven't been a direct part of, is not whether we will vote for change, but what kind of change we want to embrace.

You know here, as well as any group of people in America, that avoiding change is not an option; if we all do nothing, we're going to change because the way we work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world is changing at a breathtaking pace. So the question is, what deliberate decisions will we make about the nature of change that we hope to shape and we hope to grasp?

The argument I've been trying to make to the American people, I think with some success, to the Democrats in Congress with some success and to the Republicans in Congress with more

limited success, is that we ought to identify the largest challenges facing our country that we now are in a position to grasp because of our current prosperity and the projected financial lines that we see in the future.

The biggest ones I believe are, number one, the demographic challenge caused by the retirement of the baby boomers. We have to lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund, as well as to make it easier for people to have more private savings so that when people my age and younger retire, the baby boomers, we don't bankrupt our kids and undermine their ability to raise our grandkids. Number two—and that requires not only Social Security but some changes in Medicare as well.

Number two, we have to deal with the education of the most diverse and the largest group of schoolchildren in our history. Eric told you that he was at the education summit that the Governors had, the second one over the last 4 years. It was the 10th anniversary of the first education summit we had at the University of Virginia when I represented the Democratic Governors and President Bush was in office, and we set goals.

And then we argued that there ought to be standards to achieve those goals, and now, when I became President, only 16 States, led by Governor Romer, who was the leader of the Governors on education, had really enforceable standards; now, 50 do—in 4 years. That's good. Only 11 States had real accountability for schools and teachers and students. Now we still only have 16. So the next big thing we've got to do is get more charter schools out there, more options, and then assist them where you end social promotion, but give kids the support they need. And you have to turn around failing schools or shut them down, but there are options like charter schools if the schools aren't working. That's the next big frontier there, but that's very important.

The third big challenge I think we face is the global environmental challenge. Many of you in this room work on technologies which demonstrate to you every day that modern developments have broken the link between economic growth and putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. But a lot of people don't believe that.

A House subcommittee last year made us spend something like \$400,000 trying to defend our position on global warming, which was not

taxes, not regulation; it was markets and tax incentives to basically accelerate the development and the widespread use of available technologies that would grow the economy while improving the environment. And they think it's some dark conspiracy to take us back to the stone age economy. And we see this all over the world, and it will be a terrible problem for our children unless we do something about it.

There's a new book out by Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins, and it's called "Natural Capitalism," that I commend to all of you. No one could read it and come away with any conclusion other than we could actually accelerate the growth of this economy if we got very serious about energy conservation and the development of alternative energy sources. We would accelerate, not slow down, the growth of the economy. So it's a huge issue, I think.

The fourth thing that I would like to say is I think that we have got to find a way to sustain—to keep pushing the limits of the business cycle. When I became President, I was told by my own economists that if we got the unemployment rate below 6 percent for 6 months or more, we'd have inflation. And it's been below 4½ percent for 2 years, and we don't have much. I don't think we've repealed all the laws of economics here. I don't even think you can do that. But what we have done is to plug into the global economy and emerging technologies in a way that make it possible to fundamentally change the parameters of business cycles and the heavens of supply and demand. In order to do that, what I think we have to do among other things, in Government, is to keep paying down the debt.

And I've given the Congress a proposal that, if they would adopt it, would deal with these other challenges I've mentioned, provide for a modest tax cut and still enable us to get America out of debt by 2015 for the first time since 1835. And I think it would be very good economics, because with interest rates set by global markets to have in America a situation where the Government wasn't competing with you for money, and we were going to have lower interest rates for a generation, in my judgment would lead to higher standards of living, more business growth, more jobs, and a more stable future.

So I think this idea of paying down the debt, which sounds like a very old idea in the context of the global economy, is actually a new one.

There are a few of you here in this room that are almost as old as I am, and anybody who is—certainly anybody who is 40 or over who went to college and took any number of economics courses, was taught by people that we ought to have a healthy amount of debt; every country needed a certain amount of debt because you were always borrowing to invest in the future.

Then, in the 12 years before I took office, we borrowed just to put food on the table as a government, which was a disaster. We may need to do that again someday. But right now, in this global economy, we'd be better off getting out of debt.

The last point I want to make is this is something you should all ponder—no it's not, it's the next to the last point I want to make is—[laughter]—not everybody has participated in this economic growth. Yes, we've got the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in 20 years, and I'm proud of all that. But there is a huge number of working people and their children in poverty and skirting on the edges. They have not participated in this recovery, and we just have to face that. Even though unemployment is the lowest it's been in 29 years. And a lot of them are physically isolated in inner cities and the Delta of the Mississippi River and Appalachia and Indian reservations. Technology can have a lot to do with how we overcome that. But we have got to find a way to bring enterprise to poor people, because the distribution of intelligence in this country is fairly even. We have to figure out a way to make the distribution of usable opportunity even enough to get a core of enterprise in these poor areas here and around the world.

This really is the last point. One of the most ironic experiences I have had as President is

that I have been privileged to work with you and others to build a truly modern economy for America, an economy for the 21st century. But so much of my personal leadership in foreign and domestic policy has been required to deal with the emotional and practical and national security demands caused by the eruption of primitive hatreds, from Bosnia to the Middle East to Northern Ireland to African tribal warfare to the Oklahoma City bombing to this whole spate of the ethnic and racial and religious and antigay violence we've had in America in the last 2 years.

It's quite interesting, isn't it? I mean, here you are out here; all you think about is the new millennium. You just gave me a book about these hard questions to ask about the next thousand years. Isn't it ironic that the thing that's holding us back most in fulfilling our shared potential is our inability to form a community around our common humanity because of our vulnerability to mankind's most ancient fears: the fear of the other? And so I think we need to deal with that.

I'm very proud that I believe my party is on the right side of all those issues, and I thank you for being here to help us tonight.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Eric and Wendy Schmidt; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, former general chair, Democratic National Committee; Mr. Romer's wife, Bea; attorney John Doerr and his wife, Ann; Sanford Robertson, founder and chair, Banc Robertson Stephens; and Scott Cook, founder and director, Intuit, Inc.

The President's Radio Address

October 2, 1999

Good morning. Although my voice has been a little hoarse, I want to speak with you this morning about your voice, about how you can make the difference this week to help secure

the vital health care protections you've long deserved.

Like many of you, I've been appalled by the tragic stories of men and women fighting for their lives, and at the same time forced to fight

insurance companies focused only on the bottom line. I've met the husbands and wives of those who have died when insurance companies overruled a doctor's urgent warnings. I met a former HMO employee who broke down in tears when describing how callous delays wound up costing a 12-year-old cancer patient his leg. If we work together, we've got the power to put patients first once again.

Just this week Governor Gray Davis signed into law an ambitious health care reform package, giving 20 million residents of California a strong and enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Now it's time to do the same for every American, because it doesn't matter whether you're from California or Connecticut or anywhere in between; families all across our Nation need greater patient protections at this time of great change in medical care.

My administration has worked hard to do its part. Through executive action, we've granted all of the patient protections we can give under law to more than 85 million Americans who get their health care through Federal plans.

Today I'm pleased to announce that this month we'll propose rules to extend patient protections to each and every child covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program. These children are from some of our hardest pressed working families. That's why I feel so strongly about giving them not only access to health care but also the guarantee of quality care.

Yet, some in Congress still seem intent on moving in the opposite direction. Republican leaders recently have attached language to a budget bill to deprive 120 million employees of the right to a timely internal appeal of any coverage decision that denies them care they were promised. Blocking this basic right is simply unacceptable. It puts special interests first and patients last.

But this week the House of Representatives has a chance to effectively erase this action as they sit down to vote at long last on whether to give all Americans in health plans all the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights. This vote is critical. For all of the steps this adminis-

tration and many States have taken to extend patient rights, we don't have the authority to protect every family unless Congress acts.

So I encourage you to urge your Representatives to vote for the comprehensive bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights, sponsored by Congressmen Charlie Norwood and John Dingell. This legislation will give every American the right to emergency room care and the right to see a specialist; the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of a cancer treatment or pregnancy; the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes you or a loved one great harm.

The bill had already been endorsed by more than 300 health care and consumer groups all across America. I'm convinced the votes are there to pass this Patients' Bill of Rights this week. But we need your help to make it clear to the Republican leaders that we can't tolerate any attempt to kill this bill with legislative poison pills.

Together, let's tell them to give this legislation the straight up or down vote it deserves. Let's not allow anything to jeopardize the remarkable bipartisan consensus we have worked so hard to build. If you make your voice heard and Republican leaders permit every Member to vote on the strong bipartisan bill that stands today, this week can bring the most important health protections in years. Partisan posturing and delay will only make matters worse. To me it's the same choice patients face every day: active, preventive medicine now or expensive, last-minute interventions later. The American people are counting on the Congress, and especially the Republican leaders, to make the responsible choice.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:50 p.m. on October 1 in the Eiffel Tower Restaurant at the Paris Hotel in Las Vegas, NV, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 2. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 1 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at an Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality Dinner in Beverly Hills, California

October 2, 1999

Thank you. Let me say, first of all, I thank you for that. I'm profoundly moved. And I was thinking when I was watching David Mixner make those remarks that 30 years ago, when I let him sleep on my floor—[laughter]—when we were much younger men in England, and I didn't charge him a nickel for it—[laughter]—I never dreamed that either of us would be in this place tonight doing these things. [Laughter]

David's life has taken a lot of twists and turns since then. He's had his ups and his downs like all the rest of us. But I can tell you something, when I met him when he was young, I thought I had never met a person whose heart burned with the fire of social justice so strongly. He has never forgotten the roots of his childhood. He has never forgotten not only the pain that he and other gay and lesbian Americans have endured; he also cares for other people who are dispossessed and downtrodden and underrepresented and often forgotten.

And tonight I was watching him, and he introduced his wonderful sister—who has also been a friend of mine for nearly 30 years now—and I was thinking how fortunate we are in this country at this time, with all the things we've had to do, to have had his energy, his heart, his devotion, his passion. It was 8 years ago that he and Scott Hitt and a few other ANGLE members met with me this week 8 years ago, here. Then in May of '92 we had a big event out here, and some of you were there. And I told you that I had a vision of America, and you were part of it, that we were all part of the same community.

Well, tonight I thank you for helping to make that happen. I thank my good friend Governor Gray Davis for the leadership he has given in California. I thank our leader in the House of Representatives, who—when David made that crack about the "Canterbury Tales" and how we're known by our traveling companions—[laughter]—it kind of made me feel sorry for Dick Gephardt. [Laughter] You talk about a guy that gets up and goes to work every day under adverse conditions and continues to do the right thing, he does.

But I know that Representatives Baldwin and Becerra and Kennedy and Sherman and Waxman are here, and they're his good fellow travelers. We just may need five more in the company to make it a much better trip.

I want to thank Bill Melamed, Skip Paul, Gwen Baba, Roberta Bennett for putting this together. I want to thank the members of our administration who came: Sean Maloney, Karen Tramotoano, Minyon Moore, Fred Hochberg, Richard Socarides, Marsha Scott. And I want to thank Scott Hitt, especially, who's been the Chair of the AIDS council. He's having his last meeting as Chair on Monday, and he's been magnificent, and we ought to give him a big hand. [Applause]

I'd also like to thank the Gay Men's Chorus. I was back there feverishly trying to write down all those lines. [Laughter] I want to call Hillary and give her those best lines tonight. You know, I'm trying to remember them all. It was unbelievable. If someone would furnish me with the lyrics of that song, I would be eternally grateful. [Laughter]

You know, I'd like to put what brought us all here tonight just for a minute. I know a lot of other people are going to speak and have a lot of great things to say, but I would like to put this in, just for a moment, in the context of history and the larger context of our future, and how the fight for equal rights and equal opportunity and full participation to build one America fits in with all the other things we should be doing as a country, and how what we are at home will determine what we can do around the world in the new millennium.

When I ran for President in 1992, most Americans felt things were pretty dismal in this country. The economy was in bad shape; the society was divided; all the social indicators—crime, welfare, and other things—were going in the wrong direction. Politics was, as we all remember from the convention they had back then on the other side, a matter of division, you know, just drive a wedge in society and make sure your wedge is bigger than their wedge; you get more votes, you win; and if

everybody is all torn up and upset, who cares, you're in power.

And over and over and over again, things in Washington were sort of repeating themselves like a broken record. And I felt that we could do better with a unifying vision. That's why I set out a vision of America, and you were part of it. But I also had a vision that we could build an economy that was good for working people and employers. I believed we could build a country where we could grow the economy and make the environment better, not worse.

I have always believed that the real purpose of life and growth is to try and figure out how to develop these unifying visions and to move closer to them and to break down all these funny walls we have to put up in our minds to organize life into little boxes so we can figure out how to get from here to there.

And, you know, in '92, the American people just sort of took a chance on me and Al Gore. I mean, it was an argument we made and there was no evidence for it because the other crowd had been in so long. We just made an argument. And it was not an easy race. A month after we had that meeting out here in May of '92, I won the California primary. And the headline the next day was that the exit poll showed that all the people that voted for me really wanted Ross Perot to be President. *[Laughter]* And I was in third place.

And then he and President Bush got in a fight about who messed up whose daughter's wedding or something. *[Laughter]* You remember that? I mean, it was an amazing—and I thought to myself, people don't have jobs; they're being foreclosed on; why are you guys fighting about this? The wedding went off without a hitch. What is this about? *[Laughter]* And somehow the American people decided to give me a chance, decided to give Al and Hillary and Tipper and all the people that came in the administration a chance.

I guess what I'd like to say tonight, first of all—not with arrogance, but with humility—is that we now know that there is evidence that we're right and that pulling things together and moving forward actually works. We have the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, the highest homeownership in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history.

And you have to—15 million Americans took leave under the family leave law. And when it was vetoed in the previous administration, they said, "Oh, well, we've got to veto this bill because if we let people take time off from work when their babies are born or their parents are sick, why, it will ruin the small business economy." And every year, we've set a new record for new small businesses in America.

Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious diseases for the first time, our young children. We're giving 5 million more of them health insurance. A hundred thousand young people served in AmeriCorps. I could just go on and on. And along the way, we gave America the most diverse, truly representative government by far in the history of America. That included you and everybody else.

What I want to say to you is, this is not an argument anymore. *[Laughter]* We have evidence. And so you should be of good cheer. And when you look ahead to these elections in 2000, you should be absolutely sure that anybody who is not with you knows they're doing it in the face of the evidence.

And because—what really bothers me about what's going on in Washington now, it's like there are all these people out there making decisions in the congressional majority as if the last 6½ years just didn't happen. And that bothers me. So I say to you, when they say, looking at the Vice President and our party, "Well, America needs a change," I agree with that. America always needs a change. We've got a lot more to do on your agenda. America needs a change. The question is not whether we'll change, but how are we going to change? How are we going to change?

You mark my words, the world is changing so fast in how we work and live and relate to each other and folks around the globe, that the world will change. The question is, how? And are we going to use this unprecedented moment, the chance of a lifetime to say, okay, what are our big challenges out there, and seize them? Or are we going to do what got us into so much trouble in the first place? Are we going to pretend that the last 6½ years just didn't happen? That's very important.

And I want to try to put the things that you're thinking about now into that context. What are the really big challenges facing America that affect you, too? One, the aging of America—I hate it because I'm doing it. *[Laughter]* But

I'm the oldest of the baby boomers. The number of people over 65 will double in the next 30 years; there will be two people working for every one person retired and drawing Social Security.

Now, we have never been in a position, until now, in my lifetime, to deal with that challenge. But we now have the ability to run the life of Social Security out 50 years, to add more than a decade to the life of Medicare, to cover prescription drugs for elderly people—three-quarters of them cannot afford quality prescription drugs today—and to do it in a way that all of you who are younger than that should rejoice about. Because I can tell you those of us in the baby boom generation are plagued by the notion that our retirement will be so expensive for our country that it will burden our children and our ability to give our grandchildren the childhoods they deserve. But we can fix it now. So I gave them a plan to do it. So far, they say no.

Another thing that really bothers me: we've got the largest and most diverse group of children in our school in history. We never had over 53 million children in schools, and they come from more different backgrounds than ever before. And that will be a godsend to 21st century America if, but only if, they all have a world-class education. And I think they're entitled to it.

So I gave Congress a plan to build and modernize 6,000 schools and hire 100,000 teachers for smaller classes; make sure all the kids had computers in their classrooms; make sure we stopped social promotion, but had after-school programs for the kids who needed it; and more of these charter schools that California has led the way in bringing to our children. So far, they said no.

Funny thing, maybe Mr. Gephardt will talk about this later, but one of the most interesting things is last year, right before the election in '98, they got religion on this education program. [Laughter] And they supported this big downpayment on our plan for 100,000 teachers, and we funded 30,000 of those teachers. And you had those real liberals, like Mr. Arney—[laughter]—going home. This is serious business; ask Dick. You had these real liberals going out and saying, "Man, this is a great thing we've done. We've made a big downpayment on 100,000 teachers; we're going to put 30,000 teachers out there, and this is a great Republican program

because there is no bureaucracy in it. We just give it to the schools, and they hire the teachers." They thought it was the greatest thing since sliced bread before the election.

They have just voted not only to refuse to fund any more of those but to no longer earmark the money for the 30,000. So there's a big difference here.

I'm worried about the families of our country. I'm worried about all these working people. How are they going to have the child care they need? How are they going to have the health care they need? Why don't we pass the Patients' Bill of Rights that protects working people? There's a difference between the two parties on that, and I think it's important. We're finally going to get a chance—we've been working for 2 years—finally going to get a chance to vote on the Patients' Bill of Rights in the House next week.

I'm very worried about this fabulous economy, because we've left some people behind. Yes, we've got the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, but there are still people in places that have not felt this recovery. If you come from—a lot of you come from other places, the Mississippi Delta, Appalachia, the Indian reservations, many of the inner cities. So I want to do some things that I think will change all that. I want to, first of all, give Americans with money the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas around the world. I think that's important.

I hope in the near future we'll be able to make access to the Internet as universal as telephone access is. It will have a huge impact on the economy. Last night I was in northern California, and I was with some people who work with eBay. A lot of you probably buy things on eBay. [Laughter] It seems like everybody does now. And I learned that over and above the employees of that company, there are now over 20,000 people, including a lot of people that used to be on welfare, who actually make a living buying and selling things, trading on eBay, over 20,000 people.

Well, I'm telling you, that means nothing at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, where the unemployment rate is 73 percent. Now, we can do better. And we ought not to quit until every American has the chance to participate in our prosperity if he or she is willing to work. And I won't rest until that happens.

I want you to keep a checklist in your mind, and when I get to the end, ask yourself what's all this about, what's it got to do with you as Americans? This is part of being part of America. I think we need to do more, not less, for the environment. The Vice President has this livability agenda to deal with, using all kinds of computer technology to alleviate traffic congestion, to buy more green space in urban areas. We're trying to lead the world toward recognizing that this global warming is real, but that you do not have to end your economic growth, because now there are technologies available to allow us to grow the economy as we reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. There are people in the other party who believe that this is some sort of subversive plot to wreck America's economic future.

Not very long ago, I came out here and went to San Bernardino, to the Inland Empire, and we announced a housing development for low income working people in which the developers pledged, by the use of energy conservation technologies, to cut the utility bills of these low income working people by 40 percent. And I just got a report that the average reduction is 60 percent. That's good for the economy. That's not bad for the economy, and it's good for the environment.

Let me just mention a couple of other things. I am very concerned that America, even though we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years, is still a pretty dangerous country compared to other countries. We should be the safest big country in the world. This is a free and prosperous place. We welcome all kinds of people. It is not rational. Why aren't we the safest country in the world? Because we haven't taken reasonable steps, not enough of them, to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. And because, frankly, even though we've put 100,000 more police on the street in community policing, we've still got neighborhoods that don't have enough coverage.

So I gave Congress a plan to deal with both those things: put 50,000 more police officers out there to prevent crime in the highest crime areas of the country and to deal with guns and so forth. They say no. Our crowd says yes; their crowd says no. Big difference.

What about our role in the world? I've tried, from Bosnia to Kosovo to the Middle East to Northern Ireland, to stand up for the idea that people ought not to be murdered or moved

wholesale because of their race or their religion. We have worked to support other countries and to build the capacity in Africa to prevent future Rwandas, because people ought not to be murdered because of what tribe they're in. And you can define tribe however you want. *[Laughter]*

We're about to start a great debate on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, to end nuclear testing, something that Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy wanted us to do years ago. We're finally going to have a chance to do it. In so many of these areas, there are partisan differences which surprise me. And let me come back to you.

Why are we for the hate crimes legislation? Why are we for ENDA? Because if we can't build one America, it's going to be very hard to have a unifying force that will deal with every other one of these issues. And that's what I want you to think about. Don't you think that it's interesting that here we are on the verge of this new millennium with all these absolutely breathtaking technological breakthroughs that people who are technologically challenged, like me, can hardly keep up with? *[Laughter]*

I mean, isn't it amazing to you that we have—modernity is bursting out all over in the form of high technology. And yet, the world's largest problem and America's largest problem, that you can see when those kids got shot at that Jewish school and that Filipino postalworker was murdered here; that you could see when that guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did believe in white supremacy killed all those people of color and wounded others in Illinois and Indiana; that you could see when Matthew Shepard was murdered and James Byrd was torn apart; and that you can see in the tribal slaughters of Rwanda, and the persecution of the Kosovar Albanians or the Bosnian Muslims or the fights in Northern Ireland or the continued agonies of the Middle East—here we are on the verge of this great modern world, where we can make movies with virtual reality now, and virtual reality seems sometimes more real than what is real, and the biggest problem we've got is the primitive, age-old fear and hatred and dehumanization of the other people who aren't like us.

And so I say—I'm nearly done; I just want to say this—*[laughter]*—I'm going to do everything I can, every day that I have, to remind people of that, that we have to be one America.

We can have honest differences over issues, but we can't have honest differences about whether we share a common humanity. And we cannot be under the illusion that either material prosperity or technological breakthroughs alone can purge the darkness in our hearts.

I believe that America's best days are still out there. I believe with all my heart that we can find a way to marry prosperity and peace and humanity. But we must have a unifying vision. I want to say, again, I am grateful to people who have worked in my administration who have made me more alive to the concerns of your community, not only those who themselves are gay and lesbian, but others, beginning with my Vice President, who has been terrific on all of that in ways you will never know.

But people are still scared of people who aren't like them. And other people are scared of themselves, and they're afraid they won't count unless they've got somebody to look down on. And if you have to find somebody to look down on, it must be somebody that is different from you. Because if you look down on somebody who is just like you, then you're looking down on yourself. *[Laughter]* And so we, in our little minds, come up with all these boxes. But all of life is a struggle to find a more and more and more and more unifying vision that, at least for me, makes us both more human and more in tune with our maker.

I wish I could have done better. But we've done pretty well. And we're a long way from

where we were. But I want you to think about this a little bit every day between now and next year, 13 months until the millennial election to define what America will be like; whether we will continue to embrace these big challenges and change in a positive way, building on what we now have evidence of; whether we will continue to look for those unifying visions that allow us all to join hands and go forward together.

And I want you to remember the enthusiasm with which you greeted me tonight. And I want you to remember that it's easy to shout in the moment. But the world is turned by those who day in and day out, with courage and determination and heart and hope, stay the course. We need you. America needs you. I still believe in the future of America, and you are a part of it.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Beverly Hills Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to ANGLE member David Mixner, who introduced the President, and his sister, Patricia Mixner Annison; H. Scott Hitt, Chairman, President's Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS; Gov. Gray Davis of California; and ANGLE members and dinner cochair Bill Melamed, Skip Paul, Gwen Baba, and Roberta Bennett. The President also referred to ENDA, the proposed employment nondiscrimination act.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Reception and Dinner in Brentwood Park, California

October 2, 1999

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, I've already been to the ANGLE dinner tonight. We had a wonderful time. I've looked forward to coming to Rob and Michele's place; they've been so great to me and to Hillary all these years. But it's 2 o'clock on my body clock—*[laughter]*—and I'm reduced to being Gray Davis' straight man. *[Laughter]* I mean, it's humiliating enough to think about leaving office, you know—*[laughter]*—trading in "Hail to The Chief" for a rap. *[Laughter]*

I mean, if President Reagan could be an actor and become a President, if Michael Douglas is your next choice, maybe I could become an actor. *[Laughter]* And I've got a good pension; I can work cheap, which is unusual around here. *[Laughter]*

I told Mel Brooks when I met him, that I was so thrilled. I mean, I got to see Carl and meet Mel and tell him I've read "The 2000 Year Old Man" book and gotten all my laughs. I have a videotape of "Blazing Saddles," and I watch it every 6 months whether I need to

or not. [Laughter] I told him, you know, all the Republicans, they've been fighting over what to do about Pat Buchanan now that he's got this interesting interpretation of World War II. [Laughter] And I suggested that Mel might put him in a remake of "The Producers." That would be a good thing to do with Pat Buchanan. [Laughter]

Let me say very briefly that the problem with all these events is that at some point, I know we're all preaching to the saved, but there are a few points I would like to make. I want to thank Rob and Michele and Alan and Cindy for cohosting this, and all the cochairs who put this together. I want to thank the Governor and Sharon and Attorney General Lockyer; Speaker Villaraigosa and Kathleen Connell and the assemblywoman who is here, congratulations on your legislation being signed today. I want to thank my longtime friend and former colleague Governor Romer, and Beth Dozoretz, our finance chair of the Democratic Party, and all of you who came here.

You know why you're here, but I would like to just make a couple of points very quickly about what we're facing, what the stakes are, why this is important. When I came to California in 1991, this State was in terrible shape economically, and there was an awful lot of social tension. We even had a civil disorder here. And the politics of America were dominated by the continuing attempts of the Republicans, nationally, basically to demonize the Democrats after the fashion that Gray Davis described. And Washington seemed to be basically in this sort of death grip of repeating the same old fight over and over again.

I had this idea that no one else in America thought like they behaved in Washington—unfortunately, it is still largely true—[laughter]—and that we needed a unifying theory of our national politics, one that would bring people together; that would increase opportunity for every responsible citizen; that would say to every person, without regard to their race or gender or sexual orientation or their religion, you can be part of our America if you're willing to do your part; and that unless we did that we could never fulfill our responsibilities around the world or maximize people's opportunities here at home.

But it was just an argument. I mean, I said, look, you know, we can help labor and business; we can improve the economy and actually make

the environment cleaner, not worse. We can expand trade and put a more human face on the global economy. We can prevent crime and still punish people, who do really bad things, more severely. We can have a unifying theory. We've got to get out of this either/or business and dividing the electorate up into wedges and hope you get the biggest piece of the pie. But it was just an argument, because there was no evidence because they'd had the White House a long time.

And except for the 4-year Carter interregnum, they'd had it since 1968, with various incarnations of the same social politics of division. And then Mr. Reagan and Mr. Bush brought in the supply-side economics, which defied arithmetic and quadrupled the debt in 12 years. [Laughter]

And there were periods when we had a good economy, but I used to have a senior Senator named Dale Bumpers who had a great line about supply-side economics. He said, "If you'll let me write \$2 billion worth of hot checks, I'll show you a good time, too." [Laughter]

Anyway, so I said, "Look, this may give you a headache, but we've got to get rid of this debt. We've got to bring the deficit down, eventually get rid of it, turn it around, and we've got to do it in a way that continues to invest in our future." I tried to find unifying ways of getting people to think about how we could all win and all go forward. But it was just an argument.

And then the American people gave Al Gore and me a chance to serve, led by the electoral votes of California. And in '96, things were rocking along pretty well, so you gave us another chance to serve, and we got an even bigger vote in California.

But it's not an argument anymore. The evidence is in. And that's what makes the present struggle in Washington and the reported political strength of our adversaries so interesting, because the evidence is in. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rates in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever before, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, the highest homeownership in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history. This is not about argument; it's about evidence.

Now, I say that not to say, "Boy, I did a great job." Because I don't believe—I'm very touched if somebody comes up to me and says,

"Gosh, I wish you could run again." You know how politicians are. You hear one person, you're convinced they're 50 million calling. *[Laughter]*

I say that to make this point—not a personal one. I feel privileged to have been able to serve. I'm grateful. If my life ended tomorrow, I'd be way ahead. But if we had done the wrong things, we would not have gotten those results. The reason I'm here for the Democratic Party—I can't run for anything else—I'm here because I think we did the right things. And I want us to keep doing the right things, and I want America to keep doing the right things.

The other guys will say, "Well, we ought to make a change." And guess what? I agree with that. I wouldn't vote for anybody who said, whose campaign was, "I think Bill Clinton's the greatest thing since sliced bread; vote for me, and I'll do what he did." *[Laughter]* I would vote against that person. We're not around here after over 200 years for any reason other than we kept true to our principles, but we were always reinventing ourselves, always seizing new vistas.

The issue is, what are we going to do now? I've asked the Congress and the country to take this huge moment of opportunity to deal with the consequences of the baby boomers retiring; to save Social Security and Medicare; to deal with the consequences of the largest and most diverse student population in history, being in our schools; to bring genuine excellence to our schools; to deal with the consequences of the fact that there's still a lot of people, believe it or not, who aren't a part of this marvelous economy of ours.

If you go to the Mississippi Delta or to Appalachia or to the Indian reservations or to many of our inner-city neighborhoods, there are people and places where there is no free enterprise. And I've offered a plan for that to give people like you the same incentives to invest in poor communities in America that we give you to invest in poor communities overseas. I think we ought to work to make Internet access as universal as telephone access is. It will make a huge impact in the poor areas of our country.

You know, I learned in northern California last night that there are 20,000 Americans making a living on eBay—not people who work for eBay, not people who work for the company, people who—including a lot of people who used to be on welfare—people who make a living trading on eBay. Just think what we could do

in America if access to the Internet were as universal as access to the telephone.

So I want us to do something about that. I want to think about the economy of the next generation. I want us to—we're paying the debt down now. If I'd run for President, if I had come here in '92 and said, "Vote for me; I'll balance the budget, run a surplus, and start paying down the debt," you would have said, "He is such a nice young man, but he's totally deluded." *[Laughter]* "Let's see if we can't get him a good psychiatrist to see and vote for someone else." If I had told you, "Vote for me, we'll have 19½ million jobs, in 6½ years, we'll be paying the debt down," you would have thought I was crazy.

But we can pay this debt down. And the Democrats, as the progressive party, should be for our plan to pay the debt down over the next 15 years so that we're out of debt for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President. Why? Because in a global economy, money is fungible and crosses international borders quickly. And if we don't owe anything as a government, all the money you have to borrow, and people like you, will be cheaper. That means there will be lower cost business loans, more businesses, more jobs, higher incomes; families can send their kids to college cheaper; they can finance homes cheaper; and when our friends around the world get in trouble, the way the Asians did over the last couple of years, they can get the money they need for less. This is a huge deal.

Now, those are just some of the things. Let me just mention a couple of other things. I believe, as strongly as I can tell you, that the environment will be an even bigger issue in the next 20 years than it has in the last 20. And I believe that the United States will either lead the way or block the way toward a solution to this problem of global warming. Global warming occurs when we burn things that put greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, primarily coal and oil.

It used to be that you couldn't grow a modern economy and get a whole people rich unless you burned a lot of coal and oil. That is not true anymore. That's a big idea that's no longer true. Just outside Los Angeles, in San Bernardino, there's a working class, low income housing development that our administration built with the homebuilders with a view toward energy conservation, and we promised these low

income working people, if they bought those homes, their utility bills would go down an average of 40 percent. So far, the average is down 60 percent. Why? Better windows, better lights, better insulation. It is not rocket science.

One of the Japanese car manufacturers will offer a car in the United States next year that will get 70 miles to the gallon, that will run on a composite of electricity and gasoline: Turn it on with electricity, get up to 30 miles an hour, automatically kicks into gasoline; you break down, it automatically kicks back into electricity. These are just two simple examples.

There's a new book out I commend to you by Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins called "Natural Capitalism." And if you read it, you will be convinced that whatever you're doing and however well you're doing it, you could make a lot of money on the side by getting into alternative sources of energy and energy conservation. This is a huge deal.

What do all these ideas have in common? They are things that bring us together instead of driving us apart. We ought to do—Gray Davis did a good thing on gun control, but we can make America so the crime rate's the lowest it's been in 26 years. We ought to make America the safest big country in the world. If we're the most prosperous big country in the world, if we're the freest big country in the world, we ought to be the safest big country in the world. Why aren't we? Because we don't do enough to keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people, because we don't do enough to give kids positive things to do, because we don't do enough to get mental health care in a preventive way to people who need it. We can make America the safest big country in the world. But to do it, we have to have a unifying theory.

We can't continue to believe that if we jail more people than anybody else on Earth and that's all we have to do because that'll get us by the next election, that that's enough. Now, I am a Democrat by heritage, instinct, and conviction. But we have proved that the ideas we have will give us a stronger economy, a safer country, a more constructive role in the world, a fair and more decent society, and a cleaner environment. We've proved that.

But there are these huge challenges out here. And I'll just close with this. I've spent a lot of my time as your President trying to stop people from killing each other because they

hated each other over their racial or regional or tribal differences, whether it was the Kosovar Albanians or the Bosnian Muslims or the continuing conflict in the Middle East, in Northern Ireland, or trying to help African nations build their own ability to stop future Rwandas.

And when you put that—we look at that and we think, oh, that's so horrible, and just look what happened in America in the last few weeks. Here is Los Angeles, you had the shooting at the Jewish school, and then the same guy apparently murders a Filipino postalworker. Then, there is a guy out in the Middle West in Illinois and Indiana who says he belongs to a church that doesn't believe in God but does believe in white supremacy, so he kills a black former basketball coach and a young Korean coming out of his church—a church where he did believe in God—and a number of others. Then you have—this is the year anniversary of Matthew Shepard's death, and you had that African-American man literally dragged to death and torn apart in Texas. And I could go on and on.

Don't you think it's interesting that we are living in the time of greatest technological advance in history? You know, if you think about it, the Internet is probably more significant, in terms of its long-term impact on the change in the nature of communication, maybe even than the printing press. Just think about it; it's the fastest growing—do you know there were only 50 webpages in the entire world when I became President? In the whole world. The Internet was the providence of theoretical physicists when I took office.

So every day all we do is think about all this modernity and all this great technology and all this stuff going on, and yet, all of our dreams for our children are threatened by our vulnerability to the most primitive of human weaknesses: the fear, the hatred, the dehumanization of the other people who are different from us. Interesting, isn't it?

So we're going into this new millennium where we're going to all have 500 channels on our television, and we're all going to be able to shop on the Internet, and all of our kids will live to be 150 because they will get a little genome map—at least our grandchildren, at my age. And they're looking at this world which should be the most brilliant, wonderful, interesting, exciting time in all of history, and from

the Middle East to Northern Ireland to the Balkans to Africa to our own mean streets, we are all fighting the most primitive of human weaknesses.

And if you look at every issue I mentioned, the position my party has taken since I've been privileged to be President is different from the position being advocated by the other party. And the consequences for our country are enormous in these coming elections for Congress, for Senate, for the White House. Look at the difference Gray Davis has made here with these legislative leaders, that are here with him, in the last year in California. You've gone—in 11 months only, you've gone—leading the country on the cutting edge of these important issues.

And if you think about what kind of world you want for your children, just remember what I told you. I'm glad we've got a good economy. I've worked hard for it, and I'm grateful that I've had a good team and enough insight and a great country behind me that we got these results. And I'm glad we've made progress on the environment, on giving children health care and immunizing, all of the things we've done.

But I'm telling you, it won't amount to a hill of beans unless we figure out how to get along together. It won't amount to a hill of beans unless we figure out how to develop a more unifying understanding of our relationship to one another, our relationship to the future, our relationship to the Earth. And if—when you strip it all away, I belong to a party that believes in the fundamental unity of our common hu-

manity. And we are struggling for the direction of America. We're the party that enjoys power and is willing to divide people to get it.

The money you invested to come here tonight, I'm going to do my best to see is well spent. I won't be on the ballot in 2000, but as long as I have breath and strength to do it, I will fight for the things that I believe in to make this country what it ought to be.

And you just remember this when you leave here: We were just making an argument in 1992. It's not an argument anymore. The evidence is in. And all of us ought to be willing to fight to take the next steps for our children's future in a millennium that should contain America's greatest days.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to film director Rob Reiner and his wife, Michele, dinner hosts, and Alan Horn, president, Warner Brothers Studios, and his wife, Cindy, dinner cohosts; Gov. Gray Davis of California and his wife, Sharon; actor Michael Douglas; comic actors Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner; Patrick Buchanan, author of "A Republic, Not An Empire"; State Attorney General Bill Lockyer; State Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaraigosa; State Controller Kathleen Connell; State Assemblywoman Shelia Kuehl; and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, former general chair, Democratic National Committee. The President also referred to ANGLE, Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Representative Brad Sherman in Beverly Hills, California

October 3, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Let me, first of all, say to Dick and Daphna, Brad Sherman said I was patient; I could have stayed up there all day. I'm looking at you and all your happy faces and the kids on the trampoline and the other kids in the playhouse back there and these beautiful children who sang for us and somebody back up there with half a dozen saxophones—it must be a wise person—[laughter]—in this beautiful, beautiful setting.

So let me begin by just thanking you all for coming. I thank our attorney general, Bill Lockyer, and Controller Kathleen Connell and, of course, our wonderful first lady, Sharon Davis, for being here. I want to say I just got off the phone with Hillary a few moments ago, and we admire so much the work that Daphna has done and the prodding of us she has done to try to change the laws of our country to make adoption easier and to do what is always in the best interest of the children. And she

has played a genuine national role in that, and that is a very elegant way of saying I never saw her that she wasn't pushing me to do the right thing. And I want to thank her for that very much.

I want to say that I'm glad to be here for Brad Sherman, too, because—you would know why if Brad Sherman had ever asked you to do anything. [Laughter] He's really a perfect Congressman. When Brad Sherman asks you to do something, you can do it now, or you can do it then—[laughter]—after he has gnawed on you for months or years or however long it takes. Eventually when he asks you to do something, if it involves his work, you will do it. So I've learned to do it sooner rather than later. It saved me a lot of trouble, and I've had a lot of fun. [Laughter]

You should know that he genuinely is, I think, one of the most energetic and effective Members of the United States Congress, with a great future, very much liked by all of us, and very much trusted by all of us. So I thank you for being here for him. And in a larger sense, I thank you for being here for what his election represents.

You know, Brad was reading off those statistics, and he was very kind to do so, but I would like to ask you to think about something else. Remember what it was like in California in 1992? We had a bad economy, a terribly, terribly fractious social climate here, a lot of tensions between the races. We had a sense of drift and division, and the politics of the national Republican Party were basically designed to divide the country up between us and them, and as long as their "us" was bigger than our "them," they won and who cared what the consequences were.

Al Gore and I came to the people of California and the United States and said, "We would like to try a different way. We're sick of all this division. We think there can be a unifying theory of American citizenship in our American community. We believe, for example, that we could reduce and get rid of this deficit, which is crippling our economy, and still continue to invest in education and the environment, things that are important. We believe we could help business and labor. We believe we could grow the economy and actually clean up the environment, given the technological advances of recent years." And on and on. You know, when I came here in '92, it was an argu-

ment; that is we made an argument, and they made an argument, and—thank God—you agreed with us, and you gave us the chance to serve.

But nobody knew whether we were right or not because they had been in for so long. And you heard those statistics Brad reeled off. I just want to say them again, not to give myself credit but to give the American people credit. A unifying, community-oriented, balanced view of America, that gives us all a chance to bring out the best in one another and to work together, works. We do—it's given us the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. So it's not an argument anymore. There is evidence. This way works. It works better than the other way.

Let me say, the land is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the air is cleaner; the food is safer. We've set aside more land than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We didn't hurt business. The previous President vetoed the Family and Medical Leave Act; I signed it; 15 million people took advantage of it. They said it was bad for business. Every year, there's been a record number of new small businesses.

The previous administration vetoed the Brady bill; I signed it and the ban on assault weapons. They said hunters were going to lose their weapons. That didn't happen, but 400,000 people with criminal records did lose their weapons, and that's one of the reasons we got the lowest crime rate in 26 years.

So I say to you, you have to see this election in 2000, Brad Sherman's election and all these others, in that context. We made an argument in 1992. In the year 2000, there is no argument; we have evidence. The question is, will the American people act on the evidence, or will they once again be vulnerable to the siren songs that the Republicans put out?

Now, what I think I should be doing, primarily, is not out here politicking, because I'm not on the ballot. What I do most of the time is just try to give you every day I've got left to be the best President I can. But let me tell you, you need to know that when we brought our economic program forward, 100 percent of the Republicans opposed it. When

we brought our crime program forward, 90 percent of them were against it. When they passed welfare reform, I had to veto it twice because they didn't guarantee medical care and food for the children of the families on welfare we were requiring to move to work.

They are still fighting us every step of the way on the environment. And I could go on and on and on. We have a different view of America's future. It is a deeply and honestly held difference. I don't question their motives, but I think they're wrong, and now we have evidence that they're wrong. But the one thing I like about the Republicans is they are undeterred by the evidence; they go right on. [Laughter] They go right on.

And you know, we have—our prosperity has been indiscriminate; we've let the Republicans make money, too. [Laughter] Why do you think Governor Bush has so much money in his campaign treasury? [Laughter] I've been thinking of listing that as one of the seminal accomplishments of my economic policy, the George Bush campaign treasury. [Laughter]

So they're never in doubt. It doesn't matter what the evidence is. But the rest of us, we have to act on that. So I'm trying to get the Congress today to deal with the challenge of the aging of America. We're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years. We ought to take the opportunity now to save Social Security, save Medicare, add a prescription drug coverage to the Medicare program. Three-quarters of the seniors in this country can't afford it. We ought to do that. We're for it, and they're not.

As California knows, we have the largest and most diverse student population in history. We ought to take this opportunity to give all the students who need it not only high standards and accountability but the summer school and after-school and mentoring programs they need. We need more teachers, and we need more modern schools. We've got a program to do all three of those things. The Democrats are for it, and they're fighting us every single step of the way.

I'll tell you an interesting thing. It was a big issue in California last time. We made a down-payment right before the election in 1998 on putting 100,000 teachers in the schools for smaller classes. And the Republicans voted with us right before the election. And then they all went home and said, "We voted for 100,000

teachers and this is a great thing, and this is like a Republican program. There is no bureaucracy here; it is wonderful."

You know what they just did? They refused to continue the commitment, and they undid it. Why? Because this is not an election year. And they don't want the Democrats to be able to say they did anything for our children. Doesn't anybody care about whether it's good for the kids or not? Isn't there anybody in their party that will say, "To heck with the politics; we did it in '98 when we wanted votes; it was the right thing then for kids; it's still the right thing?" There are serious and deep differences up there. And Washington is a long way from California, but what Gray Davis and all these other fine State and local officials can do is shaped, to some extent, by what we do.

On the environment, last year we spent \$400,000 complying with subpoenas from one Republican subcommittee in the House of Representatives because they thought our attempts to fight global warming and promote energy conservation and alternative sources of energy was some sort of deep conspiracy to wreck the economy of the United States. You have no idea; however bad you think it is, multiply it by three or four. [Laughter]

We are five seats away from a majority in the House of Representatives. They will not vote to close the gun show loophole. They have kept 2 years—they let 2 years go by until we could vote on a Patients' Bill of Rights, which finally we're going to get a vote on this week. We are five votes away from a majority. We can't lose a guy like Brad Sherman, and we can pick up three or four more seats in California if you will fight.

If you believe we ought to meet the challenges of the future; if you are for dealing with the challenge of the aging of America; if you're for giving all these kids a world-class education; if you're for putting America back in the lead to a safe and healthy environmental future; if you're pleased that we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years, but you would like America to be the safest big country in the world; if it bothers you that not everybody in America has participated in our prosperity and you think every person who's willing to work ought to have a chance to be a part of our successful, free enterprise system, and you want us to do something for the poor, to give them a chance, too; if you believe that we are all one people,

without regard to our race or our gender or our religion or our sexual orientation, and we ought to all be part of America's future, and you're sick and tired of the politics of division, and you want us to pass the employment non-discrimination act and the hate crimes prevention act, and in a larger sense, you want us to stand for these things around the world; if you thought we were right to try to stop ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo and to try to bring peace to the Middle East and Northern Ireland, and to do our best to diffuse the tensions between India and Pakistan; if you believe that ought to be America's role at home and abroad and you don't want to see us go into the 21st century everybody hooked up to a mod-

ern computer and everybody hooked down and held down by paralyzing primitive hatreds, then you ought to be a Democrat, and you ought to be for Brad Sherman and take him back to Congress and holding the White House and helping us to build a country this Nation can be in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon hosts Richard S. and Daphna Ziman; California State Attorney General Bill Lockyer and Controller Kathleen Connell; Sharon Davis, wife of Gov. Gray Davis of California; and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Beverly Hills October 3, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Clarence, I'd like to spend the night and—[laughter]—and we could have quite a bunking party here. [Laughter] But you'll have to give me a raincheck.

I want to thank Clarence and Jackie and their family for having us here, and all the other people who helped to sell tickets and make this event possible. I'd like to thank my good friend Maxine Waters for being here and for her passionate leadership for our party. Having Maxine for a friend, a supporter, and an occasional rebuker has been one of the more interesting experiences of my life. [Laughter] And I like it. I'd like to thank Governor Romer; I'd like to thank Beth Dozoretz, our national finance chair of the DNC, for being here. I want to thank all of you.

You know, I was thinking, particularly here, all of you have to come to so many of these dinners, and you listen to so many people give speeches, and I'm trying to decide what can I do to make this memorable? I guess I could give the talk I normally give. I remember one time Tina Turner came to Little Rock to give a concert, when she was just sort of making her comeback. It was right after she'd come out with that "Private Dancer" album. You all remember that? And she had that big macho saxophone player with chains and everything—

it made me want to go pump iron and apply for a new job. [Laughter] But anyway, she sang all these new songs, and she was a big hit, and everybody loved her. And we got to the end of the concert, and the band started playing her first hit, "Proud Mary," playing the introduction to "Proud Mary." And she kind of moved up to the microphone, everybody cheered, and she moved back. She moved up and everybody cheered, and she said, "You know, I've been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it." [Laughter] So maybe this will be a little better. [Laughter]

But I would like to just ask you to take just a few minutes to be a little serious with me tonight about why you came. If somebody asked you tomorrow why you came, what are you going to say? If somebody asked you tomorrow why you contributed, what are you going to say?

When I came to California as a candidate for President and then later the Vice President and I came together, this State was in trouble. It was in trouble economically; it was divided socially; there was a great sense of anxiety and frustration. Maxine took me into her home, and we walked down the streets and the neighborhoods that she represented, and people were worried about the future. And I had this idea that—this general idea that there was something

wrong with American politics in the early nineties because it was basically all focused on repeating the same old arguments we'd been having in America for years and having the same old fights with the same old language and seeing who could divide the pie up. And it was all about the politics of division. And when you got through slicing the citizens up, you just hoped that your share of the pie was bigger than the other person's share of the pie.

It didn't seem to me to be working very well. I mean, after all, we had high unemployment; we had social tension; we had no driving vision; we had quadrupled the debt of the country in 12 years. We had a lot of problems. So I said, "Give me a chance to lead the country on a philosophy that there should be a community of all Americans, and that we should look for unifying ways to do our business together. We should look for an economic policy that gets rid of the deficit and continues to invest in the education of our children. We should look for an economic policy that helps business and labor. We should be able to grow the economy and make the environment cleaner, not dirtier. We should be able to respect all of our differences and treat everybody with respect and still be more united by our common humanity." It sounded kind of Pollyanna, I'm sure, to some people, but I believe it.

So I was making an argument to the American people, and thankfully the American people said, "Okay, we'll give these guys a chance." And they did. But they didn't know. They couldn't know. It was my argument.

In 1996 people thought there was some evidence that it was working, and so they renewed my contract. If anybody comes to me and talks to me about running for President, I say it's the world's biggest job interview. *[Laughter]* You get an employment contract if you win. And then you move to a place where everybody who talks to you tries to make you to forget who you really work for and what you're supposed to be doing.

So here we are now, almost 7 years into this grand experiment. It is not an argument anymore. One reason you should be here is, the politics of community and progress together work. This country has had, in the last 7 years, the longest peacetime expansion in history; we now have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rates in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest pov-

erty rates in 20 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and the highest homeownership in history. This is not an argument; there is evidence. What we have done has worked for America. And I'm glad that we have been a part of that. But that's not enough.

We've got the country working again. What I think we have to do now is to look at the great, long-term challenges of the country. Once in a lifetime do people get a chance to do what we have a chance to do now, to look around and say, if we wanted to paint a picture of tomorrow for our children and our grandchildren, if we wanted to celebrate the new millennium not just with the brilliant show that Quincy is putting together for me on The Mall but with a really different way of living in America, where we were working for ourselves and for our neighbors and where things were really working in ways that we could all be proud of, what would we do?

When I got here, we couldn't ask these questions. We had to get the country working again, you know? We had—as somebody said—what's that old saying? If you're up to your ears in alligators, it's hard to talk to somebody about draining the swamp. *[Laughter]* Well, now we can drain the swamp. Now we can look ahead. We can imagine what would we really like America to be like in the new millennium and what would we have to do to get there.

I want us to think about big ideas. Let me just say, some of them are things that I can make some real headway on in the time I'm in office, and some of them are things that will have to be dealt with when I'm not President anymore. But the main reason I hope that you will say—tomorrow if somebody said, "Well, why did you go there last night?" I hope you'll be able to say, "Well, I bought their argument, but it works; but more importantly, I share their vision for tomorrow, and I want to be part of it. Because elections are always about tomorrow."

I'll just tell you one other little story, then I'll go back. When I was a Governor of what President Bush used to call a small southern State, every year I would go out to the State Fair, and I would have Governor's day. Sounds kind of august. Really what I did was go into this big tin shed and find myself a little booth, and I'd sit there and any citizen who wanted to come up who was at the fair and talk to me and say anything would do it.

And so in 1989, in October, this month, 10 years ago, I'm having Governor's day at the fair. And there's another election coming up in 1990, at which time I will have been Governor for 10 years and four terms, because we went from 2- to 4-year terms. So this guy comes up to me, about 70 years old in overalls, and he looks at me and he says, "Bill, are you going to run again?" Except he said, "again." [Laughter] And I said, "Well, I don't know. If I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I guess I will; I always have." And I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me after all these years?" He said, "No, I'm not, but nearly everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And this guy might have won me the election in 1990.

So I had this conversation. So I got sort of hurt and huffy, and I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Yeah, but"—this is exactly what he said—he said, "Yeah, I do. But," he said, "you did get a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?" [Laughter] He said, "That's what we hired you to do." He said, "If you want to win this next election, you'll have to tell them what you're going to do next time." He said, "The fact you did a good job doesn't mean much." He said, "We paid—we gave you a salary, gave you a nice house to live in, you know."

And that's very important. But the reason that the achievements of our administration and our party and our Members of Congress like Maxine matter is that they are some evidence that if we're going to change, we need to keep changing, building on what we've done that's right, rather than changing by taking a U-turn and going back to what got us in trouble in the first place. Neither she nor I should get some sort of gold star. The question is, is it evidence of whether we're moving in the right direction as a country?

Now, here are some of the things that I think we ought to be doing if we want America to look like it should. Number one, we've got to deal with the aging of America. When the baby boomers retire, the number of people over 65 will double. There will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. I am the oldest of the baby boomers. Tony told me tonight—Tony Robbins—that he was the youngest. I wish I could switch positions. [Laughter]

But I can tell you that my people, the people I grew up with, middle class people, people

without a lot of money, they are plagued by the notion that the retirement of the baby boom generation will impose an intolerable burden on our children and our grandchildren. And we have a chance now to take care of Social Security and Medicare, so we take care of the elderly, but the income of their children is free to raise their grandchildren. It's a big deal.

The second thing we ought to do is to recognize that we have an extra-special responsibility to children and families because we've got more kids in school today than ever before, from more diverse backgrounds. The school district across the river from me in Washington, DC, in Alexandria, Virginia, has people from 180 different national and ethnic groups, speaking 100 different languages—one school district—even slightly more diverse than the Los Angeles county schools, unbelievably enough.

Now, this is a godsend in a global economy with a global society if we can figure out how to take our conviction that all these children can learn and turning it into an educational environment in which all of them do learn. We ought to have after-school and summer school programs for the kids who need it. We ought to end social promotion but not blame the kids for the failure of the system, so you've got to give them the support they need. There ought to be universal access to the Internet. We ought to have more teachers for smaller classes and modern schools. These things are all terribly important. And you should know that there's a big difference in the parties on these two things: what to do for the seniors, what to do for the children.

The third thing we ought to do is to do something about poor people who haven't been part of our prosperity. It really bothers me that we've got the greatest economy in the history of America, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever measured—we've only been measuring it about just under 30 years—but if you go to any inner city, if you go to the Mississippi Delta, if you go to Appalachia, if you go to the Indian reservation—unemployment on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota is 73 percent—you will see that there are people who have not participated in our prosperity. And we cannot do it by just Government programs alone, because we still have to—I'll say more about that in a minute, but we've got to find a way to bring enterprise to these people.

And I'll just give you two examples, two ideas I have. Number one, if you want to invest in the Caribbean and Latin America, in Africa, in poor countries in Asia, we will give you significant loan guarantees and tax credits to do so. I think we ought to give people the same tax incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas around the world. Let me be very clear: I don't want to take away those other things. I want Americans to help other people work their way out of poverty. I'm trying to pass an Africa trade bill right now that will bring us closer to Africa. I'm trying to pass a Caribbean Basin initiative right now that will bring us closer to the Caribbean and do more to help those people, but I want to help people here at home.

The other thing—think about this. I was in northern California the night before last with a bunch of people that worked for eBay. Did you ever buy anything off eBay? Do you know eBay? Do you know there are now over 20,000 people who make a living not working for eBay, the company, but trading on eBay the Internet site? Many of them used to be on welfare. They actually make a living trading on eBay.

Now, think what we could do for the economy of America, for poor people, if we could, within the next couple of years, make access to the Internet as universal as access to the telephone is—access to the Internet as universal as access to the telephone. Giving investors in America the same incentives to invest in poor areas they have to invest around the world, we can do something to bring enterprise and opportunity to people who aren't part of our prosperity. And I think we ought to do it. It's the right thing to do.

One last economic thing, a big idea that I think I've sold most of my fellow Democrats on, that no one ever thought the more liberal party in America would advocate: if we follow the budget outline that I gave the Congress, we can actually afford a modest tax cut and still get this country out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President.

Now, everybody in this room who is over 40 years old who studied economics was taught that the country ought to be in debt a little bit; a little debt was a healthy thing. Why do I think we ought to get out of debt? Because everybody in this room that is in the global economy in any way, shape, or form—whether

it's in entertainment, investment, or anything else—you know that there is a worldwide market for money. Every time a country gets in trouble, they find out they can't keep their money in if people want to put it somewhere else.

If we got this country out of debt, what would it mean? It would mean lower interest rates forever. It would mean lower interest rates if Berry wants to start a new business in his second childhood. [Laughter] It means more jobs. It means higher incomes. It means you can send your kids to college cheaper. It means you can buy a home cheaper. It means that our friends around the world who are poorer than we are can borrow money that we used to take away from them. This is a big deal. We can give our children a generation of prosperity if we make America debt-free.

Let me just give you a couple other ideas. We've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Does anybody seriously think that it's low enough? Don't you think America is still a pretty dangerous place? Don't you think we're still losing too many of our kids? Don't we still have too many people in prison?

Okay, now, we can talk all day about this, but I just want to say one thing. I think America should adopt as a goal, say, okay, for a long time we didn't think we could get crime down. Now we know we can drive crime down, 7 years in a row; big deal. It is a big deal. And it's the lowest it has been in 27 years. There are some places where the murder rate is half what it was 5 years ago. This is huge. But no one believes this country is safe enough.

Why don't we adopt a big goal and say we're going to make America the safest big country in the world? If we're the most prosperous country in the world, if we're the freest country in the world, why shouldn't we be the safest country in the world? Well, I'll tell you one thing. We're going to have to do more to keep kids out of trouble and help them and support them. We're going to have to do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands. It's crazy.

You know, every time I have a fight with the NRA, they say guns don't kill people, people do. They say this is about evil. So I said the other day, I said, "Okay, it's about evil. I agree with that." I mean, this guy shoots this Filipino postalworker out here and shoots at these little Jewish kids. Yes, that's evil. But do you believe America is more evil than any other country

in the world because we have a higher murder rate? I don't.

Or what about this; listen to this. The number of children killed accidentally by handguns in America—accidentally—is 9 times greater than the number of children killed accidentally by guns in the next 25 biggest industrial economies combined.

Now, do you believe we're more stupid than any other country?

Audience member. Yes. [Laughter]

The President. So are we, like, 9 times more stupid than—you see where I'm going with this? Look, I grew up—I was shooting cans off fenceposts with .22's when I was 12 years old. I governed a State where we shut factories and schools down on the opening day of deer season because there wouldn't be anybody there anyway. [Laughter]

But this is madness, to let people go to gun shows and buy guns with criminal records and go out and shoot people when you can stop it. And don't let anybody tell you we can't do something with reasonable restraints; 400,000 people have not been able to get guns because they have criminal backgrounds since the Brady bill passed. And don't you kid yourself for a minute; that's one of the reasons we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Let's make America the safest big country in the world.

And I want to say just two other things, one thing that people normally—maybe you wouldn't see raised in a group like this. But I think environmental issues are too little discussed outside environmental groups. You know, the economy has gotten better in the last 7 years; the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; we set aside more land than any administration in history, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. But we're still in the grip of a big idea that's not right anymore.

Most of you now believe—I think you do—that global warming is real. I hope you do. Nine of the 11 hottest years in the last 500 years have been in the last 12 years. If this thing happens—I just was down in New Zealand near the South Pole, the polar ice cap melting, big chunks of it coming off. If the planet heats too much, the polar ice caps melt, the water level rises, island nations can be flooded. Sections of Louisiana and Florida can be flooded. The whole center of agriculture, the people who produce our food that we live by, will be moved

to the north, changing and disrupting societies. This is a big deal.

You have malaria now today in places in Africa where it has never been before at altitudes it has never been before because the mosquitoes are going higher because it's hotter up there. This is a serious thing. Now, what's that got to do with all of you? It's a big deal.

For a long time, it was true that you could not build a rich country unless you put more greenhouse gases into the air by burning coal and oil. It was true. But it isn't true anymore, and most people still think it is.

So the Indians and the Chinese, they think they can't get rich, and when I tell them they don't have to do this, they think, "old Bill Clinton's trying to hold us down on the farm." In America, in Congress, there are people who think that I have some dark plan to wreck the American economy. Well, if I wanted to wreck the American economy, I've done a poor job of it.

But I'm telling you, we now can conserve our way to greater wealth. We will be a wealthier country if we are environmentally responsible. We will be a wealthier planet if we protect the Earth. And the young people in this room, you mark my words. Someday you'll remember I said this; 10 years from now, if you go to one of these events, I'll bet you environmental issues take up 30 percent of the discussion, maybe more.

So why don't we turn it around now while we can? Why don't we say we'll make America the first country in the world to give up an idea that's not true anymore and embrace the future?

The last thing I want to say is this. The thing I most worry about of all is that we're on the verge of a new millennium with these unbelievable technologies and these unbelievable scientific discoveries; a lot of the young women in this room tonight will have babies in the future, will have your children after the human genome project is completed and we have decoded all the mysteries of the human gene. So literally, this might start in 5 years. You have a baby, and then you come home from the hospital, and you have a road map of you child's future. And it's a little scary because it says, well, your child may be more likely to develop heart disease at an earlier age, but it will also say, but if you do these five things for the first

10 years of his or her life, you'll add another 20 years to their life.

The average 65-year-old person today has a life expectancy of 82. The children—Quincy said thank you. [Laughter] You think about this. Think about young mothers bringing home their children thinking their kids are going to be 90 or 100 years old, and they'll be alert and active and healthy and strong. It will be great.

So you've got all this, and we're all hooked in on the Internet, and all this stuff is happening. And whoop-dee-doo, and it's wonderful. And there are more rich people than ever before. But what is the biggest problem in the world today? What do I spend my time worrying about? That there are still people who insist upon killing each other and preventing the children of their areas from having a decent future because of their racial, their ethnic, their religious, their tribal differences.

And what's the biggest problem we're dealing with in America today? From the bombing in Oklahoma City to stretching poor, young Matthew Shepard out on a rack and killing him a year ago in Wyoming this week to dragging James Byrd until he came apart, literally, in Texas to what happened out here at the Jewish school and with the Filipino postalworker to what happened in Illinois and Indiana with that young man who was a member of a church that said they didn't believe in God but they did believe in white supremacy, so he went—he murdered a former basketball coach at Northwestern and murdered a young Korean coming out of church—the guy was coming out of a church and he got shot in the back and killed—what do all these people have in common?

They are on the verge of a new millennium that is the most modern of times, absolutely in the grip of the most primitive and ancient of hatreds, the fear, the hatred, and the dehumanization of people who are different from them.

And that's the last thing I want to say to you. All these other things I've said to you are important, but they're by and large mental problems. This is a spiritual problem. But it should be part of the political platform of any group of citizens that really seeks to make the future America's greatest days. You have to ask yourself if you really believe that what we share in common is more important than what divides us.

And if you just think about it, I mean, here, we're—I'm trying to get this thing done in Northern Ireland, where my people grew up—in my family there were both Catholics and Protestants, and they lived on the line between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and this has been going on for a few hundred years now. It's not like we're unacquainted with the issues. And they've been fighting for 30 years, and now they've all agreed what to do and everybody's agreed that they all have to do what they're supposed to do and everybody's agreed they all have to do what they're supposed to do by a certain date. And a lot of people are prepared to let it all go back to smithereens again because they want to have an argument about who goes first, like you used to have when you were 6 or 7 years old on the playground.

I'm just telling you, just think about it. Look, we all wake up every day with, like, little scales inside of hope and fear and light and darkness. We all do. Everybody has bad days. But it is unbelievable that we're almost in a new millennium and the world is in a grip of this level of primitive hatred and destruction. My party believes that we are one America. My party believes that I did the right thing in trying to stop the slaughter of the Muslims in Bosnia and the Albanians in Kosovo.

I believe that when my child is my age, she will live in a golden age if, but only if, we have married all this modern science and technology to a higher level of humanity. Thank you very much.

[At this point, dinner host Clarence Avant, chairman, Motown Record Co., made brief remarks and presented a gift to the President.]

The President. Thank you. Let me say, you know, one of the things that all this money you give to the Democratic Party does is to finance a lot of the election activities in 2000, and my wife may be part of those election activities. And she has—the reason I can't spend the night with Clarence and participating in this bunking party is that she has to go on a trip tomorrow. And I am going to get home before she leaves, because I want to see her before she leaves for a week, so I can't stay. But I thank you for this, and I thank you for your friendship and support. I wouldn't take anything for the last 7 years, warts and all. And a lot of you made it possible for me to serve and for us to do what we've done. Just don't quit.

Believe me, these are big issues, and I hope I gave you some things to think about tonight that'll make you want to keep on fighting all the way through next year. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Mr.

Avant's wife, Jacqueline; former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, former general chair, Democratic National Committee; musician Quincy Jones, a coordinator of the planned millennium celebration on The Mall; motivational speaker Anthony Robbins; and Berry Gordy III, founder, Motown Records Industries.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Iraq's Compliance With United Nations Security Council Resolutions October 1, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council. My last report, consistent with Public Law 102-1, was transmitted on Au-

gust 2, 1999. I shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 4.

Remarks on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and an Exchange With Reporters October 4, 1999

The President. Is everybody in? I'd like to make a brief statement, and then I'll answer your questions.

Our national security team is about to meet to discuss the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to end nuclear weapons testing forever. This is very important for protecting our people from the danger of nuclear war. That's why so many prominent Americans, including four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, support it.

For 2 years, the opponents in the Senate have blocked any consideration of the treaty. Now, we have been given just 8 days before the Senate vote. I will do all I can to get the treaty ratified.

Our experts have concluded that we don't need more tests to keep our own nuclear forces strong. We stopped testing in 1992, and now

we are spending \$4.5 billion a year to maintain a reliable nuclear force without testing. Since we don't need nuclear tests, it is strongly in our interest to achieve agreement that can help prevent other countries, like India, Pakistan, Russia, China, Iran, and others, from testing and deploying nuclear weapons.

The treaty will also strengthen our ability to monitor if other countries are engaged in suspicious activities, through global chains of sensors and onsite inspections, both of which the treaty provides for. This is a crucial decision the Senate is about to make that will affect the welfare of the American people well into the next century. I hope the American people will pay close attention to this, and I hope the Senate will pay close attention and that we will have a careful debate as much as possible within the time that's been allotted.

Q. Mr. President, why do you think the Republicans handled this in the way they did and just said, "Okay, let's go ahead and vote on it in a few days?" And you've been pushing this for a long time. Why is it that you're so behind the eightball on getting the votes for it?

The President. Well, we've been pushing it, but there has been no consideration of it. If you look at how other treaties have been handled in the past, you have 8 days of hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee, 12 days of hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee. The Democrats in the Senate were frustrated because the whole thing had been stonewalled. And finally, they said, "Okay, you can have a debate and a vote right now or no vote at all."

So we decided we would take the "right now" and do our very best to do it. I don't want to speculate on other people's motives. We'll have to ask them why they decided to do it this way.

Q. Mr. President, you need a lot of Republicans if you're going to pass this treaty. How many do you think you have right now?

The President. I don't know. We don't have enough now; I hope we can get them. I think the critical thing is, if you look at all these—anybody who expresses reservations, there can only be, it seems to me, two arguments against it. One is that we have to test and maintain our stockpile. And Secretary Richardson is here. The people at the energy labs and many other experts say that is absolutely not true. And we are spending \$4.5 billion a year to make sure it's not true, that we can maintain the integrity of our stockpile.

The other argument that we saw a version of in the press yesterday that I think is just a missing point is that maybe somebody, somewhere, is doing a very small-scale test, and we won't pick it up. Well, the point I'd like to make about that is the following: Number one, if you get the really small test, they're hard to pick up. They're hard to pick up now; they'd be hard to pick up if this treaty is ratified. If this treaty is ratified, there are new tools to monitor the testing levels. We'll have monitoring stations; we can do onsite visits. There's the deterrent impact of a country signing and then getting caught violating it. So we'll have a lot more ability to pick up all kinds of testings at all levels and a lot more deterrent against it if we ratify the treaty than if we don't.

There is another thing the American people need to think about and the Senate needs to think about. If any of the 44 original signatories of this treaty don't sign and don't ratify it, then it cannot enter into force. For decades, the United States has led the world against proliferation. If the United States Senate votes this treaty down, it would be a signal that the United States now wants to lead the world away from the cause of nonproliferation. We would be giving the green light to all these other people.

We're not testing anyway. That's why Britain and France and nine other of our NATO Allies have already ratified this treaty. They understand this. That's why there is such overwhelming support for it. So it would be, in my judgment, a grave mistake not to ratify the treaty.

Chinese Nuclear Espionage

Q. Mr. President, on a related matter, I'm sure you've been briefed that the FBI is sort of starting all over this week on the Chinese espionage investigation. Are you concerned now, looking back, about the way the investigation was handled?

The President. I think the only thing I would say about that, I think the only appropriate thing for me to say is, number one, they ought to do whatever they can to find out whatever the truth is. Number two, this is another lesson that we should not assume anyone's guilt, ever. We should let the investigations take their course. And I think that's—we just have to support the proper—the investigative process.

Health Care Insurance Coverage

Q. Mr. President, on health care, do the new numbers mean that you've failed in your effort to expand coverage to people who are not insured?

The President. Well, first of all, they mean that the First Lady and I and all the rest of us were right in 1994 when we told you in 1994 that if this were voted down, the insurance companies would continue to drop people and employers would because of the system we have. So what has happened is exactly what we said would happen.

Now, what are we doing about it? We passed the 1997 Children's Health Insurance Program, but it was only this year that all the States finally signed up. I do believe you will see this year significant numbers of children enrolled in

our Children's Health Insurance Program. And I've talked with Senator Kennedy and others in the Congress about what else we can do to try to get several million more children insured.

Number two, I do believe that the Kennedy-Jeffords bill will pass this year which will allow people with disabilities to go into the work force and keep their health insurance, and that will be good.

Number three, we have before the Congress and have had for 2 years a proposal to let people between the ages of 55 and 65, one of the biggest problem groups without insurance, buy into the Medicare program. That would help a lot if Congress would pass that. Some Republicans have said in the past that they favor that sort of approach. I would urge them to take another look at this. They ought to allow Medicare buy-in. It's the cheapest, least costly, least bureaucratic way for people in that age group to get insurance.

And number four, we have granted to some innovative States waivers from the Medicaid program which they have used to let people who are lower income working people buy into Medicaid. If we can get some more States to do that, that can make a big difference.

If you look at these numbers, you've got people between the ages of 55 and 65, you've got people who have moved from welfare to work and then get jobs above the income level when

they're eligible for Medicaid. Then you've got all these middle class people who work for companies that are dropping health insurance. So I think we ought to keep working on these things. I certainly don't think we ought to give up. I do think you'll see the numbers improve with children over the next 2 years.

I think that if we pass Kennedy-Jeffords, which I think we will, you'll see that improving. But we need the Medicaid buy-in and the Medicare buy-in for the older people and more States could solve this problem. We could give them the money through Medicaid waivers to let lower income working people buy into that. All those would make a big difference.

Let me also finally say I'm glad to see that this has become a source of discussion in the Presidential campaign for the Democrats, and I'm proud that the candidates in my party are trying to do something about it, and I hope that we will continue to see this debated. But these numbers confirm exactly what the First Lady said in '94, and we have some specific things we can do about it if the Congress and the States will help, and I hope they will.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:02 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House prior to a meeting with the national security team. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

October 5, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. I am delighted to be joined this afternoon by Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman, and leaders of some of our Nation's top health, consumer, and provider organizations, including Dr. Thomas Reardon of the American Medical Association; Beverly Malone, the president of American Nurses Association; Judy Lichtman, the president of the National Partnership for Women and Families; John Seffrin, the CEO of the American Cancer Society; and Ron Pollack, the president of Families USA.

Before I leave for the Pentagon to sign legislation to enhance our national security, I want to say a few words about legislation to enhance the security of patients and the health of our families.

Tomorrow the House is set to begin the long-awaited debate on the Patients' Bill of Rights. We are here today to urge Congress to act responsibly and pass strong, enforceable, bipartisan legislation to protect working families with the real health care protections they sorely need.

We have had enough of tragic stories from every corner of our land, families forced to

switch doctors in the middle of pregnancy or cancer treatment, parents whose children had to bypass one or more emergency rooms before they received care, Americans who saw their loved ones die when their health plans overruled a doctor's urgent recommendations. The fact is Americans who are battling illness shouldn't have to also battle insurance companies for the coverage they need.

Our administration has done everything we could to protect patients. Through executive action, we've granted all of the safeguards in the Patients' Bill of Rights to more than 85 million Americans who get their health care through Federal plans. This past week I announced we'll publish rules to extend similar patient protections to every child covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Many States are also making progress. But no State law, no executive action, can do what Congress alone has the power to achieve. Only Federal legislation can assure that all Americans, in all plans, get the patient protections they need and deserve.

Congressmen Charlie Norwood and John Dingell have a bill to do just that. It's a bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights that would guarantee Americans the right to see the medical specialist they need, the right to emergency care wherever and whenever a medical crisis arises, the right to stay with a health care provider throughout a program of treatment, the right to hold a health plan accountable for harmful decisions.

But before Americans can be assured these fundamental rights, the Norwood-Dingell bill must be assured a fundamental right of its own, and that's the right to be offered on the House floor, with a straight up or down vote. No legislative poison pills. No weakening amendments. No parliamentary sleights of hand.

Let's be clear: This is about more than congressional rules or legislative prerogatives. It's about providing Americans basic rights. It's about making sure medical professionals are able to do their jobs, about providing families with the quality care they deserve, and above all, about putting patients' interests above special interests. That's what all of us standing here and our allies in both parties in the House of Representatives are committed to.

Now, I'm told this morning some Republican leaders sat down with insurance company lobbyists who are fighting to defeat a strong Patients'

Bill of Rights. On the eve of this vote, I'd like to ask them to think about sitting down with America's families instead.

This is not a partisan issue anywhere in the United States except Washington, DC. The legislation that we endorse has the endorsement of more than 300 health care and consumer groups across America, including groups where I would imagine most of the members are in the Republican Party.

The support for this legislation across America is broad and deep. We cannot allow a small group in Congress, representing a large, well-financed special interest, to thwart the will of doctors, nurses, medical professionals, and working families. We can't allow some parliamentary trick to litter this bill up like a Christmas tree and then have people vote for it to give people the impression they are for the Patients' Bill of Rights, when they are, in fact, against it.

So again, I ask Republican leaders to be straight with the American people. Instead of watered-down provisions, just give the people an up or down vote. Let the will of the people prevail. Let them see where every Member of the House stands on this profoundly important issue. Let's have a fair vote. If we have a fair vote, there will be a bipartisan majority for the Patients' Bill of Rights in the House of Representatives that reflects the overwhelming bipartisan, even nonpartisan, feeling for it out in the United States of America.

Thank you very much.

Medicare Reform

Q. Mr. President, do you believe after meeting with Senator Roth today that you'll get a competent Medicare reform program this year? And where might you be willing to compromise to get that?

The President. Well, first of all, I had a very good meeting with him, and I'm going to put out a statement about it. We talked about Medicare reform. He and Senator Moynihan assured me they're still committed to that and will work on it in a timely fashion. They also talked to me about the need to restore some of the restrictions or cuts in funding from the '97 Balanced Budget Act to some of the medical providers. I strongly agree with that, and I think we should do it.

We talked about some trade issues, the importance of the research and experimentation tax credit, and a number of other issues that I think

are quite important that affect all Americans. So we had a good meeting, and I prepared and signed off on a statement which goes into greater detail about it.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Mr. President, do you think you could try to postpone the vote on the treaty?

The President. On the test ban treaty?

Q. Yes.

The President. Well, let me say this: I think for the Senate to reject it would send a terrible message. It would say to the whole world, "Look, America's not going to test, but if you want to test, go right ahead. We're not interested in leading the world toward nonproliferation anymore."

I'm going to have a dinner tonight and talk to a number of Senators about it. I think a lot of thoughtful Republicans who normally support us in matters like this are, number one, under enormous political pressure not to do so, and number two, have the legitimate feeling that this very important issue, which in previous Congresses would have received 8, 10, 12 days of hearings, a week or more of debate, is for some reason being rushed at an almost unprecedented pace.

So we're going to talk through this. I'm going to make the best case I can. I'm going to tell them why I think it's in the national interest. But I think it is a very curious position that some of the leaders of the opposite party are taking that they don't really want us to start testing again, and they know we have the most sophisticated system in the world for maintaining our nuclear stockpile without testing, but they don't want to vote for this treaty even if that says to Pakistan, to India, to China, to Russia, to Iran, to everybody else, you all go on and do whatever you want to do, but we're not going to do it. I think that's a very curious thing to do and would be very, very damaging to the interests of the United States and, even more important, to the safety of children in the 21st century all across the world.

We have been a leader for nonproliferation, including for the concept of a test ban treaty since the time of Dwight Eisenhower. He's the first person who recommended this. And before this Congress, it would have been unthinkable that a treaty of this kind, with these protections—particularly with the strengthening reservations that I have offered to work with Con-

gress to put in—it would have been unthinkable before this Congress that such a treaty would not pass. So I'm going to work and do the best I can, and we'll see what happens.

Q. Sir, there seems to be the compliance, it cannot be verified, and that the integrity of the arsenal cannot be maintained absolutely—

The President. Well, I would like to respond to those two things. Number one, on the compliance issue, keep in mind what the reports say—that you cannot, with 100 percent certainty, detect small nuclear tests everywhere in the world. That's all they say. Our national security people, including all of our people at the Pentagon, say that any test of the magnitude that would present any sort of threat to the United States could in fact be detected, number one.

Number two, if we don't pass this treaty, such smaller tests will be even more likely to go undetected. Why? Because if the treaty goes into force, we'll have over 300 sophisticated sensors put out in places all across the world, and we'll have the right to onsite inspection, and we will also have the deterrent effect of people being found violating the treaty. Now, if you don't put the treaty into force, no sensors, no onsite inspections, no deterrent, and if the United States walks away from it, the rest of the world will think they've been given a green light. So I think that argument has literally no merit, because nothing changes except our ability to increase our determination of such tests with the passage of the treaty.

Now, on the first argument—the idea that, some say, we can't with absolute 100 percent certainty maintain the integrity of the stockpiles—that is not what the people who lead the energy labs say. That's not what the Joint Chiefs say. Some people disagree—they do. They say they're not sure that forever-and-a-day we'll be able to do that. I have offered the Senate a reservation to the treaty which makes it clear that if ever there comes a time we think we can't preserve the integrity of our nuclear stockpile, we can take appropriate steps to do so, number one.

Number two, we spend \$4.5 billion a year, with by far the most sophisticated system in the world, to maintain that. Now, if all the—this treaty doesn't go into effect unless all the nuclear powers and several dozen other countries agree to it; 44 in total must agree. If they all agree, I'm sure that all the people who are making this argument would acknowledge that

our system of maintaining the integrity of our stockpile without tests is far in advance of what anybody else has. So our relative security will be increased, regardless.

Final point I want to make: None of these people will stand up and say, let's start testing again. So what they're saying is, "Okay, America won't test, but if everybody else tests, well, so be it." I think it would be a big mistake.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:13 p.m. in the South Portico at the White House prior to departure for the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas R. Reardon, president, American Medical Association; and Ronald F. Pollack, executive director, Families USA.

Remarks on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000

October 5, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary Cohen, for your remarks, your leadership, and for the depth of your concern for our men and women in the military.

Secretary Richardson, Secretary West, Deputy Secretary Hamre, General Shelton, General Ralston, Senior Master Sergeant Hall—he told me today this is the fourth time we've met and the first time in Washington, DC. I've tried to get around to see people like the senior master sergeant in uniform in the Middle East and Asia and elsewhere.

I want to thank all those who serve them: the senior service chiefs, the service secretaries, the senior enlisted advisers. I'd also like to say a special word of thanks to all the Members of Congress here, too numerous to recognize them all. But I do want to acknowledge the presence of Senator Warner, Senator Levin, Senator Thurmond, Senator Robb, Senator Alard, Representative Spence and Representative Skelton, and the many other Members of the House of Representatives here today.

This, for me, more than anything else, is a day to say thank you; thank you for recognizing the urgent needs and the great opportunities of our military on the edge of a new century.

Today should be a proud day for men and women in uniform, not only here in this audience but all around the world. Time and again, they have all delivered for our country. Today America delivers for them.

In a few moments, I will have the privilege of signing the National Defense Authorization Act. As you have already heard, it provides for a strong national defense and a better quality

of life for our military personnel and their families. It builds on the bipartisan consensus that we must keep our military ready, take care of our men and women in uniform, and modernize our forces.

Today, we have about 1.4 million men and women serving our country on active duty, doing what needs to be done from Korea to Kosovo, to Bosnia, to Iraq, to helping our neighbors in the hemisphere and in Turkey dig out from natural disasters, to simply giving us confidence that America is forever strong and secure.

We ask our men and women in uniform to endure danger and hardship, and you do; to suffer separation from your families, and you endure that. We ask you to be the best in the world, and you are. In return, you ask very little. But we owe you the tools you need to do the job and the quality of life you and your families deserve.

This bill makes good on our pledge to keep our Armed Forces the best equipped and maintained fighting force on Earth. It carries forward modernization programs, funding the F-22 stealth fighter, the V-22 Osprey, the Comanche helicopter, advanced destroyers, submarines, amphibious ships, command and control systems, and a new generation of precision munitions. The bill also recognizes that no matter how dazzling our technological dominance, wars still will be won today and tomorrow as they have been throughout history, by people with the requisite training, skill, and spirit to prevail.

The excellence of our military is the direct product of the excellence of our men and

women in uniform. This bill invests in that excellence. It authorizes, as you have already heard, a comprehensive program of pay and retirement improvements that add up to the biggest increase in military compensation in a generation. It increases bonuses for enlistment and reenlistment, and provides incentives needed to recruit and retrain our military personnel.

I would like to say a special word of appreciation to all the members of our military, including a lot of enlisted personnel, who have discussed these issues with me over the last 2 or 3 years, in particular. And I would like to thank the Members of Congress not only for the work they did on the pay issue but also on the retirement issue. And I'd like to say a special word of appreciation on that to Congressman Murtha, who first talked to me about it, and I know labored very hard on it.

Now, an awful lot of people worked to make this bill a reality. And I'm glad that there are so many members of both parties of the House and the Senate Armed Services Committee here today. I also want to thank Secretary Cohen, General Shelton, and all the people at the Pentagon for their leadership and determination.

This bill is an expression of America at its best. It's about patriotism, not partisanship. It's about putting the people of our Armed Forces first. No matter how well we equip these forces to deal with any threat, I would also argue that we owe them every effort we possibly can to diminish that threat—the threat to the members of our Armed Forces and to the American people whom they must defend.

One of the greatest threats our people face today, and our Armed Forces face, is the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We have worked in a bipartisan way to diminish those threats, passing the Chemical Weapons Convention, getting an indefinite extension of the nonproliferation treaty. We are now working to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention.

At this time, the Senate has a unique opportunity to diminish that threat by ratifying the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It will end nuclear weapons testing forever, while allowing us to maintain our military strength in nuclear weapons and helping to keep other countries out of the nuclear weapons business.

We stopped testing nuclear weapons in 1992 in the United States. Instead, we spend some \$4.5 billion a year on programs that allow us

to maintain an unassailable nuclear threat. This treaty will strengthen our security by helping to prevent other countries from developing nuclear arsenals and preventing testing in countries that have nuclear weapons already but have nowhere near the sophisticated program we do for maintaining the readiness of our arsenal in the absence of testing.

It will strengthen our ability to verify by supplementing our intelligence capabilities with a global network of sensors and onsite inspections, something we will not have if the treaty does not enter into force. It will make it easier for us to determine whether other nations are engaged in nuclear activity and to take appropriate action if they are.

Obviously, no treaty—not this one or any other—can provide an absolute guarantee of security or singlehandedly stop the spread of deadly weapons. Like all treaties, this one would have to be vigorously enforced and backed by a strong national defense. But I would argue if the Senate rejects the treaty we run a far greater risk that nuclear arsenals will grow and weapons will spread to volatile regions, to dangerous rulers, even to terrorists.

I want to emphasize again, the United States has been out of the testing business for 7 years now. We are not engaged in nuclear testing. If we reject this treaty, the message will be, "We're not testing, but you can test if you want to," with all the attendant consequences that might have in India, Pakistan, China, Russia, Iran, and many other places around the world. I want to avoid a world where more and more countries race toward nuclear capability. That's the choice we face, not a perfect world, but one where we can restrain nuclear testing, but train the growth of nuclear arsenals.

Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy first advocated a comprehensive test ban treaty. Four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, together with Chairman Shelton and our Nation's leading nuclear scientists, including those who head our national weapons labs, advocate this treaty. I believe the treaty is good for America's security. I believe walking away and defeating it would send a message that America is no longer the leading advocate of nonproliferation in the world.

So, all I ask today is not a vote; the discussion just began. What I ask is that we meet this challenge in the same bipartisan fashion in which we approached the defense authorization

bill. The stakes are exactly the same. When a young man or woman joins the United States military, they don't ask you if you're a Republican or a Democrat. And you all make it clear you're prepared to give your life for your country. We should do everything we can to ensure your safety, to give you a bright future, even as we give you the tools and the support to do the work you have sworn to do.

Let me say in closing, after nearly 7 years in this office, there has been no greater honor, privilege, or joy than the opportunity I have had to see our men and women in uniform do their jobs, all kinds of jobs all over the world. I have also been very moved by how honestly and frankly and straightforwardly they have answered every question I have ever put to any

of them. In a very real sense today, the work the Congress did and the support that I and our administration gave to this legislation is purely and simply the product of what our men and women in uniform, from the highest rank to the lowest, told us needed to be done for them and for America.

So again I say, this is a day for celebration and thanksgiving, and more than anyone else, I feel that deep gratitude to you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:15 p.m. on the River Terrace at the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Senior M.Sgt. Robert E. Hall, Sergeant Major of the Army. S. 1059, approved October 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106-65.

Statement on Signing the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000

October 5, 1999

Today I have signed into law S. 1059, the "National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000." This Act authorizes FY 2000 appropriations for military activities of the Department of Defense, military construction, and defense activities of the Department of Energy. Although I have serious reservations about some portions of this Act, I believe S. 1059 provides for a strong national defense, maintains our military readiness, and supports our deep commitment to a better quality of life for our military personnel and their families.

The more we ask of our Armed Forces, the greater our obligation to give them the support, training, and equipment they need. We have a responsibility to give them the tools to take on new missions while maintaining their readiness to defend our country and defeat any adversary; to make sure they can deploy away from home, knowing their families have the quality of life they deserve; to attract talented young Americans to serve; and to make certain their service is not only rewarding, but well rewarded—from recruitment to retirement.

This Act helps us meet that responsibility. It endorses my comprehensive program of improvements to military pay and retirement benefits, which add up to the largest increase in

military compensation in a generation. The Act increases bonuses for enlistment and reenlistment, providing incentives needed to recruit and retain skilled and motivated personnel and to maintain readiness.

The Act also helps make good on my pledge to keep our Armed Forces the best equipped fighting force on earth. It carries forward our modernization program by funding the F-22 stealth fighter, the V-22 Osprey, the Comanche helicopter, advanced destroyers, submarines and amphibious ships, and a new generation of precision munitions. I commend the Congress for recognizing the need to improve the way we dispose of property at closing military bases. In April of this year, I requested the authority to transfer former military base property to communities at no cost if they use the property for job-generating economic development. This new policy of no-cost Economic Development Conveyances will allow us to speed the transfer of such property to local communities and minimize the time that the property lies fallow. In this way, we can give an economic jump start to affected communities and help to stimulate the investments necessary to attract new job-creating businesses.

I am pleased with the Act's support for missile defense capabilities. The Act authorizes important funding for both theater and national missile defense. I am particularly pleased that the Act authorizes full funding for the Medium Extended Air Defense System cooperative program with Germany and Italy, authorizes funding for national missile defense military construction planning and design, and helps fix cost growth problems in the Patriot Advance Capability-3 and Navy Area Defense programs. The Act's requirement to develop Theater High Altitude Area Defense and Navy Theater Wide systems concurrently is being taken into account in the Department's review of its acquisition strategy for these upper-tier programs.

Although I believe most provisions of the Act—especially the quality of life enhancements—are beneficial and support a strong national defense, I have strong reservations about a number of provisions of S. 1059.

The most troubling features of the Act involve the reorganization of the nuclear defense functions within the Department of Energy. The original reorganization plan adopted by the Senate reflected a constructive effort to strengthen the effectiveness and security of the activities of the Department of Energy's nuclear weapons laboratories. Unfortunately, the success of this effort is jeopardized by changes that emerged from the conference, which altered the final product, making it weaker in enhancing national security. Particularly objectionable are features of the legislative charter of the new National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) that purport to isolate personnel and contractors of the NNSA from outside direction, and limit the Secretary's ability to employ his authorities to direct—both personally and through subordinates of his own choosing—the activities and personnel of the NNSA. Unaddressed, these deficiencies of the Act would impair effective health and safety oversight and program direction of the Department's nuclear defense complex.

Other provisions of S. 1059 have been faulted by the Attorneys General of over 40 States as placing in question the established duty of the Department of Energy's nuclear defense complex to comply with the procedural and substantive requirements of environmental laws. Moreover, the Act removes from the Secretary his direct authority over certain extremely sensitive classified programs specified in the Atomic

Energy Act, and establishes in the NNSA separate support functions—such as contracting, personnel, public affairs, and legal—that are redundant with those now within the Department. This redundancy even extends to the counterintelligence office reporting directly to the Secretary that was established in accordance with my Presidential Decision Directive 61, and which was designed to be the single authoritative source of counterintelligence guidance throughout the Department. The Act establishes a companion counterintelligence entity within the NNSA, compounding simple redundancy with the blurring of lines of authority that can too readily result because the NNSA is largely immunized from outside direction within the Department.

Experience teaches that these are not abstract deficiencies. As the Hoover Commission concluded half a century ago, the accountability of a Cabinet Department head is not complete without the legal authority to meet the legal responsibilities for which that person is accountable. The Act's provisions summarized above skew that authority. These provisions blur the clear and unambiguous lines of authority intended by Presidential Decision Directive 61, and impair the Secretary of Energy's ability to assure compliance at all levels within the Department of Energy with instructions he may receive in meeting his national defense responsibilities under the Atomic Energy Act.

The responsibilities placed by S. 1059 in the National Nuclear Security Administration potentially are of the most significant breadth, and the extent of the Secretary of Energy's authority with respect to those responsibilities is placed in doubt by various provisions of the Act. Therefore, by this Statement I direct and state the following:

1. Until further notice, the Secretary of Energy shall perform all duties and functions of the Under Secretary for Nuclear Security.

2. The Secretary is instructed to guide and direct all personnel of the National Nuclear Security Administration by using his authority, to the extent permissible by law, to assign any Departmental officer or employee to a concurrent office within the NNSA.

3. The Secretary is further directed to carry out the foregoing instructions in a manner that assures the Act is not asserted as having altered the environmental compliance requirements,

both procedural and substantive, previously imposed by Federal law on all the Department's activities.

4. In carrying out these instructions, the Secretary shall, to the extent permissible under law, mitigate the risks to clear chain of command presented by the Act's establishment of other redundant functions by the NNSA. He shall also carry out these instructions to enable research entities, other than those of the Department's nuclear defense complex that fund research by the weapons laboratories, to continue to govern conduct of the research they have commissioned.

5. I direct the Director of the Office of Personnel Management to work expeditiously with the Secretary of Energy to facilitate any administrative actions that may be necessary to enable the Secretary to carry out the instructions in this Statement.

The expansive national security responsibilities now apparently contemplated by the Act for the new Under Secretary for Nuclear Security make selection of a nominee an especially weighty judgment. Legislative action by the Congress to remedy the deficiencies described above and to harmonize the Secretary of Energy's authorities with those of the new Under Secretary that will be in charge of the NNSA will help identify an appropriately qualified nominee. The actions directed in this Statement shall remain in force, to continue until further notice.

I am concerned with the tone and language of a number of provisions of S. 1059 relating to China, which could be detrimental to our interests.

China is undergoing a profoundly important but uncertain process of change, and I believe we must work for the best possible outcome, even as we prepare for any outcome. The Act's provision requiring annual reports on Chinese military power, similar to those previously produced on Soviet military power, assumes an outcome that is far from foreordained—that China is bent on becoming a military threat to the United States. I believe we should not make it more likely that China will choose this path by acting as if the decision has already been made. The provision establishing the Center for Study of Chinese Military Affairs is troubling for the same reason. The Secretary of Defense will ensure that the Center is held to the highest standards of scholarship and impartiality and

that it explores a wide range of perspectives on the Chinese military.

Our long-term strategy must be to encourage China to grow into a more prosperous and open society; to integrate China into the institutions that promote global norms on proliferation, trade, the environment, and human rights; to cooperate where we agree, even as we defend our interests and values with realism and candor where we do not. We cannot do that simply by confronting China or seeking to contain it. We can only do that if we maintain a policy of principled, purposeful engagement with China's government and China's people.

I intend to implement the China provisions of the bill in a manner consistent with this policy, including, where appropriate, combining several of the reporting requirements.

Further, I am disappointed that S. 1059 contains damaging restrictions on our threat reduction programs in the former Soviet Union. Since 1992, these programs have helped to deactivate almost 5,000 nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union; eliminate nuclear weapons from Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan; strengthen the security of nuclear weapons and materials at over 100 sites in the region; tighten export controls and detect illicit trafficking; engage over 30,000 former weapons scientists in civilian research; and purchase hundreds of tons of highly enriched uranium from dismantled Russian weapons.

Restrictions on the Cooperative Threat Reduction program and new certification requirements on the Nuclear Cities Initiative threaten to slow the pace of Russian disarmament, which is contrary to our national interests. I urge that future appropriations for the Nuclear Cities Initiative not be conditioned on this certification. I also urge the Congress to reverse its current ban on chemical weapons destruction assistance to Russia.

In order to avoid any confusion among our allies or elsewhere regarding the new NATO Strategic Concept, I feel compelled to make clear that the document is a political, not a legal, document. As such, the Strategic Concept does not create any new commitment or obligation within my understanding of section 1221(a) of the Act, and therefore, will not be submitted to the Senate for advice and consent.

I am concerned about section 1232, which contains a funding limitation with respect to continuous deployment of United States Armed

Forces in Haiti pursuant to Operation Uphold Democracy. I have decided to terminate the continuous deployment of forces in Haiti, and I intend to keep the Congress informed with respect to any future deployments to Haiti; however, I will interpret this provision consistent with my constitutional responsibilities as President and Commander in Chief.

A number of other provisions of this bill raise serious constitutional concerns. Because the President is the Commander in Chief and the Chief Executive under the Constitution, the Congress may not interfere with the President's duty to protect classified and other sensitive national security information or his responsibility to control the disclosure of such information by subordinate officials of the executive branch (sections 1042, 3150, and 3164). Furthermore, because the Constitution vests the conduct of foreign affairs in the President, the Congress may not direct that the President initiate discussions or negotiations with foreign governments (section 1407 and 1408). Nor may the Congress unduly restrict the President's constitutional appointment authority by limiting the President's selection to individuals recommended by a subordinate officer (section 557). To the extent that these provisions conflict with my constitutional

responsibilities in these areas, I will construe them where possible to avoid such conflicts, and where it is impossible to do so, I will treat them as advisory. I hereby direct all executive branch officials to do likewise.

Finally, S. 1059 provides for participation in the Thrift Savings Plan by full-time members of the uniformed services and reservists, but subject to my proposing and the Congress' passage of separate legislation to pay for the costs of their participation. I shall consider this proposal when determining my Fiscal Year 2001 Budget.

Notwithstanding the concerns noted above, I believe that the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, as a whole, will enhance our national security and help us achieve our military and related defense objectives. By providing the necessary support for our forces, it will ensure continued U.S. global leadership well into the 21st century.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 5, 1999.

NOTE: S. 1059, approved October 5, was assigned Public Law No. 106-65.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Implementation of the Partnership For Peace

October 5, 1999

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with section 514(a) of Public Law 103-236, I am submitting to you this report on implementation of the Partnership for Peace (PFP).

As noted in last year's report to the Congress, PFP has been a critical tool in helping all the Partners, regardless of their desire to join NATO, to build stronger ties with the Alliance and develop closer cooperative relationships with all their neighbors. As you will see from the attached report, NATO Allies and Partners have managed to create a fundamentally different Partnership through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and PFP enhancements.

The EAPC and PFP have provided a means for incorporating Partners into NATO's oper-

ation in Bosnia, assisting Albania in rebuilding its armed forces, and helping Partners in South-eastern Europe cope with the Kosovo crisis. Enhancements to PFP provide a solid foundation for closer NATO-Partner collaboration and a mechanism for Partners to develop the interoperability with NATO that will be necessary for future NATO-led Allied/Partner missions.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, House Committee on International Relations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

October 5, 1999

Dear _____:

I transmit herewith the 6-month report required under the heading "International Organizations and Programs" in title IV of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1996 (Public Law 104-107), relating to the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO).

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Statement on Senate Action on the Nomination of Ronnie L. White To Be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri

October 5, 1999

Today the Senate defeated the nomination of Ronnie White for the Federal district court in Missouri. This vote was a disgraceful act of partisan politics by the Republican majority and creates real doubt on the ability of the Senate to fairly perform its constitutional duty to advise and consent. By voting down the first African-American judge to serve on the Missouri Supreme Court, the Republicans have deprived both the judiciary and the people of Missouri of an excellent, fair, and impartial Federal judge.

Judge White was a casualty of a judicial confirmation process that has lost any pretense of fairness. There was never any doubt about Judge White's ability to apply the law impartially. To defeat the candidacy of Judge White, the Re-

publican majority maligned and distorted White's death penalty record, falsely creating a pretext for his defeat. While serving on the Missouri State Supreme Court, Judge White affirmed the imposition of the death penalty in almost 70 percent of the cases that came before him. Moreover, in 10 of the 18 reported instances in which Judge White voted to not impose the death penalty, he did so with an unanimous court.

The disappointing action of the Senate today provides strong evidence for those who believe that the Senate treats minority and women judicial nominees unequally. This is a sad day for the cause of equal justice.

Remarks on the Legislative Agenda

October 6, 1999

Good afternoon. I want to say a few brief words about three critical issues now pending before Congress. There have been major developments on all of them in the last 24 hours that demand our attention and the attention of the American people.

First, yesterday's defeat of Ronnie White's nomination for the Federal district court judge-

ship in Missouri was a disgraceful act of partisan politics. Once again, this creates a real doubt about the Senate's ability to fairly perform its constitutional duty to advise and consent.

Unfortunately, by voting down the first African-American judge, who was already serving—the first African-American judge to serve on the Missouri State Supreme Court, the Republican-

controlled Senate is adding credence to the perceptions that they treat minority and women judicial nominees unfairly and unequally.

I would just point out that that strict party-line vote included Republicans who had previously voted in the Judiciary Committee to recommend him to the full Senate.

I hope the Senate leadership will reverse this course and begin to provide timely and fair consideration of all judicial nominees. In particular, I ask the Senate to act on the nominations of Marsha Berzon and Richard Paez, who has been held up for years now. They're both excellent candidates for the ninth circuit and have been waiting for quite some time to receive a vote from the Senate.

Meanwhile, I will continue to fulfill my obligations to nominate and press for the confirmation of the most qualified candidates possible for the Federal bench.

The second thing I want to talk about is congressional action on the Patients' Bill of Rights. Today was supposed to be the day the American people have long waited for, the day a bipartisan majority passed a strong Patients' Bill of Rights. Now, the Republican leadership knows there is a majority for that bill. But unfortunately, as a result of an 11th hour appeal by the insurance industry lobbyists, which all of you reported on yesterday, once again it appears that the will of the American people will be thwarted.

In the dead of the night last night the House leaders concocted a process filled with enough poison pills and legislative sleights of hand to practically guarantee the defeat of this bill. This is a travesty. It's the sort of thing they did to kill commonsense gun legislation in the aftermath of Littleton. The American people want something; there is a bipartisan majority for it; the leadership makes a deal with the special interest and figures out some procedural way to tie everything up in knots to keep it from passing.

Now, a bipartisan majority is poised to pass this bill. But now they are being blocked by legislative tactics concocted by the leadership that blatantly put special interests ahead of the interests of the American people.

What is the result of this? The Republican leadership would ensure that the American people will have to wait for the right to see a specialist, wait for the right to have access to

the nearest emergency room care, wait for the right to stay with their health care provider throughout a course of cancer treatment or pregnancy, wait for the right to hold their health plan accountable for harmful decisions.

Again, I ask the bipartisan majority who favor the Patients' Bill of Rights: Don't make them wait. Reject these tactics. Insist that the leadership allow a fair up or down vote on the Norwood-Dingell bill. Insist on an up or down vote on a bill that is comprehensive, enforceable, and paid for. Don't let this 11th hour gimmick kill 2 years of hard work for something the overwhelming majority of Americans of all political persuasions know we need to do.

The American people deserve more than partisan posturing and legislative gamesmanship on an issue this vital. The people who think it's the wrong thing to do ought to just stand up on the floor and vote against it. But they know they're in the minority; they shouldn't be able to pull some 11th hour deal that keeps the vote from coming out the way a majority want it to come out.

Let me say, finally, we also should proceed with our actions to protect Americans from the threat of nuclear weapons. Later this afternoon, I'll meet here at the White House with Nobel laureates, former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and others on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. I fervently believe, as all of you know, that this treaty will restrain the spread of nuclear weapons, while enabling us to maintain the effectiveness of our nuclear arsenal.

As you know, there are discussions between Republicans and Democrats on the Hill about a better process for deliberating on this important treaty. After 2 long years of inaction, one week is very little time for considered action. The Chemical Weapons Convention, for example, that we ratified in 1997, had 14 full days of hearings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee after a long process of negotiations. But for now, the vote is scheduled for Tuesday, and I will continue to aggressively argue to the Senate and to the American people that this is in our national interests.

And I will have a little more to say about this later today at the other event.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty *October 6, 1999*

Thank you very much. Let me begin by saying a profound word of thanks to Senator Glenn, to General Shalikashvili, to Dr. Townes, and to Secretary Cohen for what they have said. I thank General Jones and Admiral Crowe for being here. I thank all the other Nobel laureates who are here; Secretary Richardson and General Shelton and the members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Mr. Berger and Mr. Podesta, the other people from the White House. And I thank Senators Biden and Dorgan for their presence here and their enormous leadership on this issue, and other committed American citizens who are in this audience.

Let me say that I was sitting here thinking two things when the previous speakers were speaking. One is, it made me very proud to be an American, to know that our country had been served by people like these four, without regard to party. The second is that each in their own way represent a different piece of the American experience over the last 50 years and bring a remarkable combination of intellect, knowledge, experience, and humanity to the remarks that they made.

There's a reason that President Eisenhower said we ought to do this and a reason that President Kennedy agreed. They saw World War II from slightly different angles and different ranks, but they experienced the horror of the atomic era's onset in much the same way. I think you could make a compelling argument that this treaty is more needed now than it was when they advocated it, when there were only two nuclear powers. I think you could make a compelling argument that, given the events of the last couple of years, this treaty is more needed than it was when I signed it at the United Nations 3 years ago. Nuclear technology and know-how continue to spread. The risk that more and more countries will obtain weapons that are nuclear is more serious than ever.

I said yesterday—I'd like to just stop here and go off the script. I am very worried that the 21st century will see the proliferation of nuclear and chemical and biological weapons; that those systems will undergo a process of miniaturization, just as almost all other technological events have led us to, in good ways and

bad; and that we will continue to see the mixing and blending of misconduct in the new century by rogue states, angry countries, and terrorist groups. It is, therefore, essential that the United States stay in the nonproliferation lead in a comprehensive way.

Now, if you look at what we're trying to do with the Biological Weapons Convention, for example, in putting teeth in that while increasing our own ability to protect our own people and protect our friends who want to work with us from biological weaponry, you see a good direction. If you look at what we did with the Chemical Weapons Convention, working in good faith for months with the Congress to ask the same question we're asking here—are we better off with this or without it?—and how we added safeguard after safeguard after safeguard, both generated out of the administration and generated from leaders of both parties in the Congress, that's how we ought to look at this.

But we have to ask ourselves just the same question they all presented, because the nuclear threat is still the largest one, and are we better off or not if we adopt this treaty?

I think we start with the fact that the best way to constrain the danger of nuclear proliferation and, God forbid, the use of a nuclear weapon, is to stop other countries from testing nuclear weapons. That's what this test ban treaty will do. A vote, therefore, to ratify is a vote to increase the protections of our people and the world from nuclear war. By contrast, a vote against it risks a much more dangerous future.

One of the interesting things—I'll bet you that people in other parts of the world, particularly those that have nuclear technology, are watching the current debate with some measure of bewilderment. I mean, today we enjoy unmatched influence, with peace and freedom ascendant in the world, with enormous prosperity, enormous technical advances. And by and large, on a bipartisan basis, we've done a pretty good job of dealing with this unique moment in history.

We've seen the end of the cold war making possible agreements to cut U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals by more than 60 percent. We have offered the Russians the opportunity of

further cuts if they will ratify START II. But we know the nuclear peril persists and that there's growing danger that these weapons could spread in the Middle East, in the Persian Gulf, in Asia, to areas where our troops are deployed. We know that they can be present in areas where there are intense rivalries and, unlike at least the latter years of the cold war, still very much the possibility of misunderstanding between countries with this capacity.

Now, let me say the reason I say that I think other countries will be looking at this, one of the concerns that I have had all along is that the countries we need to get involved in this, India, Pakistan, all the other countries, will say, "Well, gosh, when we all get in this Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Americans have a big advantage, because they're spending \$4.5 billion maintaining the integrity of their nuclear stockpile." And I always thought that, too. And I think that's a good thing, because people around the world know we're not going to abuse this responsibility we have.

But it is strange to me and I'm sure strange for people in foreign capitals analyzing the debate going on in Washington that there are people against this treaty who somehow think we will be disadvantaged by it. So instead, they propose to say, well, we—they don't, any of them, say we should start testing again. So the message of not ratifying this treaty is, "Okay, we're not going to test, but you guys have a green light."

Now, forgive my less than elevated language, but I think we've got to put this down where everybody can get it. And I don't think we ought to give a green light to our friends in India and Pakistan, to the Chinese or the Russians, or to people who would be nuclear powers. I think that would be a mistake.

I think we ought to give them an outstretched hand and say, let us show common restraint. And see this in the framework of our continuing work with the Russians to secure their own nuclear materials, to destroy nuclear weapons that are scheduled for destruction, and to continue our effort to reduce the nuclear threat.

The argument, it seems to me, doesn't hold water, this argument that somehow we would be better off, even though we're not going to start testing again, to walk away from this treaty and give a green light to all these other countries in the world.

Now, I sent this test ban treaty up to the Senate over 2 years ago. For 2 years, the opponents of the treaty refused to hold any hearings. Suddenly, they say, "Okay, you've got to vote up or down in a week." Now, this is a tough fight without much time, and there are lots of technical arguments can be made to confuse the issue. But I would like to just reiterate what has already been said by previous speakers and make one other point.

There are basically three categories of arguments against the treaty. Two have been dealt with. One is, "Well, this won't detect every test that anybody could do at every level," and General Shalikashvili addressed that. We will have sensors all over the world that will detect far more tests than will be detected if this treaty is not ratified and does not enter into force. And our military have repeatedly said that any test of a size that would present any kind of credible threat to what we have to do to protect the American people, we would know about, and we could respond in an appropriate and timely fashion.

The second argument is, no matter what all these guys say, they can find three scientists somewhere who will say—or maybe 300, I don't know—that they just don't agree and maybe there is some scenario under which the security and reliability of the nuclear deterrent in America can be eroded. Well, I think that at some point, with all these Nobel laureates and our laboratory heads and the others that have endorsed this—say what they say, you have to say, what is the likelihood that America can maintain the security and reliability of its nuclear deterrent, as compared with every other country, if they come under the umbrella of this and the treaty enters into force?

The same people say that we ought to build a national missile defense, notwithstanding the technological uncertainties, because our skill is so much greater, we can always find a technological answer to everything. And I would argue that our relative advantage in security, even if you have some smidgen of a doubt about the security and reliability issue, will be far greater if we get everybody under this tent and we're all living under the same rules, than it will be if we're all outside the tent.

Now, there's a third sort of grab-bag set of arguments against it, and I don't mean to deprecate them. Some of them are actually quite serious and substantial questions that have been

raised about various countries' activities in particular places and other things. The point I want to make about them is, go back and look at the process we adopted in the Chemical Weapons Convention. Every single other objection that has been raised or question that has been raised can be dealt with by adding an appropriately worded safeguard to this treaty. It either falls within the six we've already offered and asked for or could be crafted in a careful negotiation as a result of a serious process. So I do not believe that any of these things are serious stumbling blocks to the profound argument that this is in our interest.

Look, 154 countries have signed this treaty—Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Israel, Iran, all our NATO Allies—51 have already ratified, 11 of our NATO Allies, including nuclear powers Britain and France. But it can't go into effect unless the U.S. and the other designated nations ratify it. And once again, we need American leadership to protect American interests and to advance the peace of the world.

I say again, we're spending \$4½ billion a year to protect the security and reliability of the nuclear stockpile. There is a reason that Secretary Cohen and Secretary Richardson and our laboratory heads believe that we can do this. Once again, I say the U.S. stopped testing in 1992. What in the world would prevent us from trying to have a regime where we want other people to join us in stopping testing?

Let me just give one example. Last year the nuclear tests by India and Pakistan shook the world. After those tests occurred, they had a serious confrontation along the line of control in Kashmir. I spent our Independence Day, the Fourth of July, meeting with the Pakistani Prime Minister and his senior government officials in an intense effort to try to help defuse this situation.

Now, both of these countries have indicated they will sign this treaty. If our Senate defeats it, do you think they'll sign it? Do you think they'll ratify it? Do you think for a minute that they will forgo further tests if they believe that the leading force in the world for nuclear non-proliferation has taken a U-turn? If our Senate defeats the treaty, will it encourage the Russians, the Chinese, and others to refrain from trying to find and test new, more sophisticated, more destructive nuclear weapons? Or will it give them a green light?

Now, I said earlier we've been working with Congress on missile defense to protect us from a nuclear attack should one ever come. I support that work. And if we can develop a system we think will work, we owe it to the American people to work with the Russians and others to figure out a way to give our people the maximum protection. But our first line of defense should be preventing countries from having those weapons in the first place.

It would be the height of irresponsibility to rely on the last line of defense to say, "We're not going to test. You guys test. And we're in a race to get up a missile defense, and we sure hope it will work if the wheels run off 30 or 40 years from now." This argument doesn't hold water.

People say, "Well, but somebody might cheat." Well, that's true, somebody might cheat. Happens all the time, in all regimes. Question is, are we more likely to catch them with the treaty or without?

You all know and I am confident that people on the Hill have to know that this test ban treaty will strengthen our ability to determine whether or not nations are involved in weapons activities. You've heard the 300 sensors mentioned. Let me tell you what that means in practical terms. If this treaty goes into effect, there will be 31 sensors in Russia, 11 in China, 17 in the Middle East alone, and the remainder of the 300-plus in other critical places around the world. If we can find cheating, because it's there, then we'll do what's necessary to stop or counter it.

Let me again say I want to thank the former chairs of the Joint Chiefs who have endorsed this. I want to thank the current Chair, and all the Joint Chiefs, and the previous service chiefs who have been with us in this: Lawrence Eagleburger, the Secretary of State under President Bush; Paul Nitze, a top Presidential adviser from Presidents Truman to Reagan; former Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker; many Republicans and Democrats who have dealt with this issue for years have stayed with us. John Glenn, from *Mercury* to *Discovery*—are you going up again, John?—has always been at the cutting edge of technology's promise. But he's also flown fighter planes and seen war.

The Nobel laureates who are here, Dr. Ramsey, Dr. Fitch, both part of the Manhattan Project; Dr. Ramsey, a young scientist, Dr. Fitch, a teenage soldier, witnessed the very first

nuclear test 54 years ago in the New Mexico desert. Their letter says, "It is imperative"—underline imperative—"that the test ban treaty be ratified."

Let me just say one other thing. There may be a suggestion here that our heart is overcoming our head and all that. I'd like to give you one example that I think refutes that on another topic. One of the biggest disappointments I've had as President, a bitter disappointment for me, is that I could not sign in good conscience the treaty banning landmines, because we have done more since I've been President to get rid of landmines than any country in the world by far. We spend half the money the world spends on demining. We have destroyed over a million of our own mines.

I couldn't do it because the way the treaty was worded was unfair to the United States and to our Korean allies in meeting our responsibilities along the DMZ in South Korea and because it outlawed our antitank mines while leaving every other country's intact. And I thought it was unfair.

But it just killed me. But all of us who are in charge of the Nation's security engage our heads, as well as our hearts. Thinking and feeling lead you to the conclusion that this treaty should be ratified.

Every single serious question that can be raised about this kind of bomb, that kind of

bomb, what this country has, what's going on here, there, and yonder, every single one of them can be dealt with in the safeguard structure that is normally a product of every serious treaty deliberation in the United States Senate. And I say again, from the time of President Eisenhower, the United States has led the world in the cause of nonproliferation. We have new, serious proliferation threats that our predecessors have not faced. And it is all the more imperative that we do everything we possibly can to minimize the risks our children will face.

That is what you were trying to do. I thank the Senators who are here with us today and pray that they can swell their ranks by next week.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:43 p.m. in the East Room at the White House following a meeting with supporters of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator and astronaut John Glenn, who introduced the President; former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, USA (Ret.), Gen. David C. Jones, USA (Ret.), and Adm. William J. Crowe, Jr., USN (Ret.); Nobel Physics Prize recipients Charles H. Townes (1964), Norman F. Ramsey (1989), and Val L. Fitch (1980); and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan.

Statement on the London Commuter Train Crash *October 6, 1999*

I want to offer my deepest sympathies to the families and friends of those who were injured or killed in yesterday's train crash in London. This incident was particularly tragic because it happened in such an everyday setting, as com-

muters headed towards another day at work. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Americans who were among the injured and all the victims and their families.

Remarks at a Ceremony Unveiling a Portrait of Former Secretary of Commerce Mickey Kantor *October 6, 1999*

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Secretary Daley, thank you for your comments

and your extraordinary leadership. I thank

Secretary and Mrs. Glickman, Secretary Richardson, Ambassador Barshefsky, John Podesta, Ambassador Zuzul from Croatia for being here, and the many friends and family members of Mickey Kantor, but especially Heidi, and Leslie and Bruce, and Doug and Allison, and Alix, and of course, Ryan and Zachary.

I think that when they're old enough to watch the videotape of this ceremony, they will enjoy it a lot. They will see that their father was one of America's greatest public—their grandfather was one of America's greatest public servants. They also, because of what I am about to say, will know that he's known for something other than cuddles and hugs. [Laughter] After all, you don't earn the title he actually earned in a poll once, there of the "third most hated man in South Korea"—[laughter]—by being Mr. Nice Guy all the time. [Laughter]

I went to South Korea, and I gave a speech to the South Korean Parliament. And it's always a big deal, the American President goes to a foreign parliament. I spoke to the French Parliament; I've spoken to parliaments all over the world, and they're always so excited and happy, not because of me but because it's the United States. Not in Korea. [Laughter] They all sat there glumly, with—and they held up little protest signs that said, "Rice." [Laughter] Thanks a lot, Mickey. It was great. [Laughter]

Secretary Daley has already alluded to this, and I just want to say briefly, in April of 1996, after Ron Brown and the other fine people from the Department of Commerce died in that terrible plane crash, I really thought there was no one else I could turn to to run this Department. I hesitated to ask Mickey to do it. I thought that he had been one of the truly most outstanding and effective Trade Ambassadors we had every had.

But when I did ask him, without a moment's hesitation, even though he'd rather carry his own scheduling book and make his own deals, he came over here to this massive Government Department to do the Nation's work again. And he did it out of loyalty to me, to Ron, to the thousands of grieving Commerce Department employees, and to the United States. And I am very grateful.

I like this portrait an awful lot. Mr. Polson, you did a remarkable job. But on the way over here, I was sort of hoping that you'd break the mold and you would lift this curtain and I would see Mickey in his Speedo bathing suit, flexing

his biceps. [Laughter] But instead he's got that double-breasted suit on, he can afford now that he's left Government service. [Laughter]

I want to thank Mickey for many things. I've been a close friend of his for what seems like forever now, more than 20 years. Bill mentioned his service in the Navy. I think it's worth, for the record, to point out that he served on an aircraft carrier. What you may not know is that he and the rest of the crew of the U.S.S. *Wasp* were on the frontlines of the Cuban missile crisis, locked eyeball-to-eyeball with Russian sailors for those 14 harrowing days.

I think it was good preparation for the rest of his life and the constant, constant occasions he has had to call upon his steel nerves. This has served Mickey well in everything he's ever done: in turning 9th inning double plays at Vanderbilt to dealing with 11th hour crises in our '92 campaign to closing the deal on some of the largest trade negotiations in America's history.

Back in 1993, when Mickey was using those nerves of steel in a series of complex negotiations with the Japanese, some teenagers were spotted at Japanese Disneyland with a T-shirt that sums it up well. Mickey Kantor was drawn to look like Mickey Mouse calmly beating the dickens out of sumo wrestlers 10 times his size. [Laughter]

We all like watching Mickey work. If we want to watch Mickey at all, we have to like to watch Mickey work. [Laughter] We've all seen him up for days and nights at a time on some difficult negotiation. Instead of just throwing in the towel or throwing a chair, he sort of does that "I'm just a country lawyer from Tennessee" routine, and you turn around, and you've lost your wallet.

We all know that Mickey has on occasion shown displays of temper; at least he has to me, but I deserved it, and it served the conversation well at the time. But let me say to all of you, the thing that I like about him so much is that he does have passion, and he does have nerves of steel. He has courage and a good mind, but he also, most importantly, has the right kind of heart.

When he was a teenager, he was profoundly moved when his father lost his job on the Nashville School Board because he had the temerity to believe that Nashville ought to abide by the Supreme Court's order to desegregate our schools. Later he was inspired by the activism

of Caesar Chavez and went down to Florida to defend poor farm workers against labor abuses.

As Secretary Daley mentioned, Mickey worked with Hillary on the board of the Legal Services Corporation when President Carter served here, helping to secure every American's right to equal justice under the law. He also served on the board of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund and created an award and scholarship in Valerie's name. He created the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, giving hundreds of young people a chance to make a difference in their communities and exposing me to the Corps in 1991 and 1992, which was, along with City Year in Boston, for me, the model that led to AmeriCorps, and has now given over 100,000 young Americans the chance to serve in their communities and earn some funds to go on to college—in just 5 years, more people than served in the first 20 years of the Peace Corps. I am very proud of that and very grateful to Mickey for giving me the inspiration.

Mickey has done things that I think are important for America's politics beyond the jobs that he's held. He's always believed we could fight for the underdog and make life good for everyone else. He was the prototypical New Democrat, before the phrase became popular.

When we were working on this campaign, in '91 and '92, whenever he sensed the message of the campaign drifting he would always say, "We have to prove that our party can grow the economy, can get the deficit down, is committed to expanding trade, not running away from the globalized future we all face. We have

to prove that we believe in welfare reform, that able-bodied people can work and raise their children and succeed." And he used to talk all the time about how important it was for us to follow policies that would drive down the crime rate and make America safer, things that didn't always fall within the direct ambit of his work in the campaign and later as trade negotiator. And whenever he felt we were drifting away, he would call me on the phone and say, "Remember what we ran; remember what we promised; remember what we've got to do." And still, even though he's not in public service and now that he's not in my employ—sometimes with greater color—[laughter]—he calls and reminds me of that, if he ever senses any drift.

So Mickey, before I turn the program over to you and give you a chance to rebut the charges of the Koreans, the Japanese kids, and your President, let me say, thank you for 21 or more remarkable years of genuine friendship. Thank you for astonishing public service. Thank you for being a good model, as father and husband and citizen. And thank you for believing in things and people, enough to fight for what you believe in. Our country is much better because you have served it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. in the main lobby at the Herbert C. Hoover Building. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Glickman's wife, Rhonda; Croatian Ambassador to the U.S. Miomir Zuzul; and artist Steven Polson, who painted the portrait.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Bart Stupak

October 6, 1999

The President. Thank you. Well, first of all, I would like to thank our host for providing this magnificent room for us to meet in tonight in Union Station. When I was a college student in Washington, DC, Union Station was one of Washington's big eyesores. There's a young woman here nodding; she wasn't even alive when I was in college. How does she know that? [Laughter] But to see what's happened to it, for those of us who love this city and

its monuments, it's a great thing, and I'm delighted that we're here.

I also want to acknowledge—Bart's a good politician; he called everybody's name in this audience tonight who can actually vote for him. [Laughter] Right before I came in here, I got a call on the cell phone from Hillary, who is in Europe on a trip, saying to say hello to Bart and Laurie. They are two of her favorite people,

and she loves the Upper Peninsula and its Representative.

But I think if you—everybody wants to know why I'm here—if you want to see an indication of why Congressman Stupak has been so successful, I'd like for every Member of the House of Representatives here to raise your hand—everybody who is here in the House: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten. That's pretty good, isn't it? Let's give them a hand. *[Applause]*

I saw several with my bad eyesight, and I knew that if I tried to do what he did—he had everybody written down—*[laughter]*—I'd be making a political mistake. Anyway, I want to thank them for coming.

I also want to tell you that—Bart said I had been to the Upper Peninsula. We had a Governors conference in Traverse City in 1988. I said '88, maybe it was '87—'87, I think. And I went to—we were obviously in Traverse City, where my most vivid memory besides the beautiful lake is that impossible golf course that Jack Nicklaus built there.

Audience member. The Bear!

The President. The Bear—and it is—and all of the beautiful little towns around there, including the place where they make the biggest cherry pie in the world—*[laughter]*—in the summertime that literally took up the whole courthouse lawn. I got a piece of that cherry pie. *[Laughter]* And I've been trying to get back there ever since. *[Laughter]*

We also went to Mackinaw Island for a Democratic Governors meeting, and all the then-Democratic candidates for President came and met us there at the Grand Hotel, where I stayed and where the then-Governor of Michigan, Jim Blanchard, put on a Motown revue, with Martha and the Vandellas and Junior Walker and the All-Stars. And they asked me to come play with them, and I did. It was the first time I'd played saxophone in 3 years, and I've been playing ever since. So I feel—again, I mean, from my former—so I feel very indebted to the Upper Peninsula for a lot of things. And I have very vivid memories of running around the outside of Mackinaw Island jogging there in the summertime, and how much I loved it. So I hope I can come back.

Let me be to the point here. When we passed the economic plan in 1993—that did raise taxes on the wealthiest 1½ percent of the American people, but cut taxes for 15 million working

families and promised to reduce the deficit at least \$500 billion—the very announcement of the plan, before I even took the oath of office, began to drop interest rates. And then when we introduced it, they dropped some more. And when we kept fighting for it, they dropped some more.

But everybody knew what would happen if we did it, that the Republicans would try to convince everybody that we'd raised taxes on them. And sure enough, that's what happened. They decided that they would not give us one vote, even though they knew that these deficits had quadrupled the national debt, given us high interest rates, slow growth, and a terrible recession, stagnant earnings.

And we all decided that we would jump off that bridge together. And I felt terrible about it because a third of the Senate comes up for election every 2 years, and every House Member does, but the President doesn't have to run for 4 years. And we all knew that there was a very good chance, if we passed that plan in August of 1993, that it would bring the deficit down and bring interest rates down, but people might not feel the improved economy or believe, even, that the deficit was coming down by the '94 election.

For the Members from rural America, particularly after we passed the crime bill—we passed the Brady bill for background checks; we passed the crime bill, which banned 19 assault weapons; and we put those 100,000 police on the street, like Bart said—they put an enormous burden on rural Democrats.

And Bart went home to run for reelection. And a number of our people, I think, were hoping they could make the election about something else. Bart Stupak decided to make the election about the vote he cast. He was proud of it. He thought it was right, and if the people wanted to vote him out for it, so be it. But he wanted to make sure they knew exactly what was in the bill, which is not at all what his opponent said was in the bill. So he went home and adopted an in-your-face position, and he's still standing here. And I admire the fact that he voted with us when it would have been easy for him to take a pass, because if we had lost one vote, the plan would have failed.

Then, I admire the fact that he was not ashamed of the vote he'd taken and wasn't about to run and hide from it, because he knew it

would help to turn America around. The same thing with having been in law enforcement and what he said about background checks.

Now, when I was running in '92, we just made an argument to the American people, those of us that came in in '92. It was an argument. We said, "Give us a chance. We can put people first. We can do better. We can create opportunity for every responsible citizen. We can create an American community where we don't forget about rural America, we don't forget about the minorities in the inner cities, we don't forget about anybody. We give everybody a chance to be a part of this. Give us a chance." It was an argument.

By the time I got to run for reelection—you should know this—the deficit was coming down for almost 4 years before a majority of Americans believed it. The economy was getting better for almost 3 years before a majority of Americans believed it, before they could feel it and feel secure. There is a lag time.

When you have to make a very tough decision and then you try to turn a big country around, it's like trying to turn an ocean liner around. It's not like running a little powerboat with an outboard motor that you can turn on a dime. And there's a lot of groaning in the turn. And we did lose a lot of wonderful people in the United States Congress. The country's been paying for it ever since, I might add. *[Laughter]* But Bart stood strong. And now there's not an argument anymore.

As we go through the 2000 election, this is what I hope all of you from the Upper Peninsula will say about your Congressman: When the future of the country was on the line, when America's future in the 21st century was on the line, when the children of this country had an uncertain future, he stepped up. He loved being in Congress. He had just gotten there, and he was willing to throw it all away for you, and he had enough confidence in himself and his wife and his family. You know, if I had 10 people in my family, I'd have never lost an election, either. *[Laughter]* He had enough confidence in himself, in the people he represented to believe they could take the truth and make the right decisions.

And it's not a debate anymore. And I want every Member of the House here who's with us to remember that. When you go home in 2000—we made an argument in '96—in '92. And in '96, we said, "We're doing a little bet-

ter." It's not an argument anymore. There is evidence.

So when the Republicans come up for the elections in 2000, from the White House to the Senate to the House, you've got to tell the people, "If you vote for them now and what they want to do, you're doing it in the face of all the evidence." We implemented our economic policy over their opposition. We've got 2 years of back-to-back budget surpluses for the first time in 42 years, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. We implemented our crime policy with a handful of them with us, almost all the rest of them against us. We've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Not a single hunter's been interrupted in the hunting season in the Upper Peninsula, but 400,000 people did not get guns who shouldn't have gotten them.

Now, these are facts. This is not an argument anymore. And we have worked our hearts out for over 6½ years to get this country going in the right direction again, to get the country together again, to do things that make sense again. What I want the American people to do—I'm not on the ballot; this is something I want as a citizen. What I want the American people to do in 2000 is to say, "Okay, we turned this great big ocean liner around, and we're going in the right direction, and the country is working again. Now, for the first time in our lifetimes, we are free to look at the big challenges out there, to paint the future of America we want, to deal with the retirement of the baby boomers by saving Social Security and Medicare, to give all of our kids a world-class education, to get this country out of debt over the next 15 years for the first time since 1835, and give us a generation of prosperity." We can do big things. We've got the crime rate down to the lowest level in 26 years; how about the real goal? Why don't we make America the safest big country in the entire world? We can do these things. We've got 19½ million new jobs, and it's the most we've ever had in this period of time. But why don't we establish a real goal to bring economic opportunity through free enterprise into every neighborhood in this country, all those rural towns that haven't felt it, up and down the Mississippi Delta where I grew up, in Appalachia, on the Indian reservations, everywhere?

Why don't we—if we don't get around to this now, we will never do it. We have a couple of Members from Pennsylvania here; there are still towns in Pennsylvania that have had no economic recovery. So why don't we establish a real goal—and so we say, "Look, great, we're growing. We've got a low unemployment rate. Let's bring enterprise and opportunity to people who haven't felt it yet." This is what we are free to do.

What they're going to say is, "Well, now, we learned we've got to be nice to everybody, and let's go back and do something else." And I just want to remind you this guy put his neck on the line and so did a lot of the other people here, and they tried to chop it off. But enough

of us survived to see our argument tested, and we were right.

Now, should America continue to change? Should we vote for change in 2000? Absolutely. The question is: What kind of change? We've got the country going in the right direction. Now is the time to reach for the stars, not make a U-turn. Stick with this guy. He's the best.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:25 p.m. at B. Smith's Restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Laurie Stupak of Menominee, MI, wife of Representative Stupak; and professional golfer Jack Nicklaus.

Remarks at a New Democrat Network Dinner *October 6, 1999*

Thank you. I hope I have Joe Lieberman's remarks on the White House television camera back there somewhere. Thank you so much, Senator Lieberman, for—we're about to start our 30th year of acquaintance, Senator Lieberman and I are. When I first met him, I had no gray hair. Now I have more gray hair than he does.

I thank Joe Lieberman and Cal Dooley for their leadership of this organization; my friend Simon Rosenberg, who has come a long way since he was in the Clinton-Gore war room in 1992. And he did a great job there. And I, too, want to acknowledge Al From and thank him for the inspiration he's given all of us.

I want to thank all the Members of Congress who are here and the candidates here who aspire to be in the House or the Senate. I want to reiterate what Joe Lieberman said, and I didn't think I could say this 6 months ago, but we now have, I believe, a reasonable chance to pick up enough seats not only to have a majority in the House, which everybody knows and even our adversaries acknowledge, but even in the Senate, thanks in no small measure to the extraordinary people who are running for the Senate seats on our side.

Now, let me say, I suppose I don't have to say much tonight because I'll be preaching to the saved. But I think it's worth analyzing where

we are and where we're going and why the New Democratic coalition is important and why it's important to us to keep faith with the ideas that got this group started, with the ideals, and to keep always pushing to tomorrow.

You know, there are a lot of people who say, "Well, this election is going to be about change, even if they think the Clinton-Gore team has done a good job or the Democrats have done a good job. This election is about change." Well, I think it ought to be about change, too. The question is, what kind?

I was educated about this issue very well about 10 years ago. Some of you heard me tell this story before, but it's one of my favorite and most instructive political stories. When I was Governor of my State, every year in October, this month, we'd have a State Fair. And I always had Governor's day at the State Fair, and I'd go out there and give an award to the oldest person there and the couple that had been married the longest and the person with the largest number of great-grandchildren. And then I'd go in this big old shed and get me a little booth, and I'd sit there. And anybody who wanted to come by could talk.

And in October of not—it was '89, and there was a Governor's race the next year, and I had been Governor by then for 10 years. And this old guy in overalls came up to the Governor's

booth, and he said, "Bill, are you going to run next year again?" And I said, "I don't know, but if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Oh yeah, I will." He said, "I always have, and I guess I'll keep on doing it." And I said, "Well, aren't you tired of me after all these years?" He said, "No, I'm not, but everybody else I know is." [Laughter]

And I got kind of—[inaudible]—and I said—you know how politicians are, we hate it when somebody says something like that. So I got kind of hurt, and I said, "Well, gosh, I mean, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Oh yeah, you've done a good job, but you got a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?" [Laughter] He said, "That's what we hired you to do. What we've got to figure out is whether you've got anything left to do." Very instructive.

No matter how good a job you do, elections are always about tomorrow, and they should be. America has been changing and sort of reinventing itself on the great pillars of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and the Declaration of Independence for over 200 years, and that's why we're still here. And this coalition came into being and the whole sort of New Democrat/Third Way movement came into being because we thought not that our party should abandon its principles but that we should break out of a shell and adopt policies that would bring us together and move us into the future.

I just want to make a few points as we look to that future. First of all, in 1992, when I went out to the people in New Hampshire and all these other States and into the country and asked then-Senator Gore to join me, and we said, "Look, we've got this vision of America in the 21st century. We want this to be a country where everybody who is responsible enough to work for it has opportunity, where no matter how diverse we get, we're still coming together in one community, where we're still the world's leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity. We want to take this opportunity, responsibility, community agenda and come up with concrete policies and ideas to get the economy moving again, to bring the crime rate down, to bring the welfare rolls down, to empower poor people, to get more young people into college, to raise the standards of our schools and have more choice and competition there. We've got some ideas. Give us a chance."

And all we were doing is making an argument. And against our argument, what the Republicans

said was what they've been saying about Democrats for 30 years, you know, "They're too liberal. You can't trust them with your money. They'll raise your taxes. They never met a Government program they didn't like. They sleep next to a bureaucratic pile of rules at night. You know, they wouldn't defend the country if their life depended on it." You know, you've heard all that stuff.

They had this sort of cardboard cutout image of Democrats that they tried to paste on every candidate's face at election time. But all we had was an argument. And things were sufficiently bad in this country—the economy was in terrible shape; the society was divided; the crime rate and the welfare rolls were exploding—that people decided to take a chance on the argument.

And then we set about trying to turn this country around and made some very tough decisions. And some of our Members paid very dearly for it for the '93 economic plan to turn this country around, for voting for the Brady bill and the crime bill to bring the crime rate down. They paid dearly. But we kept chugging along.

And about 4 years later, the people decided to give us a—they renewed our lease because they could feel things were beginning to change. And then in '98 we had a historic victory in the congressional elections because we had an agenda to keep building on it. We said, "Now give us a chance to save Social Security and pass a Patients' Bill of Rights and build and modernize schools. Give us a chance to do some things that will really make a difference here."

And now we come up to 2000, and I want to make the following points. Some of them have been made before. You need to memorize this. This is not an argument anymore. And the members of the other party unanimously opposed our economic policy; almost all of them are against our crime policy. We finally, thank goodness, reached an accord on welfare policy, after two vetoes, and that's good. But still there is this sort of partisan rancor when we have evidence that the direction we've taken is right.

This is not an argument anymore. The people in this room have been part—the Members of Congress in this room have been part of the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the first back-to-back

budget surpluses in 42 years, and the lowest crime rates in 26 years. This is not an argument anymore.

And along the way we've brought some real new ideas into American politics: the family and medical leave law, which the previous administration vetoed; doubling the earned-income tax credit; the empowerment zone program, which the Vice President has done so ably; the community financial institutions that are making loans to people that couldn't get money otherwise; the charter schools—we're up to 1,700 from one when I took office; the HOPE scholarships that have opened the doors of college, at least the first 2 years, virtually to every person in this country now; AmeriCorps, which has given over 100,000 young people in its first 5 years a chance to serve their communities, something it took the Peace Corps 20 years to do.

So we have been full, all of us, of these ideas, and we've worked along. And it's been exciting. It's not an argument anymore. So when we go into this election cycle, I want you to say, with all respect, you have to make a decision about not whether to change. Things are changing so fast, that's not an option.

Since I signed the telecommunications bill, over 300,000 new high-tech jobs have been created. We got this E-rate so we could provide discounts to rural schools and poor schools in the inner cities, so we could hookup all of our classrooms and libraries to the Internet by the year 2000, and it looks like we're going to make it.

I was out in California last weekend doing some work for our congressional and Senate candidates in our party, and I was with a lot of people. This great company, eBay—you all ever buy anything on eBay on the site? It's interesting. It's an interesting thing. Not working for the company, over 20,000 Americans are now making a living doing business on eBay. They don't work for eBay. They're just doing business on eBay. Over 20,000 people making a living, including a substantial number of former welfare recipients.

So what we've tried to do is to come with new ideas and policies that will really work, and it's not an argument anymore. That's the first thing I want to say. So say to people, "We're for change. The question is, what kind of change are you for?"

And the way I look at it, we've spent the last 6½ years trying to turn the country around and get it going in the right direction, and things are going well now. But I would like to suggest that the change we need is to say, "Okay, now we're moving in the right direction. Let's reach for the stars. Let's write the future of the 21st century. Let's imagine every challenge and every opportunity we've got out there that's really big and go get it. Let's don't change by taking a U-turn and going back to what got us trouble in the first place." That is the issue.

You can trust this coalition of people to deal with the aging of America. We're going to double the number of seniors in 30 years. I hope to still be one of them. [Laughter] The baby boomers will then be with us for at least another 20 years. We may or may not ever get an agreement with the Republicans on Social Security reform, but in good conscience, with this surplus, we must at least take the life of Social Security out beyond the reach of the baby boom generation. We have to do that.

If we don't agree on anything else, all it takes to take the life of the Social Security Trust Fund beyond the life of the baby boom generation is to commit to take 5 years of interest savings from saving the Social Security taxes, sometime in the next 15 years, and put them in the Social Security Trust Fund. If we don't do anything else, it'll take us out to 2050, and we ought to do it.

We ought to modernize Medicare. We ought to employ the most modern practices that you find in the private sector, and I think we ought to add a prescription drug coverage because if we were creating that program today, we would never create it without drug coverage. And 75 percent of the seniors in this country don't have affordable drug coverage. It will keep a lot of them out of hospitals. It will lengthen and improve the quality of their lives. It is the right and decent thing to do, and we can do it if we're also prepared to have some savings in the traditional program. We ought to take the lead in this. We should do it.

The second thing we ought to do is to keep working on the schools. We ought to have more charter schools. We ought to have a no social promotion policy. But we ought to give every kid who needs it an after-school program or a summer school program. We ought to modernize these schools, and we ought to hire the 100,000 teachers.

You know, if you ever wonder what the difference in the parties is, you ought to look at the debate going on in education now in the House of Representatives. Now, when the electorate was breathing down their throat in 1998 at the end of the congressional session, the Republicans worked with us to make a huge down-payment on 100,000 teachers to lower class size. And we gave the States money for 30,000 of them. And you ought to read the glowing statements made by such Democratic sympathizers as Dick Arney. *[Laughter]* In 1998, just last year, the chairman of the House Education Committee, lots of others say, "This could have been a Republican program. There is no bureaucracy here. This is a wonderful thing. We're helping these teachers."

They thought it was a great idea at election time. No electorate breathing down their throat, they have refused to fund the program anymore and taken out the dedicated funding for the teachers that's already there. This is about big ideas. We've got the largest student population, the most diverse student population in history. They need more and better trained teachers. They need higher standards. They need accountability and they need options so that the kids who aren't cutting it don't fail, but find a way to succeed. It's a huge issue.

We have the crime rate, the lowest rate in 26 years. That's very good. Does anybody think it's low enough? Why don't we have a real goal now? Why don't we adopt as a national goal that we're going to be the safest big country in the world?

If we have—we've got—you may think that's crazy, but everybody thought it was crazy when we said we'd balance the budget, too. I could never have been elected President if I said, "If you will vote for me, within 6 years I'll give you two surpluses in a row." *[Laughter]* People'd say, "He seems like a nice young fella. We'd better send him home and get him a little help. He's disturbed." *[Laughter]* "He's out of his mind."

If you don't envision this, it won't happen. Why should we say, "We've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. It's good enough?" It's not good enough. It's nowhere near good enough. But if we're serious about it, we're going to have to do more in prevention. We already have the highest percentage of people behind bars of any country in the world. We're going to have to say there's no rational distinction be-

tween a flea market and a gun show and a gun shop. We're going to have to put 50,000 more police out there in the neighborhoods where the crime rate is still too high. We're going to have to do things that help communities that are driving their crime rates down do it everywhere.

But I think the Democrats ought to say, "We're not satisfied with the lowest crime rate in 26 years. We'll never be satisfied until America is the safest big country in the world, and we think we can help to make it that way."

I think this is important. Let's talk about the economy. It's probably the best economy we've ever had. But I'm not satisfied with it for two reasons: Number one, not everybody is a part of it; and number two, it's changing so fast, if we don't keep working we can't keep the growth going. So let me just offer you a few ideas that I think are important.

I think our new markets ideas are important. These empowerment zones are wonderful, and I want to get more of them. But it isn't fair for all the places that aren't part of it not to have some help from us to bring enterprise there.

If we've learned one thing, we've got the strongest recovery of the last 30 years, also the highest percentage of private sector jobs. We have the smallest Federal Government since President Kennedy was here. But we have not yet figured out how to bring enterprise to every community that hasn't been part of this recovery.

So for those of us who represent and live in the Mississippi Delta or in Appalachia or in—represent many of the inner-city areas or a lot of the small towns and rural areas all over this country or the Native American reservations, I have proposed a modest but, I think, important plan. What I want the Congress to do is to pass laws that give us the same incentives to Americans with money to invest in poor areas in Central America and the Caribbean and Africa and Asia and throughout the world. I think it is a very, very good thing to do.

The second thing I'd like to say is that I like what we're doing, hooking up all these classrooms to the Internet, and the E-rate allows us to hook them up in rural areas and poor urban areas. But if you think about it, I believe we could revolutionize the economy of these left-behind places if access to the Internet were

as pervasive as access to telephones. So why don't we adopt that as a goal, study it, figure out how to achieve it, say we will not permit there to be any digital divide. That's the policy we've taken with regard to our schools. That's what the E-rate's all about. No digital divide for our kids in the schools.

But what if their parents all had it, too? What if their parents had access to that? What if we—why should we be content with the economy we have? If we don't reach our goal, it will be a lot better than it would otherwise, and we'll keep things going. I think we ought to think of that.

Let me just mention two other things. First of all, I want to mention something that may be sort of politically impolite, but one issue in which our caucus, in my view, is still divided too often in the wrong way, and that's the issue of trade.

Here's what I think. But there's a reason for that. You see it all over the world today. There is a move toward protectionism all over the world today, even in places that are doing well. Why? Because we have not figured out how to put a human face on the global economy. Because we haven't figured out how to tell people that, sure, there will be more dynamism in this economy, but here's what we're doing to protect the basic rights of working families. Here's what we're doing to try to protect the basic integrity of the environment. Here's what we're trying to do to make sure everyone can benefit from this.

So our party needs to take the lead in pushing for trade, but for doing it in a way that says we're determined to put a human face on the global economy. Because if we don't, it's not just in America; you see this everywhere. I see it in the Europeans. I see it in Asia again. I see it—the economy is now the strongest, here, it's been in a long time, and yet, the impetus for continuing to trade is not there.

Yet, you don't have to be a rocket scientist. We've got 4 percent of the people and 22 percent of the wealth. So if we want to keep strong and wealthy and growing, we've got to do something with the other 96 percent of the people out there. And I think it's very important.

I've got this big trade meeting coming up—we all do—in Washington State, in Seattle, in December. And I hope we can try to break down some barriers in other countries. But why should people break their barriers down if they

think America's trying to have it both ways? So I think we have to go back at this.

And lastly—and I think maybe the most important thing of all for the next generation—I vetoed that tax bill that the Congress passed, the Republicans in Congress passed, because I was convinced that if I signed it we not only could never meet our obligations to our children and to our seniors and to our future in our investments in science and technology, I was convinced we would never finish the work of paying down our debt. Now, we're paying down our debt now. And if we stay on the plane that I asked Congress to adopt in the budget, we will be debt-free in 15 years, for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835.

Now, why should the Democratic Party be for that? In conventional terms, we're the more liberal party. Why should we be for that? Everybody in this room who is 40 years of age or older, who studied economics in college, was told that a Government should always carry some debt. We were all taught that. Why? Because we're living in a global economy.

You look at what happens to these countries that try to hide their money; people still get it out. Interest rates are set in a global economy. If we get America out of debt, it means that all the Americans can borrow more cheaply. If the Government is out of debt, it means lower interest rates for businesses in this country, for home loans, for car loans, for college loans. It means more jobs and higher incomes. It means when our friends overseas who aren't as fortunate as we are get in trouble the way the Asians did in the last 2 years, they can get out of trouble at lower cost. And we'll start growing again more quickly.

I believe, if we do this, it would do more than anything else we could do to guarantee a whole generation of prosperity. Whatever happens in the future, we know not every day of every month of every year from now on will be as good as the last 6½ years have been, but whatever happens in the future, it won't be as bad as it would have been if we keep getting this country out of debt.

So I hope all of you will support that. We should not do anything that undermines our ability to shoot for that big idea, a debt-free America, an America with its lowest crime rate,

an America where everybody has economic opportunity. These are big ideas, and they're worth fighting for.

So, yes, we ought to be changing. But just remember, you don't have to make an argument with anybody anymore. You have the evidence on your side. We were right. So tell them, "If we're going to change, don't make a U-turn. Reach for the stars."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the Regency Room at the Hyatt Regency. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Joseph I. Lieberman and Representative Calvin M. Dooley, cofounders, and Simon Rosenberg, executive director, New Democratic Network; and Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council.

Remarks on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and an Exchange With Reporters

October 7, 1999

The President. Good morning. All this past week a chorus of voices has been rising to urge the Senate to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Yesterday our Nation's military leaders and our leading nuclear experts, including a large number of Nobel laureates, came here to say that we can maintain the integrity of our nuclear stockpile without testing, and that we would be safer with the test ban treaty. Today religious leaders from across the spectrum and across the Nation are urging America to seize the higher ground of leadership to stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

I want to thank those who are here, including Bishop John Glynn of the U.S. Catholic Bishop's Conference, Reverend Elenora Giddings Ivory of the Presbyterian Church, Reverend Jay Lintner of the National Council of Churches of Christ, Mark Pelavin of the Religious Action Center of Reformed Judaism, Bishop Theodore Schneider of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Joe Volk of the Friends Committee, Dr. James Dunn; there are others here, as well. And I would like to say a special word of thanks to Reverend Joan Brown Campbell of the National Council of Churches, as she concludes her responsibilities, for all the support she has given to our administration over the years.

And let me express my special gratitude to Senator Jim Jeffords from Vermont and Senator Byron Dorgan of North Dakota for their presence here and for their leadership in this cause.

These Americans are telling us that the debate about this treaty ultimately comes down to a fairly straightforward question: Will we do everything in our power to reduce the likelihood

that someday somewhere nuclear weapons will fall into the hands of someone with absolutely no compunction about using them; or will we instead, send a signal to those who have nuclear weapons, or those who want them, that we won't test but that they can test now or they can test when they develop or acquire the weapons? We have a moral responsibility to future generations to answer that question correctly. And future generations won't forgive us if we fail that responsibility.

We all recognize that no treaty by itself can guarantee our security, and there is always the possibility of cheating. But this treaty, like the Chemical Weapons Convention, gives us tools to strengthen our security, a global network of sensors to detect nuclear tests by others, the right to demand inspections, the means to mobilize the whole world against potential violators. To throw away these tools will ensure more testing and more development of more sophisticated and more dangerous nuclear weapons.

This is a time to come together and do what is plainly in the best interest of our country by embracing a treaty that requires other nations to do what we have already decided to do ourselves, a treaty that will freeze the development of nuclear weapons around the world at a time when we enjoy an overwhelming advantage in military might and technology.

So I say to the Senate today, whatever political commitments you may have made, stop, listen, think about the implications of this for our children's future. You have heard from the military. I hope you will listen to them. You have heard from Nobel laureates and other experts

in nuclear weapons. I hope you listen to them. You listened to our military and scientific leaders about national missile defense; listen to them about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Listen to the religious leaders who say it is the right thing to do. Listen to our allies, including nuclear powers Britain and France, who say America must continue to lead. And listen to the American people who have been for this treaty from the very beginning. And ask yourselves, do you really want to leave our children a world in which every nation has a green light to test, develop, and deploy nuclear weapons, or a world in which we have done everything we possibly can to minimize the risks nuclear weapons pose to our children? To ratify this treaty is to answer the question right and embrace our responsibility to future generations.

Thank you.

Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

Q. If the Patients' Bill of Rights fails today will you work with Republicans to get a more limited measure, or is it going to be your bill or no bill?

The President. Well, I believe there is a majority of support for the Norwood-Dingell bill. And the issue is not my bill or no bill. I'm not the issue here. I'm covered by the Federal plan, and I have extended by Executive order the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights to all people covered by all Federal plans, including the Members of Congress.

The issue is whether we're going to give the American people adequate protections. The Norwood-Dingell bill does that. We've got some Republican support for it in the House. I think Congressman Norwood, who has been a loyal Republican in virtually every respect, has shown a great deal of courage here, along with the doctors in the House, who know it's the right thing to do. And we'll just hope that it works out. We've worked very hard, and they've worked very hard. And I believe we have an excellent chance to win.

Congressional Inaction

Q. Mr. President, on the treaty, on health care, on tax cuts, and even on budget matters, the Republicans up on Capitol Hill seem to be saying that they do not want to work with you; they would prefer to wait until another person is in the office. Do you get that impression?

The President. Well, on tax cuts, I vetoed their bill, and it was the right thing to do. And it's a good thing for America. They are showing us every day they can't even fund the spending that they've already voted for and that they tried to saddle America with another \$800 billion worth of spending and say that somehow they could pay for it.

I think there are some of them who want to be a lame-duck Congress. They're still drawing a paycheck up there, and it's a little larger than it was before a bill that I signed. And I don't think they ought to make themselves into a lame-duck Congress. I think they ought to show up for work, and we ought to do the people's business. There are plenty of things we disagree on, but we have proved that we can work together under adverse circumstances.

Does this year look more like 1999 than 1996, 1997, and 1998—I mean, more like 1995? It does. It looks more like 1995. And I just don't think they ought to be a lame-duck Congress. I don't think the American people will understand it if they insist on sitting around up here for 2 years and doing nothing.

Now if the Senate doesn't want to work on saving Social Security and Medicare and educating our children, then maybe they ought to take a little time and confirm our judges and do some other things. But you know, I think there are people in the Senate and in the House, on both sides, who don't want to have a lame-duck 2 years for themselves. Senator Jeffords is here on this; Congressman Norwood and a number of other Republicans are helping on the Patients' Bill of Rights. And I think that we'll find a way to get some things done.

Labor Research Association Dinner

Q. Would you be mending fences with the Teamsters if it weren't for the campaigns of the Vice President and Mrs. Clinton?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I'm not mending fences. I would have accepted this invitation to go to this event tonight under any circumstances. I have actually enjoyed a fairly constructive relationship with the Teamsters over 6½ years. I've seen all those stories, but I've been a little amused by them. I don't understand what the fence mending—we have a difference of opinion about an issue or two, but I would—if I had been invited to this under any circumstances, I would certainly have gone.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Mr. President, any progress on delaying the treaty vote?

Q. [*Inaudible*—for the Vice President.

The President. I'm sorry; I can't hear. What did you say about the treaty vote?

Q. Any progress on delaying the treaty vote?

The President. I had a dinner here the other night that had Republicans and Democrats, including Republicans who were on both sides of the issue. There seems to be, among really thoughtful people who care about this, an overwhelming consensus that not enough time has been allocated to deal with the substantive issues that have to be discussed.

So we have had conversations obviously with the leadership and with Members in both parties, and I think there is a chance that they will reach an accord there.

Gov. George W. Bush of Texas

Q. Governor Bush seems to have taken a page from your history on triangulation in his dealings with a Republican-led Congress. Do you have any opinion on that, sir?

The President. First of all, I think the Republican right's being too hard on Governor Bush. I mean, you know, I don't understand why they're being so mean to him about this. He has stuck with them on—he was for that tax cut that they wanted. His main health care adviser sponsored that breakfast with the House leadership yesterday designed to help kill the Patients' Bill of Rights. He stuck with them and the NRA on the gun issue. You know, he's for privatizing Social Security. I don't see why they're so hard on him, but I will say this, I personally appreciated what he said.

Raising taxes on poor people is not the way to get out of this bind we're in. But I think they're being way too hard on him and unfair.

AFL-CIO Endorsement

Q. When you talk to Mr. Hoffa about the AFL-CIO endorsement will you ask him to throw his support behind the Vice President?

The President. Well I think everybody knows where I am on that. I have met already with the executive committee of the AFL-CIO. That is not the purpose of my going there. They invited me to come by, and I was happy to accept, but I have already had a meeting with the executive committee, with all the executive committee of the AFL-CIO, in which we have

discussed that issue among others. Thank you very much.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. What part of the test ban—a followup on the test ban, sir?

The President. You want to ask a test ban treaty—

Q. Yes, just a followup. If it looks like you're not going to get the votes, is it better tactically to go down to defeat and blame it on the Republicans or to just—

The President. I'm not interested—that's not the—that's a game, and that's wrong. I'm not interested in blaming them for this. I think the Members who committed to be against the treaty before they heard the arguments and studied the issues and listened to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Nobel laureates made a mistake. I think that was wrong.

On the other hand, there are lots of issues, complex issues, that serious people who have questions about it have raised that deserve to be answered, worked through. And there are plenty of devices to do that if there is time to do that. All I ask here is that we do what is in the national interest. Let's just do what's right for America. I am not interested in an issue to beat them up about. That would be a serious mistake. That's not the way for the United States to behave in the world. But neither should they be interested in an issue that they can sort of take off the table with a defeat. That would do terrible damage to the role of the United States, which has been, from the time of President Eisenhower, the leader through Republican and Democratic administrations alike, Republican and Democratic Congresses alike—until this moment we have been the leader in the cause of nonproliferation.

We should not either try to get an issue that will enable us to beat up on them, neither should they have an issue that enables them to show that they can just deep-six this treaty. That would be a terrible mistake. Therefore, we ought to have a regular orderly substantive process that gives all the people the necessary time to consider this on the merit and that gives the people who made early commitments—I think wrongly, but they did it—the chance to move to doing the Senate's business the way the Senate should do it.

Look at what these people are saying here today. This is huge. This is bigger than party

politics. This is bigger than personal politics. This is about America's future and the future of our children and the world. We have a chance to reduce the likelihood that more countries will obtain nuclear weapons. We have a chance to reduce the likelihood that countries that are now working on developing nuclear technologies will be able to convert them into usable weapons. We have a chance to reduce the likelihood that countries that now have weapons will be able to make more advanced, more sophisticated, and bigger weapons. We cannot walk away from that, and we cannot let it get caught up in the kind of debate that would be unworthy of the children and grandchildren of Republicans and Democrats.

Thank you.

I would like to ask Senator Jeffords—let me just give credit where credit is due. Senator Jeffords got this group together. And when I heard they were meeting, I invited them to come down here to stand with us. So he deserves the credit for this day, and Senator Dorgan has been perhaps our most vociferous advocate on the Democratic side of this treaty. So I would like to ask Senator Jeffords to say a few words and then invite Senator Dorgan to say a few words.

[At this point, Senator James M. Jeffords and Senator Byron L. Dorgan made brief remarks.]

The President. Do you want to ask either one of them any questions? Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for New York City. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop John J. Glynn, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Archdiocese of Military Services; Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory, director, Washington office, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); Rev. Jay Lintner, director, Washington office, United Church of Christ; Mark J. Pelavin, associate director, Religious Action Center of Reformed Judaism; Bishop Theodore F. Schneider, Metropolitan Washington, DC, Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Joe Volk, executive secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation; James Dunn, executive director, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs; and Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, general secretary, National Council of Churches. The President also referred to his memorandum of February 20, 1998, on compliance of Federal agencies with the Patients' Bill of Rights (*Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1998 Book I* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), p. 260). The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Senator Jeffords and Senator Dorgan.

Interview With John Roberts of CBS in New York City October 7, 1999

Mr. Roberts. Mr. President, sir. Good to meet you; how are you?

The President. Good to see you.

Medicare Prescription Benefit

Mr. Roberts. So, you know the issue, sir. You've been trying to address it, the idea that there are 15 million senior citizens in this country who don't have Medicaid coverage for prescription drugs—Medicare coverage. What does it say about a country, sir, where many people have to go outside of the country to buy drugs that they can afford?

The President. Well, it's wrong, and it happens because we have about three-quarters of our senior citizens need prescription drugs that

they simply can't afford. They don't have access to any coverage, or the coverage they have is too expensive and too limited. And in Canada and in many places, drugs made in America are cheaper than they are here because bigger units can buy discounts.

Now this proposal I made to reform Medicare is totally voluntary; no senior has to buy a prescription drug coverage if he or she doesn't want it. But if they do buy it, then a private group, not the Government, would be able to get the drugs at a lower cost because they would be buying them in bulk. And I think it's fair. It will not adversely affect the drug companies. It will increase their volume, even though the drugs, individually, will be cheaper. They will

still come out way ahead. And our people will be treated more fairly, and they won't have to depend upon whether they're on the Canadian border to run across the line to buy drugs they can afford.

Mr. Roberts. What do you think about the idea of allowing pharmacies to re-import drugs, parallel importing for senior citizens and allow them access to the cheaper prices that they would pay in Canada?

The President. You're the first person that ever asked me that. I don't know. But I'll look into it. It's an interesting idea. I never thought about it.

Mr. Roberts. That's Congressman Sanders' idea. He has proposed to allow pharmacies to reimport drugs from Canada or Mexico. There has been some question as to whether or not that would be legal because of FDA regulations. But that's the idea that he is proposing.

The President. Well, if you could preserve their safety and quality, that there were some assurance of that, I would think it could be done. And it might work well along the Canadian border for Vermont, where Congressman Sanders lives, and for the other States along the border.

Then the further you get away from the border, the question is, will the transportation cost back more than offset the money that you would otherwise save? I don't know the answer. You're the first person that's ever asked me that. But I'll look into it.

Mr. Roberts. Now, the drug companies have been saying that even under your plan, which would allow Medicare to buy drugs in bulk, it would decrease the revenue stream to the point where research and development would be stifled. I mean, would you look at the profits they've been making in the last few years. Is that a legitimate argument?

The President. No. No, you know, they said that over and over and over again. American drug companies charge American citizens far more money for the same pharmaceuticals than they charge Europeans, Canadians, Mexicans, anyone else.

Mr. Roberts. Does that seem right?

The President. No. They say they do it because we bear the full cost of the research and development cost, and they can't put it off on any of the others because the Government controls the prices. That's what they say.

So I think if that's true, then the United States and its people have been awfully good to our drug companies. They've been willing to pay higher prices for drugs made in America than people in other countries do, and I think they owe it to the seniors to get off this high horse and stop trying to beat this attempt to extend medical coverage to seniors for prescription drugs.

People that live on fixed incomes ought to be able to get the benefit of discounts you get when you buy in bulk. This is not Government regulation; this is market power. A lot of these drugs they have long since recovered the research and developments cost, long since. And I just think it's wrong for our people either not to be able to get them at all or to pay so much more than others do. And this is one way to sort of split the difference between their position that they need higher profits to invest in research and development and the very low cost that they can get if they happen to live close enough to the Canadian border to cross it.

So I would like to see Medicare cover prescription drugs on a voluntary basis so our seniors can get discount prices. It's very important.

Mr. Roberts. The ideas that have been floated in the Senate, which ostensibly are voucher systems, would you agree with that type of system to pay for prescription drugs?

The President. Well, it wouldn't be as effective as the proposal we've made because it would be more difficult to get the benefit of discounts. And therefore, over a few years it would be harder to keep the premiums down. But as I said, I would like to see the Members of Congress in both parties engage with us on this. Let's work it through. Let's come up with something. You've got three-quarters of our seniors in trouble out there, and we ought to do something about it.

Mr. Roberts. In terms of national priorities, how important is this?

The President. Oh, I think it's very important. The big challenges facing our country right now, at the top of those challenges are what to do about the aging of America as more of us live longer—that means we have to save Social Security and reform and modernize Medicare; and the children of America—we have to give all of our kids a world-class education with the most diverse student population ever.

Those are the big challenges we face. And to me this is a big part of it. You're going to have—the average 65-year-old person today has a life expectancy of 82. The people being born today, if the human genome project works out right, might have a life expectancy of 100. But if that's true, in order to maintain their quality of life and their health and not bankrupt the hospitals, we'll have to keep more and more of them well with the proper kind of drug treatment programs.

So you want the drug companies to be able to continue to pioneer new drugs, but they've got to be affordable, and they have to be accessible.

Mr. Roberts. Thank you for your time, sir, I appreciate it.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 3:40 p.m. at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Tower. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks on House Action on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City October 7, 1999

The President. This afternoon the House of Representatives took an important and encouraging step in the effort to give the American people a real Patients' Bill of Rights. After rejecting watered-down legislation by substantial votes, the House voted by a large margin to approve a strong bipartisan Patients' Bill of Rights, sponsored by Congressmen Norwood and Dingell.

The passage of this bill represents a major victory for every family and every health plan. It says you have the right to the nearest emergency room care and the right to see a specialist. It says you have the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of a cancer treatment or a period of pregnancy. And it says you have the right to hold your health care plan accountable if it causes you or a loved one grave harm.

It shows that America is no longer willing to allow unfeeling practices of some health plans to add to the pain of injury or disease. It proves that America is committed to putting patients first.

But let me be clear: We still have a lot of work to do before this bill becomes the law of the land. When the House and the Senate negotiators meet, we must be sure the bill is paid for, and when they meet in conference, the Republican leaders must resist the urge to weaken the patient protections guaranteed in the Norwood-Dingell bill, and they must not undo behind closed doors what has been done

in the public. They must also resist the urge to load up the final legislation with poison pill provisions that they know I can't sign.

But today, let's just congratulate the members of both parties in the House of Representatives for making a responsible choice in the face of significant pressure to do otherwise.

I especially thank Congressman Norwood and Congressman Dingell for their leadership and for their dogged determination. We have shown once again that, when we work together across party lines, we can use this moment of prosperity to meet the greatest needs of the American people.

Thank you very much.

Q. Sir, what do you think made the difference? Yesterday you were almost conceding defeat.

The President. I think a lot of work was done by a lot of people, but I think in the end, most people just went up there and voted for what they thought was right. Now, you know, there's kind of an unusual parliamentary maneuver of which you're all aware in which they've tied another bill to it and sent them both to conference. The other bill is one I don't support. It would cost an awful lot of money and help less than one percent of the uninsured in America, most of whom can afford their own health care policies anyway. And so we have to watch things like that being done in the final legislation. But a big majority of the House did

vote for this bill, just as it was written, and I'm very proud of them.

This is the sort of thing America wants us to do. We can work together across party lines; we can get things done. There will still be plenty for the two parties to argue about in good conscience in the coming election. No matter what we do, we can deal with every challenge before the Congress now, and there will still be things to debate next November.

So I would hope that this is an omen of more good things to come. And I'm certainly prepared to do my part, and I'm very grateful today. I talked to some Republican and Democratic House Members before the vote and encouraged them. And I'm very proud of all of them. And I thank them.

Meeting With Teamsters President

Q. Could you tell us about your talks with Hoffa?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. Could you tell us about your talks with Jimmy Hoffa—

The President. Oh, sure—

Q. —and did you ask him to not stand in the way of an early endorsement of the AFL-CIO for Gore?

The President. Actually, we didn't talk much about that. We talked about—this is the first long personal visit we've had, although we've worked on a lot of things. He thanked me for the work that I'd done over the last 6½ years. We talked a little about that.

We talked about—interestingly enough, we talked about Franklin Roosevelt and Frances Perkins and the rise of the American labor movement for some good amount of time; said he was glad I was coming tonight, and that President Roosevelt was the last President to talk to the Teamsters.

And we talked quite a bit about trade and about his strong feeling that we ought to make sure that the safety provisions of NAFTA are met. And I assured him that we were doing everything we could to do just that and that we would continue to do so.

He said he was deeply concerned that, ever since the recession in Mexico and then the recession in Asia, countries with whom we had had a balance of trade or a small surplus we now seem to be running large deficits with. He was concerned about the rise of protectionism in Europe. And we talked about that.

And that was—most of our conversation was about that. We also talked about golf for probably too long. We had a good talk about golf. We didn't talk too much about other politics, and I said I look forward to seeing him tonight.

Thank you.

Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you have any reason to believe the Senate will allow the right to sue?

The President. Sure, if they listen to the American people. That's what happened today. I mean, 70 percent of our citizens want it; 70 percent of Republicans want it. And there's a way to do it. If they just look at their own estimates—not mine, the Congressional Budget Office—says it will add, at the most, \$2 a month a policy to have all the protections of the Patients' Bill of Rights. And that's a good investment in our future.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. at the Sheraton Towers. In his remarks, he referred to James P. Hoffa, general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Statement on the Manual for Courts-Martial

October 7, 1999

I have signed an Executive order amending the Manual for Courts-Martial, which sets out procedures for criminal trials in the Armed Forces. The amendments make a number of desirable changes to modernize the rules of evidence that apply to court-martial proceedings

and to take into account recent court decisions. These changes have been recommended by a committee of experts representing all the military services.

There are four principal changes. First, the new rules provide that evidence that a violent

crime was a hate crime may be presented to the sentencing authority as an aggravating factor in the determination of the appropriate sentence. As in the case of laws that apply in civilian courts, this rule sends a strong message that violence based on hatred will not be tolerated. In particular, the rules provide that the sentencing authority may consider whether the offense was motivated by the victim's race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.

Second, the rules provide special procedures for cases in which there are allegations of child abuse and children are called to testify. The new rules allow for televised testimony from a location other than the courtroom and provide for other special procedures to make it as easy as possible for children who are witnesses to testify completely and accurately. These provisions are similar to those applied in most civilian courts.

Third, the order adds a new evidentiary rule to court-martial proceedings providing that most statements to a psychotherapist are privileged. The purpose of this change is to encourage candid confidential communications between patients and mental health professionals. It is similar to a privilege that is recognized by the Federal courts and courts of virtually all States. The privilege is not absolute, and the exceptions make clear that communications must still be disclosed when necessary for the safety and security of military personnel and in other compelling cases.

Finally, the new rules create the offense of reckless endangerment as an additional crime under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. This offense is similar to that found in most State codes.

NOTE: The Executive order of October 6 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Proposed Legislation To Protect Pensions

October 7, 1999

I commend Senators Moynihan, Jeffords, Leahy, Robb, Kerrey, and Rockefeller and Representatives Matsui, Weller, Andrews, Gejdenson, Pomeroy, Bentsen, and Kelly for introducing the "Pension Reduction Disclosure Act of 1999." This important new legislation, developed in partnership with my administration, will secure the right-to-know for American workers when changes are being made to their private pension retirement benefits. I applaud the leadership of these Members of Congress in furthering our effort to protect the retirement security of American workers and look forward to working with them to achieve speedy enactment of this legislation.

Our voluntary, employment-based pension system plays a critical role in providing income security for American workers in retirement. Increasingly, employers are converting traditional, employer-sponsored defined benefit plans to cash balance and other new types of pension plans. While these new types of pension plans may provide enhanced benefits for some workers, they also could result in other workers hav-

ing smaller pensions at retirement than they would have if their old plan had continued.

Unfortunately, too few workers understand the effects of these conversions. Too many workers today are left in the dark about changes to their retirement plan. In fact, under some new plans, some workers may not even realize that they have temporarily stopped earnings and benefits at all. This is not right. It needs to be changed.

This legislation would ensure that all Americans have the necessary information to plan for retirement. It would provide workers with meaningful and timely notice of plan changes and clearly demonstrate the impact of those changes now and in the future. It would shine sunlight on changes in retirement benefits. And it would do this without unduly burdening employers. It is truly a smart, commonsense measure, and Congress should pass it.

The sponsoring Members and my administration worked closely together to develop this proposal. I am grateful to Labor Secretary Alexis Herman, Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, and National Economic Council Director Gene

Sperling for their hard work to provide this important new protection for American workers.

Statement on Senate Action on Proposed Education Appropriations October 7, 1999

Today the Senate passed a spending bill that woefully shortchanges America's children. The Senate Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriation bill fails to make vital investments in our Nation's children. It undermines the commitment we made last year to hire quality teachers and reduce class size in the early grades. It underfunds after-school programs and such important efforts as the GEAR UP mentoring program.

If this bill were to come to me in its current form, I would veto it. I have already sent Congress a budget for the programs in this bill that provides for essential investments and is fully paid for. I urge Congress again to work on a bipartisan basis to develop legislation that truly strengthens public education and other key national priorities.

This bill is a catalog of missed opportunities and misguided priorities. I am particularly disappointed that the Senate defeated a common-sense measure to make schools accountable for results. The Bingaman-Reed-Kerry amendment would have set aside funds for States to turn around failing schools. By rejecting it, the Senate lost a chance to make accountability more

than just a slogan. The Senate also rejected amendments to increase the number of qualified teachers in high-need districts and to help States improve the quality of their teaching forces.

The Senate properly rejected two wrong-headed amendments that would have hurt workers. One would have barred implementation of the ergonomics rule so key to safeguarding worker health. The other would have barred enforcement of the Davis-Bacon law in natural disaster areas, a law which assures workers appropriate wages.

While the Senate did make important strides by committing to increase child-care funding next year, the bill underfunds many other efforts, including public health priorities in preventive and mental health, programs that give millions of Americans better access to health care and critical social services for vulnerable families. The bill also does not provide aid to families caring for elderly or ill relatives through the family caregiver initiative. Even worse, in expressing support for an across-the-board cut in all discretionary programs, the Senate has shown its unwillingness to address America's needs in a responsible and comprehensive way.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in New York City October 7, 1999

Thank you. Please be seated.

Let me, first of all, thank Dennis and all of you for this event and for your support for the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee. Senator Schumer was supposed to be here tonight, but they're voting late, so he's working for you, and I'm filling in for him. *[Laughter]* That's sort of getting prepared for my life after the Presidency. I'm sort of the stand-in speaker tonight for Chuck Schumer. *[Laughter]*

I'd like to thank you again for your support for the Senators, and I'd like to thank, as I always try to do, the people of New York City and New York State for being so very good to me and the Vice President and our whole administration over these last 6½ years.

I would like to just make a brief statement about the event that we're here for. I think all of you know that we Democrats have maintained a constant commitment to the health care

of our people and to the well-being of the health care network. We all are very well aware that, as Hillary warned us back in 1994, the number of uninsured people continues to rise and will continue to do so until we do things that cover more people and stem the hemorrhaging of loss of coverage.

I will say this: We've got some specific proposals out there that I think will begin to make a dent in that this year. This is the first year that all the States are enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program. Now what we have to do is go out and get the children enrolled. The States are enrolled. We have to get the children enrolled. As all of you know—I see a lot of you nodding your heads—it's easier to say than to do; to find these people, to tell them that even though they may be Medicaid-eligible, they are eligible for this; please come enroll. But we need to make a huge, Herculean effort over the next 6 months, to get every single eligible child in America enrolled in these programs. It will also help to alleviate the financial problems of a lot of our health care providers, and we need to do it.

The second thing I would note is that in my Medicare reform this year, I have asked the Congress to allow people between the ages of 55 and 65 to buy into the Medicare program. A lot of the people without health insurance between 55 and 65 can't get health insurance from anybody else. But they're middle-class people, and they do have the funds to afford a Medicare buy-in. We can do that with the present budget I've given the Congress, and I hope we will do it.

The third thing I would note is, I do believe that some time before the Congress goes home, they will pass what is known as the Kennedy-Jeffords bill, which will allow disabled people on Medicaid to go into the workplace and keep their Medicaid, which will put more people in the workplace and continue the flow of funds to the health care system and enable them to keep their health care.

There will doubtless be more to be debated about this. Now, let me say a word about what happened in 1997. I am not at all surprised that the 1997 Balanced Budget Act imposed greater burdens on the health care system than were estimated. And some of you were involved in that and know that we had a figure of the savings we wanted to achieve, and we, in the administration, having good data from all of you,

gave the Congress a set of changes we thought would be necessary to meet that figure.

The Congressional Budget Office did not believe we would achieve those savings and therefore said we had to do more things. So we did everything that the CBO said we had to do, and we had more savings than we needed to meet the original budget targets, and it came right out of the teaching hospitals, a lot of the therapeutic services people, a lot of the other things. All of you know this.

We are working hard now. I've had a conversation—every time they come back from New York or anywhere else, Hillary and the Vice President ask me, "When are we going to do something about this Medicaid problem? We've got to deal with this." We understand that. I think that there is now a consensus in the Congress in both Houses and, I think, increasingly in both parties, that part of the last budget negotiations will require funds flowing back to deal with this problem, and I will do the best I can with that.

Let me just make some general points here. When I came to New York in 1992 as the nominee with my family and my then very new Vice Presidential partner and his family and asked the American people and the people of this State to take a chance on us because we thought we could turn the country around—and it's been so long since things were bad, people had forgotten how bad they were in 1992, but they were quite bad, indeed—I asked you to take a chance based on an argument I made. I said, "You know, I think that the politics of division in Washington are hurting America. You've either got to be pro-business or pro-labor. You've got to be pro-growth or pro-environment. All these things have to be opposed to one another. You have to be for big deficits or cutting spending on education." And I just don't believe that's the way the world works. I never have believed that. All of us in our own lives try to find ways to unify our objectives and pull things together to go forward.

And so I said to the American people, "Look, give me a chance to try to push a policy that will provide opportunity to every responsible citizen and will bring all people together in one community, that will allow us to be pro-business and pro-labor, pro-environment and pro-growth, get rid of the deficit but continue to invest in education."

And it was just an argument, but the American people decided to give us a chance, probably, frankly, because the country was in such tough shape. It was really tough.

Well, after 6 years, it's not an argument anymore. There is now evidence. And I'm very proud that with the help of the Democratic Members of the Senate, without whom none of this would have been possible, we now have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history, the first back-to-back balanced budget surpluses in 42 years, and the longest economic expansion in peacetime in our history, with over 19 million new jobs. It's not an argument anymore.

Now, the issue before the American people is, some say, whether we should change. That is not the question. We are going to change. This country's been changing for over 200 years; that's why we're still here. We're adaptable. We always have new challenges. We always have new opportunities. The question is not whether we'll change; the question is how we're going to change.

We can take a U-turn and go back to the policies that got us in trouble in the first place. I've tried to stop those. Some of the most important achievements of the last 6 years involved stopping the Contract With America, stopping this ill-advised, huge tax cut that I vetoed, which, by the way, would have made it utterly impossible to do what we ought to do in Medicare.

But I would just ask you as citizens to think about the big things we can do now because of the country's prosperity. And let me just mention three. And it's time to think about the big things.

Big thing number one that all of you deal with in health care, we've got to deal with the aging of America. People are living longer, and the number of people over 65 will double in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. And we have a chance and, I would argue, and obligation to save Social Security and push the life of Social Security out beyond the life expectancy of the whole baby boom generation. We can do that now.

We have an obligation not only to properly fund Medicare but to extend the life of it and to add a prescription drug benefit. I was just asked again today about all these people who

live in New York, Vermont, Maine, along the Canadian border, going across the border to Canada to buy American drugs much cheaper than they can buy them in America. If we would give people on Medicare the option, purely the option, to buy into a prescription drug program that could use market power to get discount prices, we could deal with the problems of 75 percent of the seniors in this country that don't have access to those pharmaceuticals now. I think it's important.

That's big challenge number one. Big challenge number two, as New York knows, we have the largest and most diverse student population in our schools in history. We have done everything we could with the HOPE scholarships and other aids to give everybody who can go access to college. But no one believes that we're giving a world-class education to every child in K through 12 yet.

So it's time to build them modern schools and give them more teachers and have high standards but give them access to summer school and after-school and mentoring programs, so you don't declare the kids failures when the system is failing them.

This is important. We ought to say, "We're not going to rest until the children in our public schools have the same access to quality education that children in our institutions of higher education do." That's a big idea worth fighting for.

The third thing I'd like to say is, we need to think about the 21st century economy. As you know here, from upstate New York to some neighborhoods in New York City, not everybody has participated in our prosperity. As a matter of fact, part of the problems our hospitals have today is that not everybody has participated in our prosperity. You still have a lot of poor people who can't afford to pay who have to have care.

I have offered the American people, from the empowerment zone program in 1993 to our new markets initiative now, a way to bring more people into our enterprise system. I think people with money in America ought to get the same tax breaks and other incentives to invest in poor areas in America we today give them to invest in Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa. I don't want to take those other incentives away, but I think you ought to have the same option to grow a business here you do in our poor countries to the south and around the world.

And finally, I think we ought to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. We can do that in 15 years. Now, anybody in this room over 40 who took economics in college was taught that a country should always be a little bit in debt, that somehow that's healthy. And when we learned it, it was true. It's not true anymore for rich countries because interest rates are set globally, and if we can make America debt-free over the next 15 years, it means lower interest rates for business loans, for hospital construction, for college loans, for home loans, for car loans. It means more jobs and higher incomes. It means when our friends around the world who have to buy the things we produce get in trouble, they can borrow money to get out of trouble at a lower cost. It could ensure a generation of prosperity. We can do it now. We should think big.

Now, let me just mention one final issue. I could talk about this all night, because I want America to start thinking big about it. We have the lowest crime rate in 26 years, and I'm proud of that. And it's nationwide in every big city—we're seeing—with the same strategies there that have worked here, community policing and careful targeting of certain kinds of crime in certain areas. But no one thinks it's as low as it ought to be. No one thinks America is as safe as it ought to be. So I would like to see people stand up and say, "Okay, we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. Now we need a real goal. Let's make America the safest big country in the world." If we're the most prosperous big country in the world, if we have more freedom than anybody else in the world, we ought to be able to make it the safest big country in the world.

We have to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. We have to do more to keep guns out of the hands of children who die at an accidental rate—listen to this—accidental rate from gun deaths in America, 9 times higher than the next 25 industrial countries in

the world combined. But we can do it if we make up our mind to do it.

In closing, let me say the other thing that I'm proud to be a Democrat about, besides these big ideas, is that we stand for the idea that we can be one America across all the racial, religious, gender, sexual orientation, and other lines that divide us. We believe our common humanity is more important than our differences, which make life interesting, but which are not fundamental to our common cause.

If you look at all the trouble we've had in the world in the last 20 years, just the trouble we've had in the world in the last 6½ years since I've been President, from the Middle East to Northern Ireland, to Bosnia and Kosovo, to the tribal wars in Africa, our continuing inability to get over our fear, loathing, and dehumanization of people who are different from us is the number one problem the world has! And it is quite interesting, as we deal with the miracles of modern medicine, the miracles of the modern Internet, we look forward to the human genome project, giving every mother a map of her baby's life when she goes home from the hospital, we are beset by the most primitive of all human problems, the continuing fear of people who are different from us.

I can just tell you that the people that we're running and the policies that will be followed—and you know, I'm not running for anything, I'm selling this as a prospective citizen and what I want for my daughter and my grandchildren's generation. We'll stand up for one America, and we'll change. But we don't want a U-turn. We've got this country going in the right direction, and we want to reach for the stars.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. in the penthouse of the McGraw-Hill Building. In his remarks, he referred to Dennis Rivera, president, National Health and Human Services Employees Union Local 1199.

Remarks at a National Labor Research Association Dinner in New York City

October 7, 1999

Thank you for that nice, restrained welcome. [Laughter] It is wonderful to be here with all of you and to see your enthusiasm. And I thank you for it. I want to thank all of you for being here and for the purpose that you're here. Brian McLaughlin and Lee Saunders and Representative Loretta Sanchez is here. Basil Patterson, I was delighted to see him. Randi Weingarten and so many old friends of mine are here. I want to say a special word of congratulations to Jim Hoffa and Ed Ott on their awards.

Thank you for making New York the biggest, strongest union city in America. I also want to thank Greg Tarpinian and the Labor Research Association. You know, when people hear the words "think tank," they don't think about dinners where people behave the way you are right now. [Laughter] They think about really button-down types, chewing on their pipe stems, musing about the higher things. Well, you're not in an ivory tower, and it's important that people with feet on the ground do the thinking in America. And I thank you for doing it.

I would just say one other thing about this dinner tonight, and your work and deciding to honor Jim and Ed. They represent the vitality and the strength and the intensity and the compassion and the direction of the modern labor movement in America. One of the things that I wanted to do when the Vice President and I came into office is to change the way America thought about labor. I was so sick and tired of more than a decade of people trying to make unions the whipping boy of whatever it was that was wrong with America they wanted to make right.

And when I asked—I never will forget this—when I sat around and talked to Hillary and my other close friends, and I was trying to decide—[applause]—well, that's good, too. We need that response in New York especially, I think. [Laughter]

But we were trying to decide, you know, what we ought to do with this whole Vice Presidential thing. And I said, "Look, I think I'm going with Gore, because he's the same age I am"—he's actually younger, as he never tires of telling people—[laughter]—"and we're from the same

part of the country, and we're from the same sort of general wing of the Democratic Party." But I think that's good, because what I want to do is change the way America thinks about politics.

Because everybody in Washington had created an environment, particularly the previous two administrations, where you couldn't be pro-business if you were pro-labor. You couldn't be pro-economic growth if you thought we ought to try to preserve the environment. You couldn't be for doing something about the deficit if you wanted to invest in our children's education. And it was this kind of nutty world that didn't exist anywhere I knew in America except in Washington and in the political choices we were given.

And so we made this argument to the American people. We said, "Look, give us a chance to prove you can be pro-business and pro-labor. Give us a chance to prove you can be for protecting the environment and growing the economy. Give us a chance to get rid of this deficit and invest more in the education of our children and the future of our country."

And it was just an argument—just an argument. But the people of this great city and this wonderful State and our great country gave us a chance. And every step of the way, you were with us. And now, after 6½ years, thanks to you, those who produce ideas and those who do the work, it is not an argument anymore. The evidence is in, and we were right.

Thanks to you, we raised the minimum wage; we got family and medical leave on the books; we cut taxes for millions of low income working families by doubling the earned-income tax credit. And whenever our friends on the other side of the aisle in Congress try to roll back the rights of workers, we turn them back. And every time we did that, every time we did it, they said we were hurting the job climate in America. "If you raise the minimum wage, you'll hurt small business. If you pass family and medical leave"—after the previous administration vetoed it—"you'll hurt business. We won't have job growth. If you don't get rid of the Davis-Bacon law, you're going to hurt the business

climate. If you double the earned-income tax credit that goes to people who are working their hearts out, with kids and barely above the poverty line, you know you'll waste a lot of tax money on people who will take advantage of it, weaken the economy—be hard to balance the budget.”

I heard all those arguments over and over again. Well, the evidence is in. We didn't get a single vote from the other side for our economic plan in 1993 that the labor movement stood with us on. And we stayed strong for all these other things because we believed you could be pro-labor and pro-business; we believed you could be pro-family and pro-work. And after 6½ years, thanks to you and all those who stood together, we have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, the highest homeownership in history, 19½ million new jobs, and the longest economic expansion in peacetime in the history of the United States of America.

Now, the question is, what are we going to do now? There will be a great debate across this country over the next year, between now and the next election for President, for the Senate, for the Congress, and people will say, because they know we Americans all like to hear it, “Well, we ought to have a change.” And guess what? I agree with that. I agree with that. If there were any candidate for President on the horizon today who said, “Vote for me, and I'll do exactly what Bill Clinton did,” I'd vote against that person. [Laughter] I would vote against that person, because the world is changing too fast.

We've worked hard to turn this country around and get it going in the right direction. And I believe that the changes we ought to be focused on are those which, now, we have the luxury of embracing, to just totally rewrite the future for the United States and much of the rest of the world for our children and our children's children.

Yes, we ought to change. But what we ought to do is build on what we've done to reach for the stars, not take a U-turn and get us back in the same trouble we were in 1992, when we got here. And so I say to you, now that—in the presence of a think tank—we need the best ideas to reach for the stars.

The number of people over 65 in America is going to double in the next 30 years. I sure hope I live to be one of them. [Laughter] And there will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Social Security Trust Fund's supposed to run out of money in 2034. We have the money now. We ought to save Social Security for the baby boom generation, for their children, and their grandchildren.

The average 65-year-old American today has a life expectancy of 82. Those of you who are young enough to still be having children, when we get the human genome project finished, it will be normal for young mothers to come home from the hospital with their children, with a roadmap of their children's biological future, in ways that will maybe raise their life expectancy into the high eighties or the nineties, maybe even to 100 years. Things that are unthinkable.

But today, over three-quarters of the elderly people in this country do not have the prescription drug coverage they need. So I say we ought to modernize Medicare, lengthen the life of it so it can take on the baby boomers, but give those people a chance to have affordable prescription drugs, as we should have done long ago.

We ought to raise the minimum wage again. You can't raise a family on \$10,700 a year. Hallelujah, the House of Representatives, on a bipartisan vote, passed the Patient's Bill of Rights today, but we ought to make it the law of the land, and we're a long way away. We need your help on that.

We ought to bring economic opportunity to all the people in places that haven't reached it yet. You know as well as I do, there are neighborhoods in this city and communities in this State that have not participated in our prosperity. From the time I started the empowerment zone program, that the Vice President has led so ably, in 1993, to the proposal I made for new markets; from the small towns to the inner-city areas, to the Appalachians to the Mississippi Delta to the Indian reservations of this country, I believe we ought to give people with money in this country the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America, and the Caribbean and Africa, in Asia.

I think we ought to bridge the so-called digital divide. Our administration's worked very hard to make sure we get all the classrooms

in this country hooked up to the Internet and they can all afford to do it by the year 2000. But think of this: I was out in California last week, and I met with some people that work for eBay. Did you ever buy anything off eBay? I bet there are people right here who have done that.

Twenty thousand Americans, including people who used to be on welfare, are now making a living trading on that company. But there are still a lot of people that wouldn't know one end of a computer from another. Think about what it would be like if, for every American family, access to the Internet were as universal as access to the telephone. I don't want to see a digital divide for our kids in this country. I want every single child to have access to that high-tech future.

I think—I'll give you another example. The crime rate is at a 26-year low. In every big city in America, it's way down. And everybody involved deserves a lot of credit, including the Congress who voted for the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, the 100,000 police, more help for the cities to prevent crime. But it's not low enough. Does anybody really think America is safe enough?

The crime rate is at a 26-year low. That's the good news. The bad news, I can't get one person out there to stand up and say, "I'm satisfied with the safety level in America." If we're the biggest and most powerful economy in the world, if we're the freest country in the world, if we have the most vibrant democracy—we now know something we didn't know in 1992; people didn't have any idea we could turn the crime rate around in '92. We know we can now. So why don't we set a real goal worthy of America? Why don't we make up our mind we're going to make this the safest big country in the world—that is a worthy goal—and come up with the resources and the plans necessary to do it?

The last thing I want to say is this. I think that the Congress ought to take one major part of my budget, which is to save enough money to pay the debt down so that in 15 years, for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President, America can be out of debt.

And let me tell you why I think every union member ought to be for that. You know, when I studied economics in college, every professor I had said that this debt's a good thing. Every country needs a certain amount of debt. And it was good when we were borrowing money

to build interstate highways; we were borrowing money to build airports; we were borrowing money to build America. But for the last 30 years we've been borrowing money to go to McDonald's at night or come to dinner here or whatever else the Government does. We're borrowing money just to get along through the day.

Meanwhile, interest rates are set in a global economy. And nobody can keep their money if somebody else will pay a higher price for it. You've seen that happen in country after country. That's what happened in Asia a couple of years ago.

But if we got the Government out of the borrowing business, it means that everybody that all of you work for could borrow money for less. It means there would be more businesses, more expansion, more jobs, higher incomes. It means that all the families in this room tonight would have lower interest rates for college loans, for home loans, for car loans, for credit card payments. It means we would be more immune to future problems around the world. And we ought to do it for our children's sake. We ought to do that.

Now, one thing I want to say in closing. You said the NAFTA thing; I'll tell you one thing I've done that the Teamsters agree with. I don't intend to allow the trucking rules to be changed until there's safety there that we can know about. That is—the big problem I have with trade is not the problem some of you have. The problem I have is that it's too hard to enforce the rules. This is a rule we still have control of, and we now have evidence that two-thirds of the trucks that come across the border are not safe. They don't meet our standards. And I intend to see that the rules are followed before I follow the rules on this. I think that's important.

I want to say something about trade. Generally, the American labor movement has supported trade with countries that are in our income groups and worried about trade when we're trading with countries that are poorer than we are because they pay lower labor costs. But it bothers me that we have 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's income, and we're facing rising protectionism from people unwilling to buy our products around the world. We see it in Europe. We see it elsewhere.

So what I think we need to do is to come together, as I did when John Sweeney went with me to Switzerland the other day, to the International Labor Organization to call for a ban everywhere in the world on child labor. I think what we need to do, I think we need a policy, a progressive policy, on putting a human face on globalization so we don't leave people behind, so we have rising labor standards, rising standards of living, rising environmental standards as a part of expanding trade.

If that happens, nobody will be the loser, and you can look at trade everywhere the way generally the labor movement looks at trade with Canada and Europe today. I think that we can't run away from the global economy, but we can sure put a more human face on it. And we ought to take the lead in shaping it, instead of being passive and being shaped by it.

And one final point I want to make. I am grateful to the American labor movement, in some ways more than anything else, for standing through—for decades and decades and decades for the cause of civil rights and human rights at home and around the world.

We had a memorial service for Lane Kirkland the other day at our common alma mater; Lane and I both graduated from the school of foreign service at Georgetown. And Lech Walesa, the former President of Poland, came all the way from Poland to speak at his friend's memorial service, because Lane Kirkland and the American labor movement stood for the freedom of the Polish dock workers and the Polish citizens in throwing off the shackles of communism. And I have seen it here at home, where the American labor movement has always been in the forefront against discrimination.

And I just want to leave you with this thought. It's really interesting—I see more and more people in all kinds of work working with computers. Most of you, if you're like me, have got kids that know a lot more about computers than you do. We're all sort of entranced by what's happening in the modern world. I was talking to some people about the library I hope to build when I leave office, and they said, "Well, Mr. President, you need to get some virtual reality in your library." [Laughter] And I said, I thought that was what Washington, DC, was all about. [Laughter]

So I said—so, you know, I'm sort of technologically challenged. They make fun of me at

the White House. I said, "Now, tell me what you mean by that." And they said, "Well, what we mean is, if you have virtual reality in your library, then instead of showing people a movie about something like the Middle East peace signing between Arafat and Rabin, people will walk into a room and everything will get dark, and they'll feel like they're there, and a part of it." That sounded pretty impressive to me.

So anyway, we're going to live in this world where we're just enthralled by all these advances. Don't you think it's interesting that in a world that will be dominated—historians will say, with the most strange of all times, we had unparalleled prosperity, unparalleled technological advances, and yet what bedeviled us the most, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East, to Bosnia and Kosovo, to the tribal wars of Africa? What bedeviled us the most from James Byrd being torn apart in Texas to Matthew Shepard being laid out on a rack in Wyoming to these kids being shot at at the Jewish community center and that poor Filipino postalworker being murdered to the people in the Middle West: the basketball coach at Northwestern and the Korean guy coming out of church? What bedeviled us most, at home and abroad, in the modern world? The most primitive failing of human beings: We're afraid of people who are different from us.

It's easy to go from fear to hatred. Once you get to hating people, it's easy to dehumanize them. And before you know it, you're killing them. And I think you ought to think about that.

One of the things that is really important about the American labor movement is that you never wanted to go forward in the future leaving anybody behind. You never wanted to look down your nose at somebody because they were different. And you never wanted to forget about your neighbors around the world who were denied the right to organize, the right to vote, the right to speak, the right to live free.

So I ask you, as we look toward the future, don't forget your old mission. Because if we could all get along and treat each other as human beings, we'd be a lot better off.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:43 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the New York Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Brian McLaughlin, New York City Central Labor Council president, Ed

Ott, New York City Central Labor Council director of politics, and John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; Lee Saunders, district council 37 trustee, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees; Basil Patterson, partner, Meyer, Suozzi, English, and Klein; Randi

Weingarten, president, United Federation of Teachers; James P. Hoffa, general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; and Greg Tarpinian, executive director, Labor Research Association.

Remarks at an Empire State Pride Gala in New York City October 7, 1999

The President. Thank you very much for your energy and your enthusiasm, your passion, and your wonderful welcome. I want to begin by thanking Jeff, who has been a wonderful friend and adviser, a prodder and supporter to me. And I thank him so much.

Thank you, Kate Callivan, for your work tonight. Thank you, Matt Forman, for your leadership of Empire State Pride. And thank you, Chuck Schumer, for running and winning and for all you have done to make this a better State and a better country.

I'd also like to thank two other Members of the Congress who are here, Congressman Jerry Nadler and Congressman Anthony Weiner, for the work they do for you. Thank you. I'd like to thank my longtime friend, the New York public advocate, Mark Green, who is here, for his steadfast support of your agenda. Thank you, Mark.

I understand the borough president of Manhattan is here, Virginia Fields. Thank you, Virginia. We're glad to have you. There are members of the State Assembly and members of the City Council here. Emily Giske, the vice president of the State Democratic Party, is here. I thank her. And we've got all these great people from the administration. A lot of them stood up, but I want to mention their names: the two highest ranking openly gay and lesbian appointees in the White House, Sean Maloney and Karen Tramontano; my good friend Richard Socarides, who is leaving; Fred Hochberg, the Deputy Administrator of SBA; and two former appointees, Roberta Eichenberg and Ginny Apuzzo are here. I thank them for what they did. I'd also like to thank Marsha Scott, who was my first liaison to the gay and lesbian community this year. And the head of our anti-HIV and -AIDS efforts, Sandy Thurman, who's

done a wonderful job this year. I thank her for being here.

Let me begin by saying something I need to say a lot in the time I have left as President: Thank you. Thank you for the support, the guidance, and the urging you have given to the Vice President and me and to our administration and our families. Thank you for the example you have set. Thank you for helping Chuck Schumer to get elected. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn and grow and do our jobs better and serve all Americans better.

Jeff said that, you know, last year the Vice President came, and this year Chuck and I are here. And you're looking for a speaker. I think, you know, you ought to invite a woman to speak next year. And if you want, I have a suggestion. [Laughter]

Actually I talked, as chance would have it, to both the Vice President and to Hillary this afternoon—[laughter]—not so I could tell you that I did, either. [Laughter] But they asked me what I was doing. There's a lot more attention on what they're doing than what I'm doing now, but they did ask me what I was doing, which was nice, that someone, somewhere in America still cared what I was doing. [Laughter] So when I told them what I was doing, they said to give you their best wishes, and they wish they were here.

Jeff mentioned that 7 years ago, when I first ran for President, I said I had a vision for America, and you were a part of it. I met with a group of activists from your community here in early 1992, and in California in late 1991. And I began to try to listen and to learn and to understand why so many of these issues have presented such big problems for America.

One couple came through to see me earlier tonight, two men; one was from Australia, the other from New Zealand, and they said that

as a couple, they hadn't the same immigration rights coming into America as they did in either Canada or New Zealand. I don't think that's right. I think that ought to be changed.

But I think the first thing I want to say to you—I want to talk more about this, but I'm obviously giving a lot of thought these days to what happens to America over the long run. We enter a new century; we enter a new millennium; the way we work and live and relate to each other and relate to people around the world is changing in profound and speedy ways. It's almost difficult to grasp. More of it is good than bad.

But we all have to be much more open to each other if we want this to work. We've got to learn to listen as well as to talk. We've got to learn to feel as well as to think. We have to learn, as we're all told we should do from childhood, to stand in the other person's shoes. We have done what we could to make the future one of equal opportunity and equal responsibility and equal membership in our American community, whether it is in fighting to pass the hate crimes law or the employment non-discrimination act or to invest more in research, prevention, and treatment for HIV patients.

I would like to take just a few moments tonight to try to put all the things you care about into a larger context of where America is and where I hope America will go. When I started running for President, I did so because I thought the country was in trouble and without direction and growing more divided. First, economically, unemployment was too high; job growth was too low; incomes were stagnant; inequality was increasing; and there was a sense of literal despair about it in many places.

I worried about social division. You remember, we had a riot in Los Angeles. But everywhere, there was this quiet sense of unease. And every campaign, it seemed to me, was yet another example of how we could sort of carve up the electorate and make one group resent another and hope that your group was a larger group of resenters than the other group. And it seemed to me that that was a bad way to run a country.

And it wasn't just anti-lesbian and -gay; it was tensions between the races, tensions between immigrants and citizens. And it built on this whole pattern of thought that had accumulated in Washington over decades that everything had to be divided into hostile camps. You

couldn't be pro-labor if you were pro-business and vice versa. You couldn't be pro-economic growth and be in favor of improving the environment. You couldn't be pro-work and pro-family. We had to have these divided views. You couldn't have an urban policy if you really cared about what was going on on the farm.

You know, we don't think like that. None of us do, instinctively. We always try to think of how we can live an integrated life and how our minds will think in an integrated way that pulls things together and moves things forward. But everything about our politics was about how to pit us against one another.

And since we all wake up every morning—I know maybe none of you do, but some days I wake up on the wrong side of the bed, in a foul humor. [Laughter] I'm sure you don't ever do that, but I do sometimes. [Laughter] And it has occurred to me really that every one of us has this little scale inside, you know. On one side there's the light forces and the other side there's the dark forces in our psyche and our makeup and the way we look at the world. And every day we wake up and the scale is a little bit tilted one way or the other. And life is a big struggle to try to keep things in proper balance.

You don't want to have so much light that you're just a fool for whatever comes along. But if the scale tips dark even a little bit, things turn badly for people and those with whom they come in contact. And it can happen for communities and for a whole country.

So anyway, when I ran, I thought, maybe I can change the way we think about politics. And if we do, maybe we can change what we do and how we do it.

And you know, there's an old adage that the Lord never gives you more than you can handle, but I have been severely tested in this resolve. [Laughter] But most days, you know, it's been kind of fun but bewildering. [Laughter]

So anyway, we came up—Al Gore and I—well, for whatever reason—and the American people took a chance on me and Al Gore in 1992. And we got the Democrats together, and we tried to reach out to the Republicans. And usually they said no; sometimes they said—a few of them would say yes.

But we said, "Look, let's take a different direction on the economy, on crime, on welfare, on the environment. Let's try to think of a way to integrate the things that we want to achieve

and build a creative tension so we could move the country forward. And let's try to build a country where everybody has a place." And we just made an argument in 1992. It was just an argument. You—no one could know for sure whether it would work.

[At this point, a cellular telephone rang in the audience.]

The President. You know, I'm rethinking my position about wanting everybody to have a cell phone in this country. *[Laughter]* He's a good guy. Don't worry about it.

But anyway, so we made this argument, you know, and you guys took a chance. And New York really stood behind us, gave us a chance to serve.

But it's not an argument anymore. Those of you who've been with us 6½ years, when you go out to discuss citizenship and issues and the future, say, "Look, whatever you want to say about that crowd, there are certain things that you can't dispute. We now have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, the longest peacetime expansion in history, and 19½ million new jobs." You can't argue; that happened.

And every time—every time—every time we did something that tried to reconcile our economic objectives with our other objectives—whether it was family and medical leave or vetoing the first two welfare bills because they didn't have guaranteed food and medicine coverage for poor children and enough money for child care or trying to clean up the air and the water or saying that the system we had for taking care of little kids and immunizing them—we were nuts, and we were determined to reach 90 percent immunization, which we did, by the way—all of these things—people would say—or raising the minimum wage or you name it—that was always going to be something that would hurt the economy. It turned out that that was wrong, that putting things together made all of our efforts reinforce one another.

I feel even more strongly about that when it comes to putting people together. One of the things I've spent an enormous amount of time doing in the last 2 years is trying to make sure America is Y2K ready. I've even got these little things that look like beanie babies that

are Y2K bugs I have around just to remind me that we don't want there to be one.

You know, to most people, that's about adjusting a computer. But if you think about it, there is a lot more than mechanics involved in being ready for the new millennium, and a lot more than economics involved in being a successful country.

When I signed the Executive order to prohibit discrimination in the Federal work force based on sexual orientation, I thought I was helping us to come together. I think ENDA will help us to come together.

I think the fact that we have gay and lesbian Americans, like Jim Hormel and over 200 other openly gay and lesbian people, serving in appointed positions in our Government throughout the administration, doing normal jobs—I got so tickled when you were reading—you know, if you look at our people and what they do, they do real jobs. They're out there showing up. And every time they come in contact with somebody, they destroy another stereotype. They rob people of another attack.

You know, when we were in that awful battle that I waged and didn't win over the military service issue, there was a national survey run which showed that the most significant factor tilting people in favor of the so-called gays in the military policy was whether they consciously were aware that they had known a gay person. And those who said they were consciously aware that they had had a personal relationship, contact with a gay person were two to one in favor of the policy.

Now, I say that because I believe that our whole society is like all of us are individually. We've got these scales always tilting back and forth between the forces of hope and the forces of fear. And what people do not know, they more easily fear. What they fear, they can easily hate. And what they hate, they quickly dehumanize. And it is a slippery slope.

So I say to you, this hate crimes legislation is important. People say, "Well, you know, the killers of James Byrd got the death penalty in Texas, and maybe you don't need it." But we do need it, because there are 8,000 reported hate crimes in 1997 alone, about one an hour. And people need to focus on it.

When those kids got shot at the Jewish community center school, and then that Filipino postalworker got murdered, and then the former basketball coach of Northwestern and the young

Korean Christian walking out of his church got shot in the heartland of Illinois and Indiana. And all of those things happened. And all of you know that we are now observing the one-year anniversary of the death of young Matthew Shepard, and I want to say I am honored beyond words that his mother, Judy, is with us tonight. And I'd like to ask her to stand.

I thanked her tonight before I came out for her continuing work. And she looked at me, and she said, "I'm just a mom." But when I was in Los Angeles last week, speaking to the ANGLE group, a young person came up to me and said that I had given her more legitimacy and sense of security and self-worth than she had gotten in her own family. And I said to this child—I want you to know, because this is the point I'm trying to make; I'm not bragging on me, here. I'm here to make this point about our country. I said, "You've got to be patient with them. They're afraid. You've got to stay with them. They're scared."

And it is amazing to me. I have spent so much time as President, on the one hand trying to maximize your access to the wonders of the modern world—you know, we're hooking up all the classrooms to the Internet; we got this E-rate, so that the poor schools can reach across the digital divide and all the kids can work computers in every classroom in America; we have passed the Telecommunications Act, and we've got over 300,000 new high-tech jobs just in a couple of years; and we're trying to invest in a new generation Internet; and we're about to break the human genome code, and when we do that, when mothers bring their children home from the hospital after giving birth, they'll have little genetic maps that may, some people believe literally, may help to raise life expectancy for children born early in the next century to as much as 100 years. And you know, it's all so exciting. But it is profoundly sobering to consider that at the time of greatest technological change in all of human history, we are most bedeviled at home and around the world by the most primitive of human failings, the fear of the other.

Think about what I have done as your President, how much time I've spent trying to help the Nation heal up from all these school shootings or what happened in Oklahoma City and the hate crimes I mentioned. And then think about the parallels we have—they're all individual instances; I recognize that. But think

about the parallels in terms of the failings of the human heart and mind with the ongoing problems in the Middle East, in the Balkans, in Bosnia and Kosovo, in Northern Ireland, in the tribal slaughters of Rwanda and other places in Africa, where people really can't believe they matter unless they have somebody to look down on that they can dehumanize and justify killing. So that's how their life counts when we ought to be trying to tell people that they should be excited by the differences between people, secure in the knowledge that our common humanity is more important than all the differences that we have.

And somehow we have to do this. And words alone won't do it. And laws are important, but laws alone won't do it, either. And we've got to go out and confront our neighbors, including our own families. We've got to ask people to listen as well as to talk. And we have to help people to get beyond their fears.

You know, when I go and give speeches to political groups, I tell them that I want America to continue to change, that I myself would not vote for anyone who ran for President saying, "Vote for me. I'll do just what Bill Clinton did. He did a good job," because things are changing. And I talk about meeting the challenge of the aging of America and reforming Social Security and Medicare and meeting the challenge of the children of America, the largest and most diverse group ever, and giving them all a world-class education and meeting the challenge of a 21st century economy by putting a human face on globalization and trade by investing in the markets of America that had been left behind in the poor areas, by giving everybody access to the Internet so we can fully bridge the divide and by paying the country's debt off.

I talk about these things. I talk about meeting the challenge of global warming. And it's mostly modern stuff looking to the future, and it's all profoundly important. But if you look at the journey of a country to find its true spirit, the most important thing is that we try to be one America that is a force for the common humanity of the world.

It was, I think, a very human feeling that led the Congress finally to work with us to dramatically increase funding for all elements of the AIDS fight, so that now we have continued reductions in AIDS-related deaths and a commitment to genuinely find a cure and a vaccine.

I think it was a human thing. We've still got a long way to go. You know we do.

And we pick our targets when we, as a country, when we're defensive. I was outraged this week when the first African-American ever to serve on the State Supreme Court of Missouri was voted down after having been handily voted out of the Judicial Committee of the Senate with the Republicans voting for him. They voted him down on the floor of the Senate by misrepresenting his record on capital punishment so that the Republican Senator from the home State would have an issue to run against the Governor on relating to commuting the sentences to life without parole for those who murdered other people.

So who cares about the symbolism of the first African-American judge ever on the Missouri Supreme Court? You know, not many people, African-Americans, are going to vote for this guy anyway. "Throw him to the wolves. Destroy his career. Distort his record. Who cares? I need a political issue." And we all have to be afraid of that, of objectifying others for short-term gain.

On the other hand, look at the number of people now who are in the Government, in all forms of our economic and social life. There's a reason the President is here, besides my heart. It is the right thing to do, and you have been heard. You have been heard. You have been heard.

There is a reason the Senator is here. There is a reason Al Gore came here last year, apart from his passionate conviction about the moral propriety of being here and the right thing to do. We now know that because you are willing to work and speak and stand, we can move the body politic in the right direction.

People are fundamentally good, but they're paralyzed when they're scared. And in spite of all these issues that I go around advocating, that I passionately believe in, if I were told that I was going to have to leave this old world in 72 hours and I could just do one thing for America and that was it and I just had to pick one thing, I would try to leave one America. Because if we were together, if we were willing to have all of our differences be differences of opinion and not to be afraid of one another and never to dehumanize one another, we would be not only a better country here; our influence for good abroad would be exponentially greater

even than it is today. We would have a chance to give our children the millennium that they deserve.

So I say again, the most important thing I want to say to you is thank you. I'm proud of what we've done together. I wish we could have done better. I hope we can do more.

But never forget, you deserve most of the credit. And you will get more as you fight harder but also as you are human to people who do not see you. You must—you've got to believe in this great country, that this is fundamentally a good country, that Alexis de Tocqueville was right when he said, "America is great because America is good."

But you know, we've done a lot of things that were pretty lousy, starting with slavery, as Thomas Jefferson said. So we all are always in the process of learning to be better, of learning how our attitudes and our actions are in conflict with what we believe. Life is a constant struggle, therefore, for true integrity, for integrating your mind and your body and your spirit. And so is the life of a nation.

I am indebted to you because I happened to be President and to seek this job at a time when you were raising these issues, and you gave me a chance to make a contribution. You made me a better President; you made me a better person.

Don't give up, and don't you ever turn dark. Don't do it. We can still make the America of our dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:56 p.m. at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Tower. In his remarks, he referred to Jeff Soref, executive director, and Kate Callivan and Matt Forman, cochairs, Empire State Pride; Mark Green, New York City public advocate; Emily Giske, vice chair, New York State Democratic Party; James C. Hormel, U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg; and Ronnie L. White, nominee for U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri. The President also referred to ANGLE, Access Now for Gay and Lesbian Equality; the memorandum of February 20, 1998, on compliance of Federal agencies with the Patients' Bill of Rights (*Public Papers of the Presidents: William J. Clinton, 1998 Book 1* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999), p. 260); and Executive Order 13087 of May 28, 1998 (3 CFR, 1998 Comp., p. 191).

Remarks at a Dedication Ceremony for the New United States Embassy Building in Ottawa, Canada

October 8, 1999

Thank you, and good morning. Madam Governor General, I congratulate you on your—you told me the proper word was installation. I might have said elevation, coronation. [Laughter] It's a wonderful thing for Canada and for us as your friends.

Mr. Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, distinguished justices of the Supreme Court, members of Parliament, Mr. Ambassador, members of the diplomatic corps, ladies and gentlemen: I would like to begin by thanking the Canadian and American military bands, and the four young men who sang our national anthems, equally well, I thought.

I also want to thank the Prime Minister for his words and the Prime Minister and Mrs. Chretien for their friendship to us.

You know, having said all these—you're supposed to only say nice things at an event like this. But I really resent Jean Chretien. [Laughter] He first came to Ottawa to represent the people of Canada when President Kennedy was in the White House and I was in high school. [Laughter] Now I have more gray hair than he does. [Laughter] And he's not even term-limited. [Laughter]

Your wonderful Ambassador to our country, Raymond Chretien, once joked that the Prime Minister is, I quote, "the only leader in the G-7"—that includes me; therefore, it's a put-down—"the only leader in the G-7 who could still slalom on water skis with one of his grandchildren on his shoulders." [Laughter] It is true that even if I had grandchildren, I could not do that. [Laughter]

Well, Prime Minister, that's not the only way in which you carry the children of this country on your shoulders. And I thank you for being my friend and partner.

I also want to say a special word of appreciation to the men and women who serve in our Embassy here, both American and Canadian citizens, and to my good friend Ambassador Giffin, who gave me an unusually generous introduction, confirming Clinton's fourth law of politics: Whenever possible, be introduced by

someone you have appointed to high office. [Laughter]

You know, Gordon's had an unusual life. He grew up in Canada, then moved to Georgia, where he became one of the few people in the South who had ever stood on frozen water. [Laughter] For years, Atlanta had no hockey team; no one there could even skate. Now they have a hockey team. The NHL announced it was awarding a new team there as soon as he came here. [Laughter] Instead of divided loyalties, he is for both the Senators and the Atlanta Thrashers.

We even have two minor league hockey teams in my hometown of Little Rock, now, if you can believe that. The whole American South has gone hockey-mad. And since we're all dealing with global warming, it's becoming increasingly difficult to pursue the sport. [Laughter]

I just had the honor of touring this new building. It was nice of the Ambassador to mention that the words of four of our Presidents are on this wall: President Kennedy's very memorable description of our relationship and wonderful quotes by Presidents Eisenhower and Reagan, and this is the first time I've ever had anything I've said carved in stone. I've had one or two speeches sink like a stone over the years. [Laughter] I've had several audiences sit like a stone. [Laughter] I'm glad to be carved in stone.

As was said earlier, I'm not the first member of my family to visit here, nor is this my first visit here. Hillary was here just last week and, among other things, had the opportunity to dedicate the new sculpture out front of the Embassy. And I want to thank the renowned artist, Joel Shapiro, for honoring both our countries with such a beautiful piece of his work.

I have now been here five times. Jean says I must learn to speak French, so let me say, *Je suis chez moi au Canada*. He also says if I come one more time, I have to start paying taxes. [Laughter] I think that's more important than the French to him. I don't know. [Laughter]

More than a decade ago, I came to Canada^{*} with Hillary, our young daughter, and my mother-in-law. We celebrated the new year. We had a few wonderful days in Montreal. We drove to Chateau Montebello. In 1990 Hillary and Chelsea and I had a wonderful vacation in the summer in Victoria and Vancouver.

And 6 years ago this month—something that means a great deal to me—my mother, just 2 months before her death, took one of her last trips to Ottawa, where she spoke to the Ontario Cancer Society. She, typically, gave a new wrinkle to American relations when she turned down a visit to the Parliament or the Supreme Court so that she could visit something called Elvis Lives Lane. [*Laughter*] My mother was always a great fan of Elvis Presley. She's convinced that he's going to appear at one of my speeches one day. [*Laughter*]

Today we add another chapter to the remarkable history of the friendship of our people. It is true, I believe, that in the 223-year history of our country, the President has never left the United States to dedicate an Embassy. If that tradition were ever to be abandoned, it would have to be here in Canada. In a world where too many regions are torn by conflicts and too many nations torn by hatred among people of different racial, ethnic, and religious groups, our two nations, the harmony we seek to promote within, and the friendship we seek to promote between us, have shown the world a better way and given ourselves a great responsibility for the new millennium.

If we took the border we share and stretched it across Europe, it would reach the combined distance from Lisbon to Moscow, Belfast to Tehran, across lands scarred by warfare for many centuries. Yet our border has been undefended for 180 years now. It's hard to believe the Rideau Canal, which passes a few blocks from here, originally was built after the War of 1812 to protect Canada from the United States. It's a sign of how far we've come that today the canal isn't a barrier, but the largest outdoor skating rink in the world.

The United States and Canada have benefited from sharing our continent. We, in particular, have learned from you, a parliamentary democracy with two official languages, many distinct cultures, an inspiring commitment to social justice and solidarity. Our culture is richer, much

richer, for the writings of Robertson Davies, the photographs of Yousuf Karsh, the magnificent music of Oscar Peterson, and for those of us who are country music fans, we were thrilled when Shania Twain was named the Country Music Star of Year. And last week, of course, when number 99 was raised to the rafters in Edmonton, most people on both sides of our border agreed that Wayne Gretzky is the finest hockey player ever to be seen.

Our two nations have a wonderful tradition of standing together in moments of difficulty and need. During last year's terrible ice storm, I was proud to hear that linecrews from Vermont helped restore power to some small towns in Canada. And we in the United States will always be grateful for the way in which the people of Nova Scotia responded to the tragic crash of Swissair flight 111.

All of you know well that we share the world's largest trading relationship, with more than a billion dollars a day passing over the border. Our NAFTA partnership, together with Mexico, has resulted in a 100-percent increase in trade within North America in just 5 years and the creations of millions of new jobs in both our countries. I know Canada is looking forward to hosting the third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in early 2001, to talk about ways to strengthen trade within our hemisphere.

We also share a responsibility to help to spread the benefits of freedom and democracy beyond our borders. That's what my quote on the wall is all about inside. It is fitting that the first American Embassy in Ottawa—the first American Embassy in Ottawa—was opened the same week that the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington.

For in this century, young Americans and young Canadians have fought side by side again and again to turn back tyranny and defend democracy. Together, we stood against mass killing and ethnic hatred in Bosnia, in Kosovo, and East Timor. Together, we have worked to build peace and democracy from the Balkans to Haiti. We have stood against aggression in the Persian Gulf. And together we must continue to work for the day when all the world can look to us and see how much stronger the bonds between nations can be when freedom and human rights and the diversity of human beings are all respected, how much richer society can be when we work to build each other up in our

^{*} White House correction.

common humanity, rather than to acquire political advantage by putting each other down.

It is no surprise that the word "multicultural" actually comes from Canada. For two centuries, you have shown the world how people of different cultures can live and work together in peace, prosperity, and mutual respect in a country where human differences are democratically expressed, not forcefully repressed.

Earlier this year, we in the United States were pleased to see Canada's rich tradition of democracy deepen with the creation of the new territory of Nunavut. We are proud to be your partners and allies. And we deeply value our relationship with a strong, united, democratic Canada.

Of course, as any two nations as complicated as ours are, we have our differences, and we don't always see eye to eye. It's kind of interesting to watch Jean Chretien and me get in an argument. It's kind of like getting in an argument with your brother, you know? You have to do it every now and then just to keep in practice. *[Laughter]*

When we do have our differences, we try to approach them in good faith and directly, as true friends must. And we have shown that when we work together, on nearly every issue we can reach agreement.

I know that there's still one big issue out there that the Canadians are really pretty tense about. But I simply do not have the legal authority to order Doug Flutie to return to Canada. *[Laughter]*

Let me say to all of you, in closing, as we move into this new world of the 21st century; as we contemplate whether our children and grandchildren live to be 100 years or more because of the decoding of the human gene; as we imagine whether poor people across the world, from Africa to Latin America to Asia, will be able to skip 50 years of economic development because of the availability of the Internet and the cell phone and the rapid transfer of knowledge; as we imagine all the glories of modern technology in the modern world, it is well to remember that for all this race to tomorrow in technology, the deepest problem the world faces today is the most primitive problem of human nature, the fear of the other, people who are different from us.

What have we done, Jean and I, since we've been in our respective positions around the world? We tried to stop people from killing each

other in Bosnia and Kosovo because of religious and ethnic differences. I spent an enormous amount of time trying to help the people in the land of my forbears in Northern Ireland get over 600 years of religious fights. And every time they make an agreement to do it, they're like a couple of drunks walking out of the bar for the last time. When they get to the swinging door they turn around and go back in and say, "I just can't quite get there."

It's hard to give up these things. Look at the Middle East. For all of our progress, it is so hard for them because of millennial differences. Why were all those people slaughtered in Rwanda?

When we have differences here in our homes, in our neighborhoods in Canada and in the United States, it is well to remember that the effort we are making to remind our own citizens that our common humanity is always more important than the things which divide us. They make life more interesting, our differences, but we must constantly reaffirm that.

Canada and the United States, I think, have a special responsibility to the new millennium. It would be tragic if all the dreams that we share for our children and our grandchildren's future, if all the potential of the modern world, were to still keep crashing on the rocks of mankind's oldest failing.

Let us show the world we don't need to be afraid of people who are different from us. We can respect them. We can differ honestly. But always—always—we must reaffirm our common humanity. That, to me, is the true story of our long friendship, which this magnificent building embodies.

And now, it is with great pride and privilege that I declare this Embassy officially open, in service to the people of the United States and in friendship to our greatest neighbor and ally, the people of Canada.

May God bless the people of Canada and the United States of America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the McKenzie Street entrance at the U.S. Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to Governor General Adrienne Clarkson of Canada; Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and his wife, Aline; U.S. Ambassador to Canada Gordon Giffin; the President's mother-in-law, Dorothy Rodham; and NFL Buffalo Bills quarterback Doug Flutie.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada in Ottawa October 8, 1999

Prime Minister Chretien. *Mesdames et messieurs*, ladies and gentlemen, it's a great pleasure for me to receive the President of the United States in Canada for this occasion of opening the new Embassy and for the President to come and make a speech in Mont-Tremblant on federalism.

As you know, the relations between Canada and the U.S. are excellent, and the President is here for his fifth visit to Canada since he started in office. And when I asked him to come to the conference at Mont-Tremblant, I had to call upon our longstanding friendship. And everyone is very pleased that you, the leader of the greatest democracy and the greatest federation, should come to give your point of view.

[*Inaudible*]*—the President of the United States to come and make this statement, the speech in Mont-Tremblant, because he has been—he is in a very privileged position. He has been the Governor of a State, of Arkansas, and he has been the president of the conference of the Governors, and he has been, on the other side, the President of the United States. So he knows the functioning of a Federal system inside out. And I'm sure that the people coming from around the world will benefit very strongly from his experience. And I want to say thank you very much. And I take it as a great sign of friendship for Canada and for myself that you have accepted to be with us today.*

If you want to say a few words.

President Clinton. Thank you. First of all, Prime Minister, thank you for welcoming me back for my fifth trip to Canada since I've been President.

I would like to be very brief, and then we'll open it to questions. I'm here today to dedicate our Embassy, to speak at the Prime Minister's federalism conference, and to have the chance to meet with Prime Minister Chretien. I want to just mention two or three issues.

First of all, I'm profoundly grateful for the leadership shown by Canada in our common efforts to promote world peace, the work we've done together in Haiti, the work we did together in Bosnia, the work we did together in Kosovo with NATO, and the efforts that we're all mak-

ing in East Timor, which is still a difficult situation, where we've got to get all the refugees home and safe and where we strongly support Secretary-General Annan's efforts to establish a United Nations program there.

One of the things that we have worked on together is our efforts in nonproliferation. And Canada and the United States agree with all of our NATO Allies that the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is the right thing to do, it's in the interest of the United States.

There has been far more controversy about it in our country than in other countries, including other nuclear powers who are our allies. And I was—we've been trying to have a debate on this for 2 years, but it is clear now that the level of opposition to the treaty and the time it would take to craft the necessary safeguards to get the necessary votes are simply not there. So I hope that the Senate will reach an agreement to delay the vote and to establish an orderly process, a nonpolitical orderly process, to systematically deal with all the issues that are out there and to take whatever time is necessary to do it.

With this treaty other nations will find it harder to acquire or to modernize nuclear weapons, and we will gain the means to detect and deter. If we don't have the treaty, the United States will continue to refrain from testing, and we'll give a green light to every other country in the world to test, to develop, to modernize nuclear weapons.

I think it's clear what we ought to do, but it's also clear that we ought not to rush this vote until there has been an appropriate process in the Senate.

So those are the major foreign policy issues I wanted to mention. The other thing I wanted to say is, I think Canada and the United States will be working very closely to try to reinvigorate the movement to expanded trade around the world. If we're going to really see the rest of the world's economy pick up and enjoy the kind of prosperity we have enjoyed in the last few years, we've got to make the most of this WTO

ministerial. We've got to make the most of Canada's hosting the Free Trade Area of the Americas ministerial. And I think that's important.

Now, as to our bilateral relations, I wanted to mention one thing that we talked about in our meeting. We have agreed to have a more intensive dialog on border issues, through a new forum we creatively called the Canada-United States Partnership or CUSP. This will enable us to have local businesses, local communities, talk about managing border issues, and figure out how we can resolve some of the hassles people have with the vast volume of goods that go back and forth across the border and the vast number of people. So, I thank you.

And you've already said why you invited me to the federalism conference. And I can tell you, I was a Governor for 12 years, and no matter how hard you try, you will never solve all the problems of federalism. So the best thing you can do is to paraphrase Winston Churchill and say it is the worst form of government, except for all the others.

Thank you very much.

Prime Minister Chretien. Thank you, sir. Now, we'll take questions.

Sir?

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Mr. President, the Senate majority leader has stated that he would consider taking the test ban treaty off the table, withdrawing it from consideration under the caveat that it would not be reintroduced in the 106th Congress. Would you, sir, in order to preserve this treaty, be willing to give up ownership of it to the next Congress and the next administration?

President Clinton. First of all, I don't own it. And insofar as I do, we always will, since we negotiated it and the United States was the first to sign it. But it isn't mine. It belongs to the world. And I think the whole nature of your question shows what's wrong with the way the Senate has treated this.

They've treated this like a political document. They've treated this whole issue like a political issue. They went out and got people committed to vote against the treaty before they knew the first thing about it. And what I have said is I don't understand what he's worried about. This thing could never have come up in the first place if he hadn't agreed to it. And I wouldn't bring it up unless I thought we could ratify it, because I won't treat it politically.

So this whole thing is about politics. It's about: Burn us in 1999 because we're against the treaty that 80 percent of the American people support, but please don't burn us again in 2000. It's political. This treaty is not going to come up until we think we can pass it, and it won't come up until they treat it seriously.

Every serious American treaty, for example, has the legislative language attached as safeguards, just like we did in the chemical weapons treaty, so that everyone understands exactly what it means. In this treaty they actually went out of their way to try to keep safeguards from being attached to it so that they could have the maximum number of votes against it.

So I will give you a nonpolitical answer. I will say again, they should put it off, and then they should agree to a legitimate process where Republican and Democratic Senators think about the national interest. They have total control over when it comes up, not me. If it had been up to me we'd have started on this 2 years ago. We'd have had 6 months of hearings, 2 weeks of debate, lots of negotiations, and this whole thing would have been out of the way a year and a half ago.

It was not out of the way because that's the decision they made not to bring it up. They control when it comes up. So you're asking the wrong person whether it would come up next year. You should turn around and ask Senator Lott whether it would come up next year.

What I want to do—I don't care when it comes up, except when it comes up, I want it to come up as soon as we can, pass it, with a legitimate process. As messy as this has been, this has illustrated to the American people, beyond any question, that this whole deal has been about politics so far.

Now, there are some people who are honestly against this treaty. But we haven't been able to hear from them for 2 years, and we haven't been able to answer them, and we haven't been able to work on it. So I think it's been a very healthy thing to bring it up. But now we ought to do what's right for America: take it out of politics. This is not going to be a huge issue next year in the election, one way or the other. We should deal with this on the merits. They should agree to a process, and they control when it comes up.

Prime Minister Chretien. And I would like to add that we all have an interest in that. And all your allies to Americans will want this

process to be terminated as quickly as possible, because there's a lot of other nations that have to live with the consequences of what the American Congress will do. And peace in the world is extremely important for our neighbors, too.

Canadian Defense Industries Licenses

Q. Prime Minister, did you discuss the concerns that Canada's defense industries have had with having to get licenses? And did you get any answer from the President?

Prime Minister Chretien. Yes, we discussed and we have found an agreement. And the agreement will be in details made public by Madam Albright and Mr. Axworthy.

Q. Was it important to get an agreement? Why?

Prime Minister Chretien. But, yes. It's always important when you have a problem to find a solution. And we found a solution. That's all. [Laughter]

Next. Next.

U.S. Documents on Augusto Pinochet

Q. Mr. President, today a London magistrate ruled that former Chilean dictator Pinochet be extradited for trial in Spain. The CIA has been accused of withholding documents that are said to show that the United States encouraged the coup which installed Pinochet in power and that the CIA maintained close ties to Pinochet's repressive security forces. Will you order that the release of those documents be sped up?

President Clinton. Well, I believe we've released some documents and my understanding—before I came out here, I was told that we're about to release some more. So I think we ought to just keep releasing documents until we—I think you're entitled to know what happened back then and how it happened.

And obviously, the Governments of Spain and the United Kingdom are following their own legal systems. I would point out, in defense of the people of Chile, is that they actually succeeded in moving away from the Pinochet dictatorship and solving the problem they had in a way that allowed them to make a transition to parliamentary democracy. And I think even the people that spent their whole lives opposed to Pinochet, they have some—they're trying to figure out, now, what the impact on their democracy will be of all these actions.

But the United States has supported the legal process, and we continue to do so. And we

support releasing the documents in an appropriate fashion. And we support the democracy which now exists in Chile.

Paul?

Prime Minister Chretien. Okay, *en Français.*

President Clinton. I've got to take a couple of the Americans; go ahead. France, yes, go ahead.

Q. Monsieur Clinton—

Prime Minister Chretien. Oh, the question is for Clinton. [Laughter]

Premier Lucien Bouchard of Quebec

Q. Mr. Clinton, I want to know if your meeting with Mr. Bouchard today is an indication of any change in U.S. policy towards Quebec sovereignty? And secondly, if Mr. Chretien asked you anything about that meeting today?

President Clinton. No, and, no. That's the short answer.

Prime Minister Chretien. Thank you. Next. [Laughter]

President Clinton. The short answer, no and no. I did meet with him when he was in opposition about 4 years ago. He is the Premier of the Province. We're going there. He's the host. It's a courtesy, and I think I should do it. But there has been no change in our policy, whatsoever.

Prime Minister Chretien. American.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. First of all, Mr. President, are you going to meet Senator Helms' demand that you actually submit what you announced here today in writing? How badly has this hurt the United States?

President Clinton. I'm sorry, what?

Q. Senator Helms' demand that you submit it in writing to him.

President Clinton. Submit what?

Q. The CTBT—I'm sorry—the CTBT, the withdrawal of it in writing. He's asked for that. How badly has that hurt U.S. leadership role in arms control? And what's the message from India where the world's largest democracy just overwhelmingly reelected the Government that you criticized heavily for conducting nuclear tests?

President Clinton. Well, I think, first of all, if you look at India, you have to see the people voted for that Government for all kinds of reasons. And what I believe is—look, France conducted a nuclear test before they signed the

treaty. What I believe is that the United States does not sign the treaty and show a little leadership here, why should the Pakistanis and the Indians do it?

Ever since the end of World War II and beginning with the election of Dwight Eisenhower, we have had a bipartisan commitment to leading the world away from proliferation. It has never been called into question until the present day. Never.

Now, we had to work for a very long time to get the Chemical Weapons Convention passed, which is very important. But Senator Helms and the others followed a legitimate process. I never had a doubt that the objections that they raised and the safeguards they wanted were absolutely heartfelt and serious. This treaty was never treated seriously. They took 2 years, had no time for hearings, said, "I'll give you 8 days," and later we discovered, after they said that, that that was offered only after they had 43 commitments on a party-line vote to vote against the treaty from people who hadn't heard a hearing and hadn't even thought about it, most of them.

So they want me to give them a letter to cover the political decision they have made that does severe damage to the interest of the United States and the interest of nonproliferation in the world? I don't think so. That's not what this is about. They have to take responsibility for whether they want to reverse 50 years of American leadership in nonproliferation that the Republicans have been just as involved in as the Democrats, to their everlasting credit.

Now, they have to make that decision. I cannot bring this treaty up again unless they want to. I have asked them to put it off because we don't have the votes. I have talked to enough Republicans to know that some of them have honest, genuine reservations about this treaty, and they ought to have the opportunity to have them resolved, instead of being told that they owe it to their party to vote against the treaty and that the leadership of their party will do everything they can to keep us from writing safeguards into the treaty which answer their reservations, which is what we do on every other thing.

So I don't want to get into making this political. But they shouldn't tie the Senate up or themselves up in knots thinking that some letter from me will somehow obscure from the American people next year the reality that they have

run the risk of putting America on the wrong side of the proliferation issue for the first time in 50 years. And they want to do it, and then they don't want to get up and defend it before the American people in an election year. That's what this whole thing is about. That is the wrong thing to do.

We don't have the votes. I'm not going to try to bring it up without the votes. Let them take it down but also agree on a legitimate process to take this out of politics. I will not criticize them as long as they are genuinely working through the issues, the way we did in the chemical weapons treaty.

They're entitled to advise and consent. They're entitled to take all the time they want. But nobody hit a lick at this for 2 years. And then they tried to get it up and down on grounds that were other than substantive, and that's wrong. And it's bad for America. It has nothing to do with me and my administration. I wouldn't care who got the thing ratified, as long as we did it in the right way.

Canada in the New Millennium

Q. On your throne speech next week, do you see it as charting some kind of grand new course for the millennium? Or is it just more of the same? [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Chretien. Yes, it will be if Canada is considered as the best country in the world. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. Are you sure he's not one of ours? [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Chretien. You know, they're complaining because I keep telling them that Canada's been considered, Mr. President, as the best country in the world to live in. I'm sorry to tell you to that. [*Laughter*] And I want to carry on in the 21st century with the same thing, and they say I have no vision. Imagine if I had a vision. [*Laughter*] So you will see.

Q. Mr. Chretien? Mr. Chretien?

President Clinton. Go ahead. [*Laughter*] I'm sorry. That was great.

Oil Prices

Q. You've been asked to sell oil from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve to fight rising heating oil prices as the winter comes. Do you think this is a good idea, and do you agree with Senator Schumer that OPEC has been engaged in price gouging, to raise the prices?

President Clinton. I think we should look at the reserve and the question of whether, if we released some oil from it for sales, we could moderate the price some.

I think that the States in the Northeast, as you know, are unusually dependent upon home heating oil and, therefore, are the most sensitive to oil prices. But it's also true that the price of oil was historically low for a good long time. And it's made a modest rebound, now.

I'm grateful that it hasn't put any inflation in our economy and so far we can manage it. But we have to be sensitive to the people who are disproportionately affected by it. And I have not reached a decision yet, because I haven't been given a recommendation yet, about whether we could have any appreciable impact on the Americans that are most disproportionately affected.

One of the reasons we always fight hard for the LIHEAP program, apart from what the summertime can do to people all over America, is that we know these people in the Northeast have a problem that no other Americans have, with the impact of the oil prices. It hits them much, much harder. So we're looking at it.

Prime Minister Chretien. Thank you.
Madam?

Quebec

Q. This morning you talked about rule of law, respect for rule of law being one of the fundamental principles Canada and the U.S. share. I am wondering, in that context, if the President could tell us what he thinks of Mr. Bouchard saying that Quebec could secede without regard to the Canadian Constitution, or the Supreme Court ruling last year, which said they must have a clear majority vote, yes, and a clear question. Would the U.S. ever recognize a sovereign Quebec under those circumstances?

Prime Minister Chretien. I think that it's for me to reply. I think that the rule of law will apply to Canada. We have a judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada, which said very clearly that the question has to be clear and the majority has to be clear. And if there is a clear will expressed, that only after that, that negotiations could start.

So the rule of law will be applied. The question will have to be clear, and the majority will have to be clear. And I know that if they have a clear question, the President of the United

States will never have to make a decision on that.

Natural Disasters

Q. Excuse me. I would like to say something. You've had a lot of disasters lately, and so has the world. And I'm with Christian News, and I would like to ask you, have you thought that possibly this is a message from above that there is moral decay, that there is abortion, that there is violence? I was wondering if you had given it some thought.

President Clinton. Actually, I have. You know, we—particularly because of all the millennial predictions. But I think the fact is that some of these natural disasters are part of predictable weather patterns, and the others have been predicted for more than a decade now by people who tell us that the climate is warming up. And I think that the real moral message here is that as we all get richer and use more of the resources God has given us, we're being called upon to take greater care of them. And I think that we have to deal seriously with the impact of the changing climate.

I was just in New Zealand at the jumping-off place for 70 percent of our operations in Antarctica, the South Pole, talking about the thinning of the polar ice cap there and the consequences it could bring to the whole world.

So I believe that insofar as these natural disasters are greater in intensity or number than previous ones, the primary warning we're getting from on high is that we have to keep—to use the phrase of a person I know reasonably well—we have to keep Earth in the balance. We have to respond to this in an appropriate way.

Yes.

Prime Minister Chretien. Okay. And that will be the last one.

President Clinton. Go ahead.

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Sir, you talked about the Republicans playing politics with this arms ban treaty or weapons testing ban treaty. Are you talking about normal partisan politics, just Republicans versus Democrats? Are you talking about the kind of politics where some Republicans—maybe not a lot of them, but some—will say, "I'm sorry, Bill Clinton is for it. I feel so viscerally that I despise Bill Clinton, I'm not going to go along with something that he wants that much, and I'm

not going to give him a victory during his administration on something this important?"

President Clinton. I don't think that's what's going on. I mean, it might be, but I don't think so. That sounds like Wile E. Coyote and the Roadrunner, you know? [Laughter] But I don't think that's what's going on.

I think you have the following things. I think you have—I will say again—you have some Republicans who have thought about this and listened to people who aren't for it and really believe it's not the right thing to do. I hate it when we have fights. We're always questioning other people's motives. There are people who genuinely aren't for this. I think they're dead wrong, and I think it would be a disaster if their view prevailed, but I believe that's what they think.

Now, in addition to that, however, this process—the Democrats were frustrated because for 2 years—that's why I don't think the second part of your thing is right. For 2 years they've been trying to bring this treaty up for a hearing, during which time we did ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, and they could never even get hearings. So there was something about this thing that they didn't want to give hearings on.

So then the Democrats agreed to what they knew was a truncated hearing schedule—almost no hearings—and debate schedule, only to find that basically a sufficient number of votes in the Republican caucus had been locked down for reasons of party loyalty, whatever their motives were, from people who couldn't possibly know enough about the treaty right now to know they were against it on the merits. Now, maybe it's they don't want some alleged victory to come to the administration during the pendency of the political season. Maybe that's it, maybe not. My point is, I don't care about that. I don't care who gets credit for it. If they adopted it, I'd be glad to say it was Trent Lott's triumph. It's six and one-half dozen of the other to me. What I want to do is to leave this country with a framework—my country with a framework for dealing with the major security problems of the 21st century.

I believe that there will still be rogue states that want nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. I, furthermore, believe that there will be enemies of all nation states—terrorist groups, organized criminals, drug runners—who will be increasingly likely to have access to miniaturized,

but powerful weapons of mass destruction. And what I would like to leave office doing is not getting credit for anything—I don't give a rip who gets the credit for it. What I want is the Chemical Weapons Convention to be enforced, the Biological Weapons Convention to have teeth added to it so it actually means something, and this Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to be in place so at least we have a shot to reduce the number of nuclear states and the sophistication of their weapons and their ability to use them. That's the whole deal with me.

Because I think that our successors are going to have a whole lot of headaches from all these groups, and we need to minimize risk because as societies grow more open they'll be more vulnerable to being terrorized by people who have access to this. That's the whole deal with me. I don't care who gets credit for it; I just want there to be a framework for dealing with it.

So if they take more than a year to deal with this, if there is a legitimate process of working through, that's okay with me. If there is an emergency in the world where the rest of the world—it looks like we're going to have 10 other people try to become nuclear powers, and they've had 2 months of hearings or 3 months of hearings, and I think there's some reason we ought to vote—that goes back to your question—I don't want to say on the front end, "Yes, I'll play the same political game, and no matter what, we won't vote next year, no matter what other developments we see on the Indian subcontinent or in other places."

But this thing can't come up for a vote if they don't bring it up. And I'm not going to willfully try to get it up if I think it's going to get beat. That's the only thing I want to—I'm sorry to bore our Canadian friends with a discourse to American politics. And the other thing, the United States cannot afford to relinquish the leadership of the world in the cause of nonproliferation.

So if they want to strengthen the treaty, there are all kinds of vehicles through which we can do it. We do it on every other treaty. And if they want to take months, if they want to take a year—whatever they need to take—just play this straight. I'm not going to be out there—there's no downside for them to playing it straight.

But I will not say in advance, no matter what—no matter what happens in the world,

no matter what unforeseeable development there is, no matter what other countries are about to do, no matter what, I would not ask you to deal with this next year, because on the merits there might be a reason. If it's just politics, we won't, because I'm not going to bring it up if we can't win.

Prime Minister Chretien. Perhaps, Mr. President, I would like to add that when we were at the summit in Birmingham, and it was at the moment that India was about to do the experiment and Pakistan was to follow, we were all extremely preoccupied about it. And it is a problem that concerns the world. And it's not only the United States; everybody around the globe has a stake into that.

And for me, I cannot agree more than the President that the leadership of the United States for the allies is extremely important. And keep up the good fight.

And unfortunately, we have to go. *Merci beaucoup.* Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 181st news conference began at 12:05 p.m. in the Parliament Building. In his remarks, the President referred to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy of Canada. He also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. A portion of this news conference could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks to the Forum of Federations Conference in Mont-Tremblant, Canada

October 8, 1999

Thank you. Thank you so much. Prime Minister Chretien; to the Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis, Denzil Douglas; Premier Bouchard; cochairs of this conference, Bob Rae and Henning Voscherau; to distinguished visitors; Governors—I think the Lieutenant Governor of South Dakota, Carole Hillard, is here—and to all of you: I think it is quite an interesting thing that we have this impressive array of people to come to a conference on federalism, a topic that probably 10 or 20 years ago would have been viewed as a substitute for a sleeping pill. [*Laughter*]

But in the aftermath of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia; the interesting debates—at least I can say this from the point of view as your neighbor—that has gone on in Quebec; the deepening, troubling efforts to reconcile different tribes who occupy nations with boundaries they did not draw in Africa; and any number of other issues, this topic of federalism has become very, very important.

It is fitting that the first global conference would be held here in North America, because federalism began here—a founding principle forged in the crucible of revolution, enshrined in the Constitution of the United States, shared

today by all three nations on our continent, as I'm sure President Zedillo said.

It is also especially fitting that this conference be held in Canada. A land larger than China, spanning 5 time zones and 10 distinct provinces, it has shown the world how people of different cultures and languages can live in peace, prosperity, and mutual respect.

In the United States, we have valued our relationship with a strong and united Canada. We look to you; we learn from you. The partnership you have built between people of diverse backgrounds and governments at all levels is what this conference is about and, ultimately, what democracy must be about, as people all over the world move around more, mix with each other more, live in close proximity more.

Today I would like to talk briefly about the ways we in the United States are working to renew and redefine federalism for the 21st century; then, how I see the whole concept of federalism emerging internationally; and finally, how we—how I think, anyway—we should judge the competing claims of federalism and independence in different contexts around the world.

First let me say we are 84 days, now, from a new century and a new millennium. The currents of change in how we work and live and

relate to each other, and relate to people far across the world, are changing very rapidly.

President Franklin Roosevelt once said that new conditions impose new requirements upon government and those who conduct government. We know this to be the case not only in the United States and Canada, Great Britain and Germany, Italy and France, Mexico and Brazil, but indeed, in all the countries of the world. But in all these places there is a federalist system of some form or another. We look for ways to imbue old values with new life and old institutions with new meaning.

In 1992, when I ran for President, there was a growing sense in the United States that the compact between the people and their Government, and between the States and the Federal Government, was in severe disrepair. This was driven largely by the fact that our Federal Government had quadrupled the national debt in 12 years, and that had led to enormous interest rates, slow growth, and grave difficulties on all the States of our land which they were powerless to overcome.

So when the Vice President and I ran for national office, we had no debate from people who said, "Look, this is a national priority, and you have to deal with it." But we talked a lot to Governors and others about the necessity to create again what our Founding Fathers called the laboratories of democracy. We, frankly, admitted that no one knew all the answers to America's large welfare caseload, to America's enormous crime rate, to America's incredible diversity of children and challenges in our schools. And so we said we would try to give new direction to the Nation and deal with plainly national problems, but we would also try to build a new partnership that would make all of our States feel more a part of our union and more empowered in determining their own destiny.

Now, people develop this federalist system for different reasons. It came naturally to the United States because Great Britain set up colonies here as separate entities. And the States of our country actually created the National Government. So we always had a sense that there were some things the States were supposed to do and some things the Federal Government were supposed to do.

Our Founding Fathers gave us some indication in the Constitution, but the history of the United States Supreme Court is full of cases trying to resolve the whole question of what

is the role and the power of the States as opposed to what is the role and the power of the National Government in ever new circumstances.

There are different examples elsewhere. For example, in the former Yugoslavia when it existed before, federalism was at least set up to give the appearance that all the different ethnic groups could be fairly treated and could have their voices heard.

So in 1992 it appeared that the major crisis in federalism was that the States had been disempowered from doing their jobs because the national economy was so weak and the fabric of the national society was fraying in America. But underneath that I knew that once we began to build things again we would have to resolve some very substantial questions, some of which may be present in your countries, as well.

As we set about to work, the Vice President and I, in an effort that I put him in charge of, made an attempt to redefine the mission of the Federal Government. And we told the people of the United States that we actually thought the Federal Government was too large in size, that it should be smaller but more active, and that we should do more in partnerships with State and local governments and the private sector, with the ultimate goal of empowering the American people to solve their own problems in whatever unit was most appropriate, whether it was an individual citizen, the family, the community, the State, or the Nation.

And we have worked at that quite steadily. Like Canada, we turned our deficit around and produced a surplus. We also shrank the size of the Federal Government. The size of the United States Federal Government today is the same as it was in 1962, when John Kennedy was President, and our country was much, much smaller.

In the economic expansion we have been enjoying since 1993, the overwhelming majority of the jobs that were created were created in the private sector. It's the largest percentage of private sector job creation of any economic expansion in America since the end of World War II.

Meanwhile, many of our State and local governments have continued to grow in size, to meet the day-to-day demands of a lot of the domestic issues that we face in our country. And I think that is a good thing.

In addition to shrinking the size of Government, we've tried to empower the States to make more of their own decisions. For example, the Department of Education has gotten rid of two-thirds of the rules that it imposed on States and school districts when I became President. Instead, we say, "Here are our national objectives; here is the money you can have. You have to make a report on the progress at meeting these national objectives, but we're not going to tell you how to do it anymore." And it's amazing what you can do if you get people to buy into national objectives with which they agree, and you stop trying to micromanage every instance of their lives and their daily activities. So we found some good success there.

We've also tried to give the States just blanket freedom to try more new ideas in areas where we think we don't have all the answers now, from health policy to welfare reform to education to fighting crime.

We have always felt—this has been easy in the United States, though, compared to a lot of places because we've had this history of believing from the time of our Founders that the National Government would never have all the answers, and that the States should be seen as our friends and our partners because they could be laboratories of democracy. They could always be out there pushing the envelope of change. And certain things would be possible politically in some places that would not be possible in others.

And we have been very well served by that. It has encouraged a lot of innovation and experimentation. Here is the problem we have with the basic business of government and federalism today. In the 21st century world, when we find an answer to a problem, very often we don't have time to wait for every State to agree that that's the answer. So we try to jumpstart the federalist experience by looking for ideas that are working and then embodying them in Federal legislation and giving all the States the funds and other support they need to do it.

Why do we do this? Well, let me give you one example. In 1787, in the United States, the Founding Fathers declared that all the new territories would have to set aside land for public schools and then gave the responsibility for public education to the States. Now, then, in the next few years, a handful of States mandated education. But it took more than 100 years for all of our States to mandate free public edu-

cation for all of our children. That was 19th century pace of change. It's inadequate in the 21st century.

So I have tried to do what I did as a Governor. If something is working in a State, I try to steal it, put it into Federal law, and at least give all the States the opportunity and the money necessary to implement the same change. But it's very, very important.

Since our Ambassador is a native of Georgia, I'll give you one example. One of my goals is to make universal access to colleges and universities in America, and we now have something called the HOPE scholarship, modeled on Ambassador Giffin's home State program, which gives all students enough of a tax subsidy to at least afford the first 2 years of college in America, because we found in a census that no matter where you come from in the United States, people with at least 2 years of education after high school tended to get jobs where their incomes grew and they did better. People with less than that tended to get jobs where their incomes stayed level or declined in the global economy.

Now, we've also tried to make dealing with Washington less of a problem. We've ended something that was very controversial, at least prospectively, called unfunded mandates, where the Federal Government would tell the States they had to do something and give them about 5 percent of the money it cost to do it. That, I think, is a problem in every national Federal system. We continue to give the States greater freedom and flexibility. And this summer I signed a new Executive order on federalism which would reaffirm in very specific ways how we would work in partnership and greater consultation with State and local officials.

Federalism is not a fixed system; it, by definition, has to be an evolving system. For more than 200 years, the pendulum of powers have swung back and forth one way or the other. And I do want to say—for those of you who may be looking outside in, thinking the Americans could never understand our problems, they don't have any problems like this—it is true that, by and large, in our State units we don't have people who are of just one racial or ethnic or religious groups. But to be sure, we have some of that. I'll give you one example that we're dealing with today.

The United States Supreme Court has to decide a case from the State of Hawaii in which

the State has given native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, the right to vote in a certain kind of election—and only native Hawaiians. And someone in Hawaii has sued them, saying that violates the equal protection clause of the United States Constitution. We disagree because of the purpose of the election.

But you can see this is a federalist issue. We basically said the National Government would give that to the States, the States want to do it this way; then a citizen says, “No, you can’t do that under national law.”

Another example that causes us a lot of problems in the West—what happens when the Federal Government actually owns a lot of the land and the resources of a State? The National Government is most unpopular in America in States like Wyoming or Idaho, where there aren’t very many people; there’s a lot of natural resources. Cattlemen, ranchers have to use land that belongs to the Federal Government, and we feel that we have to protect the land for multiple uses, including environmental preservation as well as grazing or mining or whatever. And so it’s an impossible situation.

It’s very funny; in these States, when we started, the Federal Government was most popular in the areas where we own most of the land, because we built dams and channeled rivers and provided land for people to graze their cattle. And within 50 years, the Federal Government has become the most unpopular thing imaginable. Now, I used to go to Wyoming on vacation just to listen to people tell me how terrible the job I had was. [*Laughter*] But it’s a problem we have to face.

And let me say one other thing I think might be interesting to you is that the Democratic Party and the Republican Party in the United States tend to have different ideas about federalism depending on what the issue is, which is why it’s always good to have a dynamic system.

For example, we Democrats, once we find something working at the local level that advances our social policy, or our economic policy, we want to at least make it a national option, if not a national mandate. When I became President, crime was going up, but there were cities where crime was going down. I went there and found out why it was going down. And it was obvious to me we didn’t have enough police officers preventing crime in the first place, so

I said we’re going to create 100,000 police at the national level and give them to the cities.

The conservatives were against that. They said, “You’re interfering with State and local rights, telling them how to fight crime.” Of course, I wasn’t; I was giving them police. They didn’t have to take them if they didn’t want them. [*Laughter*] And it turned out they liked it quite well; we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. But there was a genuine federalism dispute.

Now we’re having the same dispute over teachers. We have the largest number of children in our schools in history; lots of evidence that smaller classes in the early grades yield permanent learning gains to children. So I said, now let’s put 100,000 teachers out there. And they say I’m trying to impose this terrible burden on State and local governments, sticking my nose in where it doesn’t belong.

On the other hand, in the whole history of the country, personal injury law, including economic injuries, commercial law has always been the province of State and local government except for things like securities, stocks, bonds, things that required a national securities market. But many people in the Republican Party believe that since there is essentially a national economy and an international economic environment, that we should take away from the States all their States’ rights when it comes to determining the rules under which people can sue businesses. And they really believe it.

And I have agreed with them as it applies to securities litigation because we need a national securities market. But I have disagreed with them as it applies to other areas of tort reform where they think it’s a bad thing that there is State rights.

And I say this not to attack the other party, but only to illustrate to all of you that in whatever context you operate, there will always be differences of opinion about what should be done nationally and what should be done at the State level. That cannot be eliminated. The purpose of federalism, it seems to me, is to, number one, take account of the genuinely local feelings which may be in the United States a result of economic activities and ties to the land and history; or it may be in another country the result of the general segregation of people of various racial, ethnic, or religious groups into the provinces in the Federal system.

So the first process is to give people a sense of their identity and autonomy. And then you have to really try to make good decisions so that the system works. I mean, in the end, all these systems only have integrity if the allocation of decisionmaking authority really produces results that people like living with, so they feel that they can go forward.

Now, let me just discuss a minute what is sort of the underlying tension here that you see all across the world, which is what is the answer to the fact that on the edge of a new millennium—where we would prefer to talk about the Internet, and the decoding of the human gene, and the discovery of billions of new galaxies in outer space—those of us in politics have to spend so much time talking about the most primitive slaughter of people based on their ethnic or racial or religious differences?

The great irony of the turning of the millennium is that we have more modern options for technology and economic advance than ever before, but our major threat is the most primitive human failing: the fear of the other and the sense that we can only breathe and function and matter if we are somehow free of the necessity to associate with and deal with and maybe even, under certain circumstances, subordinate our own opinions to the feelings of them, people who are different from us, a different race, a different religion, a different tribe.

And there is no answer to this that is easy. But let me just ask you to look in the context of the former Yugoslavia, where we are trying to preserve a Bosnian state—Prime Minister Chretien and I and our friends—which serves Croats and Muslims, after 4 years of horrible slaughter until we stopped it in 1995; or in Kosovo, where we're exploring whether Kosovo can continue to be an autonomous part of Serbia, notwithstanding the fact that the Serbs ran all of them out of the country and we had to take them back.

Why did all this happen? Partly because it was an artificially imposed federalism. Marshal Tito was a very smart man who basically said, "I'm going to create federalism out of my own head. I'm going to mandate the participation of all these groups in government. And I'm going to forbid my government from talking about ethnic superiority, or oppression, or problems." He wouldn't even let them discuss the kind of ethnic tensions that are just part of the daily life in most societies in this world.

And it all worked until he died. And then it slowly began to unravel.

So one of the reasons you have all these people clamoring for the independence of ever smaller groups is that they had a kind of phony federalism imposed from the top down. So the first lesson I draw from this is every federalist system in the world today—a world in which information is widely shared, economic possibilities are at least—always, to some extent, based on global forces, certainly in terms of how much money you can get into a country—the federalism must be real. There must be some real sense of shared authority. And people must know they have some real range of autonomy for decisions. And it must more or less correspond to what they perceive they need to accomplish.

On the other hand, it seems to me that the suggestion that a people of a given ethnic group or tribal group or religious group can only have a meaningful communal existence if they are an independent nation—not if there is no oppression, not if they have genuine autonomy, but they must be actually independent—is a questionable assertion in a global economy where cooperation pays greater benefits in every area of life than destructive competition.

Consider, for example, the most autonomous societies on Earth, arguably, the tribes still living in the rainforests on the island of New Guinea. There are 6,000 languages still existent in the world today, and 1,000 of them can be found in Papua New Guinea, and Irian Jaya, where tribes living 10, 20 miles from one another have compete self-determination. Would you like that?

On the other hand, consider the terrible problems of so many African peoples where they're saddled with national borders drawn for them at the Conference of Berlin in 1885, that took no reasonable account of the allocation of the tribes on certain lands and the history of their grazing, their farming, their moving.

So how to work it out? There is no answer. We have to provide a framework in which people can work it out. But the only point I want to make to you today—I don't want to beat this to death, because we could stay here for a week discussing this—is that at the end of World War I, the European powers I think and America sort of withdrew, so we have to share part of the blame. But our record is not exactly spotless in how we went about carving up, for

Photographic Portfolio





Overleaf: Launching the Charters of Freedom preservation project at the National Archives Building, July 1.

Left: Enjoying a quiet moment in Aspen, CO, July 24.

Below: Congratulating the Women's World Cup champion U.S. soccer team on the South Lawn, July 19.

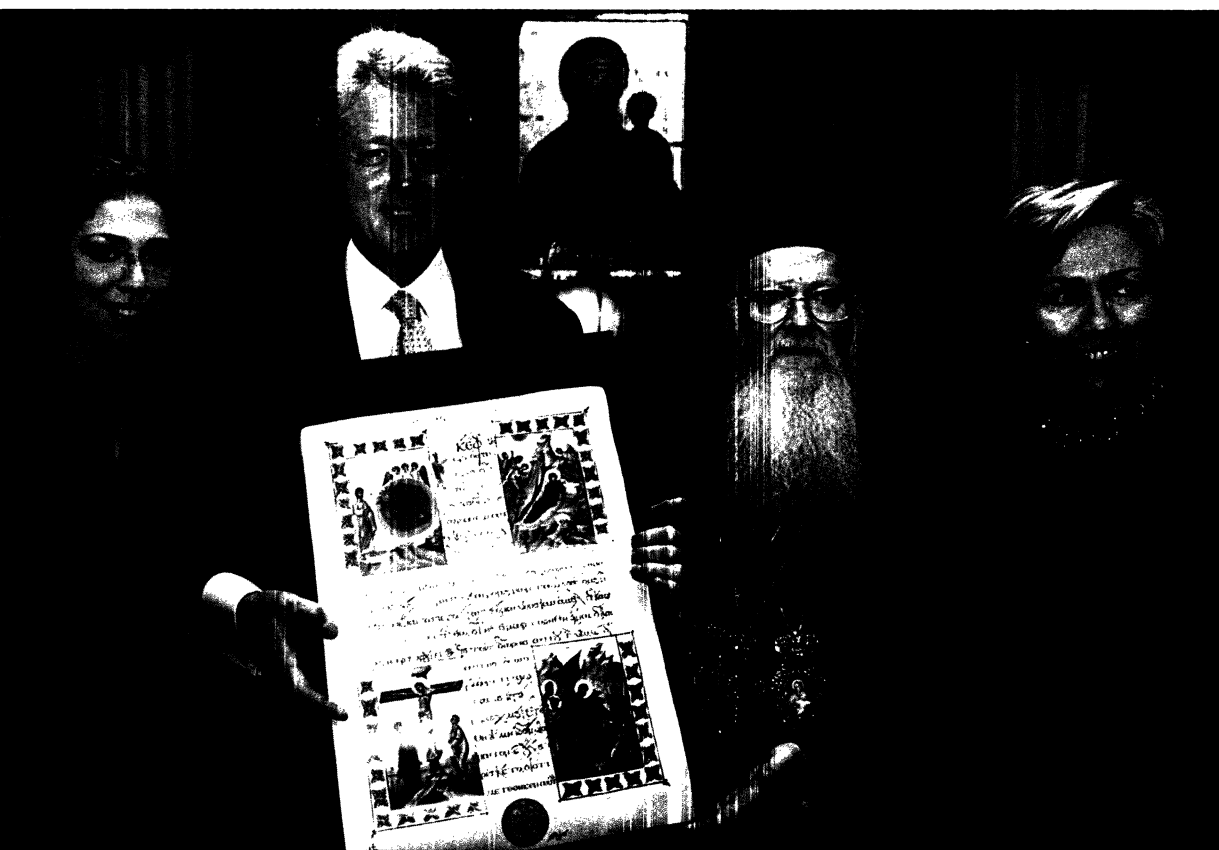
Right: Signing consolidated appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2000 in the Rose Garden, November 27.





A STRONG BUDGET
FOR A
STRONG AMERICA







Above: Touring areas damaged by Hurricane Floyd in Tarboro, NC, September 20.

Left: Meeting with Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomeos in Istanbul, Turkey, November 17.

Right: Trying out a guitar in the East Room before VH1's Concert of the Century, October 23.





Left: Greeting Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom at the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century dinner in Florence, Italy, November 20.

Below: Meeting with earthquake survivors in Izmit, Turkey, November 16.

Right: Celebrating Hanukkah in the Oval Office, December 3.

Overleaf: In the Blue Room, December 5.







example, the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire. And so we have spent much of the 20th century trying to reconcile President Woodrow Wilson's belief that different nations had the right to be free—nations being people with a common consciousness—had a right to be a State and the practical knowledge that we all have that, if every racial and ethnic and religious group that occupies a significant piece of land not occupied by others became a separate nation—we might have 800 countries in the world and have a very difficult time having a functioning economy or a functioning global polity. Maybe we would have 8,000. How low can you go?

So that doesn't answer any specific questions. It just means that I think when a people thinks it should be independent in order to have a meaningful political existence, serious questions should be asked: Is there an abuse of human rights? Is there a way people can get along if they come from different heritages? Are minority rights, as well as majority rights, respected? What is in the long-term economic and security interests of our people? How are we going to cooperate with our neighbors? Will it be better or worse if we are independent, or if we have a federalist system?

I personally believe that you will see more federalism rather than less in the years ahead, and I offer, as exhibit A, the European Union. It's really a new form of federalism, where the States—in this case, the nations of Europe—are far more important and powerful than the Federal government, but they are giving enough functions over to the Federal government to sort of reinforce their mutual interest in an integrated economy and in some integrated political circumstances.

In a way, we've become more of a federalist world when the United Nations takes a more active role in stopping genocide in places in which it was not involved, and we recognize mutual responsibilities to contribute and pay for those things.

So I believe we will be looking for ways, over and over and over again—the Prime Minister and I have endorsed the Free Trade Area of the Americas—we'll be looking for ways to integrate our operations for mutual interest, without giving up our sovereignty. And where there are dissatisfied groups in sections of countries, we should be looking for ways to satisfy anxieties and legitimate complaints without disintegration, I believe.

That's not to say that East Timor was wrong. If you look at what the people in East Timor had been through, if you look at the colonial heritage there, if you look at the fact that the Indonesians offered them a vote, they took it, and nearly 80 percent of them voted for independence, it seems that was the right decision there.

But let us never be under the illusion that those people are going to have an easy path. Assuming that those of us that are trying to support them help them; assuming we can stop all the pro-integrationist militias from oppressing the people, and we can get all the East Timorese back home, and they'll all be safe—there will still be less than a million of them, with a per capita income among the poorest in the world, struggling to make a living for their children in an environment that is not exactly hospitable.

Now, does that mean they were wrong? No. Under the circumstances they faced, they probably made the only decision they could have. But wouldn't it have been better if they could have found their religious, their cultural, their ethnic, and their economic footing and genuine self-government in the framework of a larger entity which would also have supported them economically and reinforced their security instead of undermined it? It didn't happen; it's too bad.

But I say this because I don't think there are any general rules, but I think that, at the end of World War I, when President Wilson spoke, there was a general assumption, because we were seeing empires break up—the Ottoman Empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire; there was the memory of the Russian Empire; British colonialism was still alive in Africa and so was French colonialism—at that time, we all assumed—and the rhetoric of the time imposed the idea—that the only way for people to feel any sovereignty or meaning was if they were independent.

And I think we've spent a lot of the 20th century minimizing the prospects of federalism. We all have recoiled, now, so much at the abuse of people because of their tribal, racial, and religious characteristics, that we tend immediately to think that the only answer is independence.

But we must think of how we will live after the shooting stops, after the smoke clears, over the long run. And I can only say this, in closing:

I think the United States and Canada are among the most fortunate countries in the world because we have such diversity; sometimes concentrated, like the Inuits in the north; sometimes widely dispersed within a certain area, like the diversity of Vancouver. We are fortunate because life is more interesting and fun when there are different people who look differently and think differently and find their way to God differently. It's an interesting time. And because we all have to grow and learn when we confront people who are different than we are, and instead of looking at them in fear and hatred and dehumanization, we look at them and see a mirror of ourselves and our common humanity.

I think if we will keep this in mind—what is most likely to advance our common humanity

in a smaller world; and what is the arrangement of government most likely to give us the best of all worlds—the integrity we need, the self-government we need, the self-advancement we need—without pretending that we can cut all the cords that bind us to the rest of humanity—I think more and more and more people will say, “This federalism, it's not such a bad idea.”

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Chateau Mont-Tremblant. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; Premier Lucien Bouchard of Quebec; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; and U.S. Ambassador to Canada Gordon Giffin. The Executive order on Federalism is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on an Inappropriate Metaphor Used in Discussing the Irish Peace Process

October 8, 1999

Earlier today, in a discussion of the Irish peace process, I used a metaphor that was inap-

propriate. I want to express my regret for any offense my remark caused.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Deployment of United States Forces to East Timor

October 8, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 15, 1999, the United Nations Security Council, under Chapter VII of the Charter, authorized the establishment of a multinational force to restore peace and security in East Timor, to protect and support the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), and, within force capabilities, to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations. In support of this multinational effort, I directed a limited number of U.S. military forces to deploy to East Timor to provide support to the multinational force (INTERFET) being assembled under Australian leadership to carry out the mission described in Security Council Resolution 1264. United States support to the multinational force has thus far been limited to com-

munications, intelligence, logistics, planning assistance, and transportation.

Recently, I authorized the deployment of the amphibious ship, USS BELLEAU WOOD (LHA 3), and her embarked helicopters, to the East Timor region, including Indonesian waters, to provide helicopter airlift and search and rescue support to the multinational operation. Also, embarked in BELLEAU WOOD is a portion of her assigned complement of personnel from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU (SOC)). At this time, I do not anticipate that the embarked Marines will be deployed ashore, with the exception of the temporary deployment of a communications element to support air operations.

At this point, it is not possible to predict how long this operation will continue. The duration of the deployment depends upon the course of events in East Timor and may include rotation of naval assets and embarked aircraft. United States support for this multinational effort will continue until transition to a U.N. peacekeeping force is complete. It is, however, our objective to redeploy U.S. forces as soon as circumstances permit.

I have taken this action pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief

Executive. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed, consistent with the War Powers Resolution. I appreciate the support of the Congress in this action.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

The President's Radio Address *October 9, 1999*

Good morning. On Tuesday the Senate plans to vote on whether to ratify the nuclear test ban treaty. Today I want to emphasize why this agreement is critical to the security and future of all Americans.

Just imagine a world in which more and more countries obtained nuclear weapons and more and more destructive varieties. That may be the single greatest threat to our children's future. And the single best way to reduce it is to stop other countries from testing nuclear explosives in the first place. That's exactly what the test ban treaty will do.

The treaty is even more essential today than it was when President Eisenhower proposed it more than 40 years ago, or when President Kennedy pursued it. It's more essential even than when we signed it 3 years ago, because every year the threat grows that nuclear weapons will spread in the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, and Asia, to areas where American troops are deployed, to regions with intense rivalries, to rogue leaders, and perhaps even to terrorists.

The test ban treaty gives us our best chance to control this threat. A hundred and fifty-four countries have already signed it, including Russia, China, Japan, Israel, Iran, and all our European allies. Many nations have already ratified it, including 11 of our NATO Allies, including nuclear powers France and Britain. But for 2 years after I submitted the treaty to the Senate for ratification, there had been absolutely no action.

Now, only a week has been allotted to consider it. That is especially disturbing since the issue has been politicized, apparently with large numbers of Republican Senators committing to their leader to vote against it without even giving the issue serious consideration or hearing the arguments.

Now, a week is not enough time for an issue of this profound importance. That's why I've said I want to see the vote postponed so we can have a thorough debate that addresses all the legitimate concerns.

The stakes are high. If our Senate rejected this treaty outright, it would be the first time the Senate has rejected a treaty since the Treaty of Versailles, which established the League of Nations after World War I. We all know what America's walking away from the world after World War I brought us: in the Depression and the Second World War. If our Senate rejected this treaty, it would be a dangerous U-turn away from our role as the world's leader against the spread of nuclear weapons. It would say to every country in the world, "Well, the United States isn't going to test, but we're giving all of you a green light to test, develop, and deploy nuclear weapons."

Last year rival nuclear explosions by India and Pakistan shook the world. Now both countries have indicated their willingness to sign the test ban treaty. But if our Senate defeats it, can we convince India and Pakistan to forgo more tests? America has been the world's leader

against the proliferation of nuclear weapons for more than four decades. If our Senate defeats it, we won't be anymore. If our Senate defeats it, what will prevent China, Russia, or others from testing and deploying new and ever more destructive weapons?

Some oppose the treaty because they say we still need to test nuclear weapons ourselves to make sure they're reliable. But this week 32 American Nobel Prize-winning physicists and other leading scientists told the Senate that America doesn't need to test more nuclear weapons to keep a safe and reliable nuclear force. After all, we stopped testing back in 1992. And now we're spending about \$4½ billion a year on proven programs, using our advanced technology to maintain a superior nuclear force without testing. Since we don't need nuclear tests to protect our security, this treaty does not require us to do anything we haven't already done.

It's about preventing other countries from nuclear testing; about constraining nuclear weapons development around the world, at a time when we have an overwhelming advantage.

I've told the Senate I would be prepared to withdraw from this treaty if our national security ever required us to resume nuclear tests in the future. And I've urged them to work with me to include safeguards in their ratification act, as they normally do.

Some also say these treaties are too risky because some people might cheat on them. But with no treaty, other countries can test without

cheating and without limit. The treaty will strengthen our ability to determine whether other countries are engaged in suspicious activity. With onsite inspections and a global network of over 300 sensors, including 33 in Russia, 11 in China, 17 in the Middle East, we could catch cheaters and mobilize the world against them. None of that will happen if we don't ratify the treaty.

That's why four former Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the current Chairman have all endorsed the nuclear test ban treaty. So have a broad spectrum of religious leaders and many other leading Americans, both Republicans and Democrats.

So I say to the Senators who haven't endorsed it, heed the best national security advice of our military leaders. Hear our allies who are looking to us to lead. Listen to the scientists. Listen to the American people who have long supported the treaty. And since you're not prepared for whatever reason to seize the priceless chance to fulfill the dream of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy for a safer world, delay the vote on the treaty, debate it thoroughly, and work with us on a bipartisan basis to address legitimate concerns. And then you'll be able to vote yes for our country and our children's future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. from the Lake Michigan Room at the Hilton Towers in Chicago, IL.

Remarks to the United States Hispanic Leadership Institute Conference in Chicago, Illinois

October 9, 1999

Thank you. Good morning. You know, I was a little sleepy before I came in here and saw you. *[Laughter]* And I'm ready to go now. I thank you very much.

Let me begin by saying a simple thank you. Thank you for your friendship; thank you for your support; thank you for bringing all of the children who are here in this audience today to remind us of what our deliberations are all about. Thank you, Juan Andrade, for your long

leadership and your friendship to me, and thank you, Rey Gonzalez.

Thank you for bringing the Juan Andrade Scholarship award winners outside for me to have my picture taken with them. I enjoyed that. They were great. People who are worried about America should take a look at those young people. They would worry a lot less and feel a lot more hope.

I want to express my appreciation to everyone at the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute for

working since 1982 on your noble mission of empowerment through education and voter participation. Your work has paid off. You see it in greater Hispanic participation in elections and in the growing number of Latino elected officials, like Congressman Luis Gutierrez. I think he is here today, and I thank him for his work.

I also want to thank the many dedicated Hispanic members of our administration, including my Deputy Chief of Staff, Maria Echaveste, who is here; our Director of Intergovernmental Affairs, Mickey Ibarra; the EEOC Chair, Ida Castro—I know she has been or will be on your program—along with George Munoz, Aida Alvarez, Henry Solano, Saul Ramirez, and Secretary Bill Richardson, and a number of other young people in our administration who I've seen wandering around here at your meeting, and some of whom have worked on my trip here.

Let me say that there is another mission that you have followed over the years. You have helped to forge unity among the diverse elements of Hispanic America. You remind us that there are actually differences of ethnicity, national origin, and even, occasionally, of opinion among Hispanic-Americans; but that you are united by common values of faith and family, hard work, and a common vision of a better America. That is America at its best, a diverse nation, now the most diverse in our history, and growing increasingly so.

In a global economy, in a global society, our diversity can be a godsend if we make the most of it, if we enjoy it, if we respect it, if we honor it, and if we believe that the common humanity that unites us is more important than all the differences among us. That thought was uppermost in my mind 6½ years ago when I became President.

Vice President Gore and I came into office determined to move away from the divide-and-conquer politics which had dominated our country for the previous 12 years. It had weakened and divided America, and it was wrong. We wanted to find a way to unify our country, to unify our thinking, to unify our action, and to move our country forward, based on values all Americans share: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all our people. With that in mind, we put in place a new economic plan, new crime and welfare policies, new education, environment, and health policies, new policies to empower the poor and elevate citizen service. I think the results speak for themselves.

We have the longest peacetime economic expansion in history; the highest homeownership in history; the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest crime rates in 26 years; the smallest Federal Government in 37 years; the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. Along the way we managed to pass the family and medical leave law, which has given millions and millions of Americans the right to take some time off when a baby is born or a parent is sick without losing their jobs. Ninety percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in our history. Our air and water are cleaner; our food is safer. We have opened the doors of college with the HOPE scholarship and other increases in financial aid. We have opened the doors of health care to 5 million children; 100,000 young Americans have served in AmeriCorps.

Just last week we learned that median household income rose 3½ percent last year, but for Hispanics it rose at an even faster rate of 4.8 percent in one year. Even though this community has serious challenges, including, I might say uppermost, a high school dropout rate that is too high, we now have the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate in history, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in a generation, and a million new Hispanic homeowners since 1994.

In 1993 we doubled the earned-income tax credit for lower income working people. It now lifts over a million Hispanics out of poverty. We raised the minimum wage that directly benefits 1.6 million Hispanic workers, and I think it's time we raised the minimum wage again.

We increased the number of Small Business Administration loans to Hispanic entrepreneurs by 250 percent. We thank Aida Alvarez for her leadership there. And as the Vice President recently announced, the SBA has planned to expand lending to the Hispanic community even more. We revolutionized welfare in a way that allowed the rolls to be cut nearly in half, millions of people to move from dependence to the dignity of work, what with more child care, more transportation aid, guaranteed food and medicine to children; and we have succeeded in reversing the unfair cuts in the welfare reform law, restoring benefits to over 600,000 legal immigrants.

Under the Vice President's leadership, we've reduced the naturalization backlog at INS,

streamlining the process to make it easier for immigrants who play by the rules to become full partners in America. We have more to do, and I ask you to help us with that.

I'd also like to ask your help with one other thing. In the 1997 bipartisan balanced budget bill, we created the \$24 billion Children's Health Insurance Program. It was the largest expansion of children's health coverage since the enactment of Medicaid. It required all the States to file plans to use this money to enroll children without health insurance in the program. This year we finally got all the States enrolled. But the alarming thing is that we estimate there are at least—at least—4 million more children who could be covered by the money that is there waiting for them to provide health insurance who have not signed up yet.

So I ask you, when you go back home, make sure that in your community there is a systematic effort under way to get health care to every Hispanic child who doesn't have it, who is eligible for this program.

Like you, I believe in the concept of empowerment, so I will mention this one last issue. I asked the Vice President to lead our efforts to create over 100 enterprise zones and empowerment communities across our country, to generate billions of dollars in new private sector investment and public investment in these low income areas. You can see them operating from Chicago to Philadelphia to Cleveland to Detroit to south Texas to the Mississippi Delta to Appalachia. And you can see them working. I have asked for an increase in the number of empowerment zones and community development banks, and we're fighting for them now in the budget.

I want to talk to you about what we're going to do next. I thank you for your support. I am pleased by the progress we have made. But in America we must always be determined to change, to improve, to move forward. And we must honestly face the fact that there are still a lot of challenges out there that have not been met.

When I came up on this stage—I'll just give you one example—when I came up on this stage, one of the people back here said, "Mr. President, there are some people in our community with disabilities who are out there. Be sure and say hello to them on the way out." One of the important things I'm trying to get passed in this Congress is a bill sponsored by Senator

Kennedy and Senator Jeffords which would allow people with disabilities to move into the workplace and still keep their Medicaid insurance because they can't get health insurance in the workplace. That's the sort of thing we need to be doing.

I ask you to take just a few minutes and focus on the outstanding challenges—places where we haven't made enough progress and places where we haven't received enough cooperation from this Congress.

Let me begin with judicial nominations. I am proud that we have succeeded in appointing more Hispanics to the Federal bench than any administration in history. And I'm proud that, on the whole, the judges I've appointed are the most diverse group in our history: nearly half are women or minorities. More than half my current judicial nominees are women or minorities, and they are good judges. My appointees have garnered the highest ratings from the American Bar Association of any President in 40 years.

Now, I would also say that unlike previous administrations, there has been article after article after article saying that I have avoided putting ideological extremists on the court, unlike what happened in the previous decade or so. So these people are well-qualified, they're diverse. You would think the United States Senate would be falling all over themselves to confirm them.

Now, let's look at the facts. Earlier this week I said it was a disgrace that the Senate defeated on a straight party-line vote my nomination of Ronnie White, a highly talented African-American jurist from the State of Missouri that was the first African-American to serve on the Missouri State Supreme Court, who was endorsed by one of his State's Republican Senators, supported by Republican Senators on the Judiciary Committee, but when he came to the floor, for political reasons back in Missouri, 100 percent of the Republicans in the majority voted to deny his confirmation and distorted his record in capital punishment appeals cases. It was wrong. That's the kind of thing that's going on up there that ought to stop.

But unfortunately, it's not an isolated event. Listen to this: Richard Paez, the first Mexican-American ever to serve as a judge in the Federal district court in Los Angeles, I nominated more than 3½ years ago for a seat on the ninth circuit court of appeals. For more than 3½ years he

has been waiting for the Senate to confirm his nomination. Is it because he's not qualified? No. The American Bar Association said not that he was qualified, but that he was well qualified. He received the highest rating from the ABA. He has broad, bipartisan support back in California and in the legal community. Yet, he still has not been given a Senate floor vote. Why? Well, they don't want to vote him down because they hope that you will vote with them in the next election, but they don't want to vote for him. So this man has been hanging there for 3½ years.

Now, I don't know about you, but if I took 3½ years to make a decision, you wouldn't think I was a very good President. And most of you couldn't hold your jobs if you took 3½ years to do your assigned tasks. Can you imagine that? How many times has somebody been on you because you took 3½ hours? *[Laughter]*

Another fine candidate for the ninth circuit, a renowned appellate lawyer, Marsha Berzon, has been waiting for more than 18 months to receive a floor vote. That is, they put these people out of committee and they just never bring them up. They just disappear somewhere in the dark recesses of the calendar of the Senate. Now, I think the treatment of Richard Paez and Marsha Berzon is shameful.

We have also been working to get three other exceptional Hispanic nominees confirmed: Judge Julio Fuentes for the third circuit; civil lawyer Enrique Moreno for the fifth circuit; and Judge Ronald Guzman for the northern district of Illinois, here.

I am pleased to announce that Judge Guzman finally received his judiciary committee hearing last week for a vacancy here. But the Senate's treatment of Judge White and its failure to vote on the outstanding Hispanic nominees that are pending creates a real doubt about their ability and their willingness to perform their constitutional duties to advise and consent.

So I urge you to help me get a Senate vote on Judge Paez, Judge Fuentes, Judge Guzman, Marsha Berzon, Enrique Moreno. They should be confirmed. They should be confirmed. But they ought to be voted on one way or the other.

Now, let me say, in spite of the difficulties we have had with this Congress, they're capable of putting partisanship aside and putting the country first. We did it on the third try with the welfare bill in '96. We did it with the Balanced Budget Act in '97. We did it last year

when they voted right before the election for my program to put 100,000 teachers in the schools. And just last week, at the end of this session that just concluded, finally, after 2 years of work, a substantial bipartisan majority in the House of Representatives passed a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

Now, that bill is a long way from becoming law, but a lot of people never thought we could get this far. It gives you the right if you're in an HMO to see a specialist if your doctor says you should; to go to the nearest emergency room if you're in an accident; to keep your doctor through a course of treatment, whether for chemotherapy or a pregnancy; and to hold your health care plan accountable if you're injured.

So we're capable of doing this. I have asked the Congress to do more. I have asked them to keep our prosperity going by paying down our debt and getting America out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835. We can do that.

I have asked them to keep working until the prosperity of this moment reaches every community and every person willing to work for it. I have asked them to double the number of empowerment zones and enterprise communities. And I have asked them to adopt my new markets initiative, which would simply say we want the same incentives for people with money to invest in poor communities in America we give them to invest in poor communities around the world, because people in America deserve the chance to be a part of America's prosperity.

I've asked them to work with me to meet the challenge of the aging of America by saving Social Security and modernizing Medicare and adding a prescription drug benefit. I have asked them, now that we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years, to ask them to join me in making America the safest big nation on Earth by closing this gun show loophole in our background check law and doing more to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals.

I have asked them to help me give all of our children—all of our children—a world-class education, demanding more from our schools, but also investing more. Our agenda is clear: Build or modernize 6,000 schools; there are too many kids in the schools and too many schools are run down or too many kids going to school in trailers. Put 100,000 teachers out there and focus on the early grades to give our children

smaller classes. Have more after-school and summer school programs like Chicago does, so that you can say, "Okay, we're going to have high standards; we're going to end social promotion, but we will not label children a failure when the systems fail them." We want them to have access to the help they need. Close the digital divide; hook up every classroom and every library in this country to the Internet at a rate even the poorest schools can afford. That's what we're doing.

I am proud that we won almost \$500 million in the 1999 budget for the Hispanic education action plan, to make sure Latino children get the tutoring, the after-school, the mentoring programs they need to help them meet higher academic standards, finish, not drop out of high school, and go on to college.

It will take time for these efforts to have an impact, but you can help at the local level. Hold up these young scholarship winners as an example to the young people in your communities. We cannot make America what it ought to be in the 21st century unless we dramatically reduce the 30 percent dropout rate among Hispanic-American children.

As many of your leaders have told me, not withstanding our best intentions in this administration, we have a lot more to do to make sure that the States and the school districts who accept Federal dollars actually spend those dollars in a way that reaches underserved Hispanic students, and we are working on that, as well.

Let me finally make this one point. I have always wanted an administration that looks like America. You've heard me say that a dozen times, I bet. More and more, America will look like you. More and more, there will be more people listening and more people performing like Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez. There will be more books. There will be more movies. There will be a bigger part of our culture.

And what I ask you to do as you rise in dominance and influence, not only in our political life but in our cultural life, is never to forget your roots and never forget the pain of discrimination or being ignored, and make sure that you are always a force for good, for building one America.

If you look around this old world today, the biggest problem I have faced as your President in my responsibilities around the world is dealing with the racial and the ethnic and the religious and the tribal conflicts where people occupy the same land and cannot get along; where they continue to believe what is different about them is more important than their common humanity; where they fear people who are different from them and get to the point where they look down on them and in some places—God forbid—they think it's even okay to kill them.

And if you look all over the world today, we celebrate the modern world—modern music, modern culture, the Internet, the decoding of the human gene—all these things that are going on. A lot of your young people probably want to go to work for these Internet companies, where there are dozens and dozens of young people in their twenties now worth \$50 million. That's chump change to some of them. It's all great, all this modern world, but don't forget the biggest problem is the oldest problem of the human heart—the fear and hatred of people who are different.

So I ask you to remember this. You are growing in numbers; you are growing in influence. You will grow in ways that are good and will make America richer, more alive, more textured, more exciting. And it's all going to be positive. But don't forget what you've been through. And do everything you can to stop it from happening within America and beyond our borders. We are still, for all of our modern advances, too much in the grip of the oldest fears of the human heart. And your community can make all the difference for 21st century America.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. in the Grand Ballroom at McCormick Place. In his remarks, he referred to Juan Andrade, Jr., president and executive director, and Rey Gonzalez, board chairman, U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute; singer Ricky Martin; and actress/singer Jennifer Lopez.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Naval Petroleum Reserves

October 8, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 201(3) of the Naval Petroleum Reserves Production Act of 1976 (10 U.S.C. 7422)(c)(2), I am informing you of my decision to extend the period of production of the naval petroleum reserves for a period of 3 years from April 5, 2000, the expiration date of the currently authorized period of production.

Attached is a copy of the report investigating the necessity of continued production of the reserves as required by 10 U.S.C. 7422(c)(2)(B).

In light of the findings contained in that report, I certify that continued production from the naval petroleum reserves is in the national interest.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 8, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12.

Statement on Signing the Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

October 9, 1999

I have signed into law H.R. 2084, the "Department of Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000." The bill provides \$47.1 billion in funding for the Nation's vital transportation and related safety needs. The record level of infrastructure investment provided by this measure, which I requested, will enhance use and efficiency, provide better connections, and help improve the conditions and performance of the Nation's transportation system.

This bill's funding levels for highway and transit programs will allow us to continue making substantial improvements in travel conditions and transit ridership. Completing the full funding of our request for Coast Guard operating expenses will improve the safety of all Americans by enabling the expansion of the Coast Guard's vital search and rescue, law enforcement, and drug interdiction activities. Provision of our request for Amtrak capital funds will improve passenger service and keep the rail service on the 5-year glide path to operating self-sufficiency that was agreed to in 1997 by the Congress and my Administration.

I am concerned about the funding level provided in the bill for Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) operations and capital programs.

For example, the bill provides \$144 million less than my request for FAA operations. This reduction will slow hiring for safety and security positions and postpone implementation of needed efficiency and management improvements. The bill also constrains funding for the modernization of the air traffic control system, including needed modernization and improvement of the Global Positioning System. These reductions may increase air travel delays and ill-position the FAA to meet the growing challenges of the future. My Administration will work with the Congress to rectify the consequences of these harmful reductions.

Section 321 of this bill again blocks the Department of Transportation from evaluating corporate average fuel economy standards to determine whether the vehicles we drive can be more fuel efficient. Because of similar provisions, the Department has been unable to carry out its responsibility to review this issue for several years, during which time the average fuel economy has dropped to its lowest level since 1980, adding to pollution and to the Nation's dependency on imported oil. I am very disturbed by this limitation on my Administration's ability to address this critical issue. We cannot continue to ignore this. For that reason, we will soon

invite the leaders of the auto industry to the White House to try to find a way to address this issue notwithstanding the limitation in this bill.

I appreciate the increase in funding for motor carrier safety provided in the bill, as it is the goal of the Secretary of Transportation to reduce motor carrier safety fatalities by 50 percent within 10 years. However, I am disappointed that the full funding requested for motor carrier safety grants to States was not provided, as this funding is needed to help achieve this goal. I am also concerned about language that precludes enforcement action, and my Administration will work with the Congress to address this problem.

I am also troubled by the widespread earmarking of vital highway and transit programs without regard to criteria that have been established to ensure that these are sound investments. For example, a number of projects specified for the Job Access and Reverse Commute program are strictly for research, an activity that would not otherwise be eligible for this funding. In general, earmarks tend to be aimed at projects that have not advanced in the local

planning process and, as a result, the funding will likely remain unused for a longer period of time, depriving ready-to-go projects of needed Federal assistance.

I recognize the widespread transportation needs of our country, which is why transportation infrastructure investment during my Administration has increased by 32 percent above the previous Administration's average. However, our transportation investment must be strategic and applied to critical needs, and excessive earmarking can undermine this goal. I ask the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to work with the Department of Transportation to see that essential projects that can quickly utilize Federal funding are given the ability to move forward.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2084, approved October 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-69. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12.

Statement on Signing Family Farmers Bankruptcy Relief Legislation

October 9, 1999

I have signed into law S. 1606, which extends the provisions of chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code until July 1, 2000.

Chapter 12 of the Bankruptcy Code was enacted in 1986 to provide bankruptcy relief to our Nation's family farmers, enabling them to avoid the loss of their farms and their way of life. Chapter 12 has also benefited creditors, who would be unlikely to obtain repayment if these farmers went out of business.

This is the third short-term extension of chapter 12 that I have approved since last fall. As

I stated in March when I approved the most recent extension, I urge the Congress to make chapter 12 permanent.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 9, 1999.

NOTE: S. 1606, approved October 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-70. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 12.

Remarks to the American Academy of Pediatrics October 12, 1999

Thank you very much, President Alpert—[laughter]—President-elect Cook. Seems like just yesterday I had that title for a while. [Laughter] To the executive board and the members of the American Academy of Pediatrics, thank you for welcoming me here. I am told that I'm the first President ever to address your convention, but I know that Hillary spoke to you in 1993, and I was thinking of, given the difference in our respective political prospects for the future, we should have reversed the order. [Laughter] But we just got back this morning from Camp David, where we celebrated our 24th anniversary, and she asked me to give you her regards, so I do so today.

I'm delighted to be here. I think pediatricians have a special place in the hearts of every person who has ever been privileged to either be treated by one or have his or her children treated by one. Just a few weeks ago, the man who was my doctor in Hot Springs, Arkansas, when I was a little boy, Dr. Joe Rosenzweig, came to see me with his wife and his grandchildren. I regularly stay in touch with Dr. Betty Lowe, who once headed this distinguished group and took care of Chelsea when she was a little girl. And so I feel a great personal bond to the work that you do.

And you should feel a great personal bond to the work that I do. I mean, Washington is the only place outside of a pediatrician's office where you can hear so much screaming and crying on a daily basis. [Laughter] And we all—all the politicians here have a lot in common with doctors. We all want to prescribe medicine, and no one wants to take it. [Laughter] But screaming and crying are part of the process of getting better, in medicine and in politics.

Let me echo some of the things that Dr. Alpert has said. I am profoundly grateful for the things that we have done together and the leadership that you have taken to make America better. The gains that our administration has made for children have come with your organization fighting by our side: passing the family and medical leave law, which now over 15 million people have taken advantage of; immunizing more than 90 percent of our children against major childhood diseases for the first time in

our history; passing the Brady bill and other measures to stem gun violence; making aggressive initiatives in the area of school safety, including zero tolerance for guns in schools; and the V-chip, the TV rating systems, and now similar systems for the Internet and for video games that we're working on; increasing child support enforcement and collection; dramatically expanding opportunities for adoption and for moving foster care kids into permanent adoptive homes—I thank you for all those things—the First Lady's prescription for reading program, and many, many other issues I could mention.

One I want to talk about more later today in my remarks is your role in creating the \$24 billion Children's Health Insurance Program, which is designed to address that problem of more than 10 million uninsured children.

Because of all these efforts, America is a better place for children; they're healthier and safer than they were 7 years ago. Infant mortality is down. Drug abuse is down. Teen pregnancy is down. Juvenile crime is down. America, itself, is stronger, more prosperous, more confident.

Today, we enjoy the longest peacetime expansion in our history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. Thank you for your contribution to all of these things.

But like your work with children, our work here is always about tomorrow. So the question we face is, what are we going to do with this phenomenal burst of good fortune that we have had by dint of effort and the grace of God? What are we going to do with it?

I have been arguing very strenuously now for some time that we have turned the country around and we are heading in the right direction. And now we have, as a people, the chance—literally, the chance of a lifetime, that a nation gets maybe once every 30, 40, 50 years, to deal with its long-term challenges, to seize its long-term opportunities, to forge the future that our children and our grandchildren will have. And that is what I earnestly hope we will do. I believe that we have to use this moment to meet the great challenges we know,

without a doubt, 21st century America will face. What are they?

First, the aging of America. The number of people over 65 will double by the year 2030. I hope I'll still be one of them. There will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security.

Second, the health and education of the largest and most diverse group of children in our Nation's history.

Third, sustaining our economic prosperity over the long term and expanding its reach to people and places that have not been touched by this marvelous economic recovery.

Fourth, making America the safest big country in the world. Yes, the crime rate's at a 26-year-low, but no one believes it's low enough. The accidental death rates by guns of children is 9 times higher than that of the next 25 big industrial countries combined. So, yes, we have a 26-year-low in crime rates, but if we're the strongest economy in the world and we have a free society, why don't we say we're going to not stop until America is the safest big country in the entire world?

The fifth big challenge we have, which will bear directly on your efforts and those that succeed you in the years ahead is dealing with the environmental challenges we face, especially the challenge of climate change and global warming. I feel very, very strongly about that. One of the problems I have in dealing with it is that the applause is still scattered when I talk about it. [*Laughter*]

And sixth, building one America out of all the diverse threads of our citizenship and doing it in a world that we help to make ever more interdependent, peaceful, and prosperous.

The answers to those questions, whether we will do that, will be affected by the decisions we make here in Washington in the coming days and weeks. Ever since I gave my State of the Union Address, I have been working with Congress, or trying to, on a budget that will move us ahead in meeting all these challenges, that will leave this country in good shape for the new millennium, while maintaining our budget discipline that has been responsible for so much of the good things that have happened in this country in the last 6½ years.

To meet the challenge of the aging of America, I have proposed to extend the life of Social Security to 2050, to get it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation, to lift the earnings

limit, to give more help to older women who are disproportionately poor. I have also proposed to extend the life of Medicare to 2027—that's the longest existence of the Medicare Trust Fund in a long time—to add a voluntary prescription drug benefit, to allow uninsured Americans between the ages of 55 and 65 to buy into the Medicare program, and to provide a long-term care tax credit for families that are dealing with that challenge.

To meet the challenge of our children's education, I have proposed to continue with our program of putting 100,000 more teachers in the classroom, to lower class sizes in the early grades, to build or modernize 6,000 schools, to complete our efforts to hook all of our classrooms up to the Internet by the year 2000, and to raise standards and accountability.

I know Secretary Riley spoke here earlier, and perhaps he dealt with this at greater length, but we propose as we give out our Federal money and reauthorize that law every 5 years—this is the year we do it—to say every State must have high standards, every State must have accountability, accountability for teachers, for schools, for students. We shouldn't have social promotion, but we shouldn't blame kids for the failure of the system. So we proposed to triple the number of our children served by after-school and summer school programs. We proposed to give funds to schools that are failing, to turn them around or require them to be shut down. We proposed to expand the number of charter schools within our public school system so we'll get up to 3,000 by the end of next year.

These are very important things that I hope all Americans will support. Unless we can educate all our children—and increasingly they come from families whose first language is not English—we will not have the country we want in 30 years.

To meet the challenge of expanding and continuing our economic prosperity and bringing it to people who haven't felt it yet, I have asked the Congress to adopt a new markets initiative to give Americans with funds to invest the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we now give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa.

I have proposed to increase the immensely successful community empowerment program that the Vice President has run for us over the

last 6½ years, to increase enterprise zones, empowerment communities, to increase our community development banks that make loans to people and places where capital is not available. And to keep this expansion going perhaps for another generation, through ups and downs in the global economy, I have asked the Congress to do this within a framework that would enable us to continue to pay down our national debt which we quadrupled in the 12 years before I took office, so that in 15 years, America could be debt-free for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was the President of the United States.

Let me say to all of you—this is a pretty progressive group, and you always want Government to invest in money. Why should progressives want America to be out of debt? I want to make this argument just very briefly. All of us who are over 40, at least, who went to college and took an economics class were told that every country needs a certain amount of debt, that it's healthy. And that was true when every country controlled its own economic destiny independent of every other. And it was true when people were borrowing money to invest in things like roads and bridges and parks and universities and long-term capital investments.

But over the last 20 years, governments, the United States being the worst offender, got to borrowing money just to pay the bills every week. And in a global economy where money can move across national borders instantaneously, if a government is debt-free, it means the people in that country, whether they're businesses trying to start or expand or families trying to pay for homes, cars, college loans and credit card bills, can all borrow money more cheaply. It means that if rich countries like America get out of debt and other countries get in trouble, like our Asian partners did over the last couple of years, they can get money to get help more quickly, rebound more quickly, and buy our products more rapidly.

So I feel very strongly that this is an important idea that I hope the American people will insist upon. And I hope that they will say to the Congress, "Don't let tax cuts or spending increases get in the way of getting us out of debt. If you want to spend the money, raise it. Do whatever's necessary, but get America out of debt over the next 15 years so that we can continue to grow for the next 50 years. It's very, very important to our future."

Now, here's what's going on here. I know you see all this food fight in Washington and you wonder, what is really going on? Here's what's going on. We passed a balanced budget bill in 1997. It had very tough spending caps. The spending caps were too tough. If you work in a teaching hospital, or at other hospitals that have been handicapped by the Medicare cut-backs, you know they're too tough. I'll say more about that in a minute. But what we said was, "We're going to balance this budget, and then we're going to keep it balanced by staying within these caps, which means we have to spend money according to a certain plan over the next 5 years; or, if we want to spend more money, we have to raise more money, either by cutting some other spending, closing some tax loopholes, raising some fees, or raising some tax." So that's why we're having this fight.

Then it turns out we have a bigger surplus than we thought we would, thanks to the prosperity and the hard work and the productivity of the American people. Then the Congress said, "We want to separate the Social Security fund from the other funds." That's something they never could have done before, because the only surplus we've had for the last 17 years was in Social Security. All the others—the deficit—every year, you saw those deficit numbers, it was always a lot bigger than that. It's just we were paying more in Social Security taxes than we were paying out in Social Security payments. And the difference, under the Government's unified accounting system, lowered the deficit.

So they said, "Let's separate them. Now that we have a non-Social Security surplus, let's separate them. And we really want to do this." So I said, "Fine by me; I'll do that," because under my plan, we would keep the Social Security taxes separate, then use the interest savings we get on paying down the debt and put it back into Social Security and run Social Security out to 2050, beyond the life of almost all but the most fortunate baby boomers, and get us through this big population problem we've got.

But when—the Congress looked at the books, and the majority party, the Republican Party—which normally says they're more conservative than we are on spending; it depends on what it is—found out that they couldn't spend all the money they wanted to spend with just the non-Social Security surplus. And they didn't want to raise the cigarette tax or raise fees on

people that have to help us clean up the toxic waste dumps, or close any of the corporate loopholes that I tried to close. And so that's why you see all these problems up here.

They're having a very difficult time, even with this big surplus, because they promised they wouldn't touch the Social Security part of the surplus, crafting a budget that both protects that surplus, invests in important things like education and health care, does what both parties wanted to do in transportation, meets their defense targets, and stays within the spending cap. So that's why you hear about all these gimmicks and why they wanted to start giving poor people their tax returns under the earned-income tax credit every month, instead of in a lump sum, like the rest of us get ours, and why they wanted to put a 13th month into the year and all that.

All that sort of handwringing—it must strike you as crazy, since you know we've got a surplus. The reason is, they committed—both parties did, back at the first of the year—to take the Social Security surplus and put it over here and only spend the non-Social Security surplus. It never existed before, the non-Social Security surplus. And it's going to get bigger and bigger. And this problem won't be here next year or the year after next, but right now it's real small; and what they want to spend is real big, and they don't want to raise the money to raise the difference. That's what's going on.

How many of you knew that before I explained it? [*Laughter*] About 10 hands. That's what's going on. If we were under the old accounting system, this would be like falling off a log. It would have no, sort of, larger economic impact in the short run, but it could be a very bad habit to get into over the long run.

So if we can stop now, we ought to stop now. But in order to stop now, with no gimmicks, we have to work together. If we don't, you wind up with the problems that the House of Representatives is confronting now. Just let me give you some examples.

Already in health care, they want to cut \$85 million from my request for childhood immunizations. That's 170,000 kids who won't get the vaccines they need to ward off major childhood diseases like measles and mumps. There's no money in this proposal, which was strongly pushed by the First Lady, to support graduate medical education at children's hospitals, where many of our pediatricians receive their training

and over half of the specialists in many areas receive their training.

It doesn't offer even a modest downpayment on my \$1 billion effort to support our Nation's health care safety net of public hospitals and clinics, which—you remember back in '94, when we got whacked around on health care, and everybody accused Hillary and me of wanting to have the Government take over the health care system, which was not true. They said that if our proposal passed, it wouldn't work. We said, if something didn't pass, the number of uninsured would go up. And sure enough, we were right, and you see the numbers, now.

Well, one of the things we can do in the short run is to dramatically beef up the public health care network. In my home State, for example, over 85 percent of all the immunizations are now done in the public health clinic, the county health clinic. Even upper-class people get their kids immunized in the health clinic. Solves all those liability problems and other things, and it's just something we did when I was there. But we need to do this. But it can't be done with this bind they're in.

And let me tell you this: If something is not done, they're going to go back and cut everything 3 percent across the board. If they exempt defense, they'll have to cut everything 6 percent across the board. And that is a huge amount of money.

So I'd like to respectfully suggest that Congress go back and look at the budget I sent them 7 months ago. It makes all the investments that they want to make and the investments that I believe in. It stays within the spending caps by providing offsets, including a 55-cents-a-pack excise tax on tobacco.

Now, I believe—I think it's good fiscal policy, and you know it's good health policy. You know more than 400,000 Americans die every year from smoking-related diseases; almost 90 percent of our people start smoking as teenagers, and one of the most effective ways to get the attention of teenagers is to raise the price.

So Congress now faces this, for them, Biblical choice: cut investments in areas like health care and education and the environment; spend from the Social Security Trust Fund at least one more year; or maintain our fiscal discipline and save children's lives by raising the price of smoking, closing some corporate loopholes, and doing a few other things to raise some money here.

I know what I believe the right choice is. I think most Americans would agree with me. I will work with Congress to put politics aside and do the right thing. Congress is clearly capable of working with me. We did it in 1996, with the welfare reform bill, which has cut welfare rolls almost in half and, after I vetoed two earlier attempts, provided billions of dollars in child care and kept the guarantee of Medicaid and food stamps for poor families and work. We did it in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act. And last week, the House of Representatives did it again when they finally passed a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights, thanks to you and others.

We are one step closer to seeing all Americans, including those in HMO's, have the right to the nearest emergency room care, the right to a specialist, the right to know you can't be forced to switch doctors in the middle of a treatment, the right to hold a health care plan accountable if it causes grave harm. But let me remind you, this is not the law of the land yet. This is a bill which has passed the House of Representatives. A much, much weaker bill passed the Senate.

So if you look at the vote in the House—thanks to the solid support of the Members of our party and some very, very brave people in the Republican Party who stuck their necks out, took a lot of heat from their leadership and from the health insurance companies, led by Congressman Norwood and others, we got a big victory in the House. It wasn't close. It was a big victory, won it by over 100 votes.

Now, the Senate should listen to that and see the will of the American people and give us a bill that is not loaded down with special-interest poison pills. That was their original strategy. We'll pass this bill really strong, but we'll have so much other stuff on it that the President will not be able to sign it, or if he does, he'll be sick for 4 days. *[Laughter]*

And so I say to you, thank you for your efforts. I want to ask you to do two things. Number one, write every one of those Members of Congress that voted right on that bill and recognize that, especially for the Republicans, it was a tough vote, and give them a pat on the back. And number two, don't stop until it comes to my desk in the right form. We are a long way from home, but we have a good chance to win.

Now, I want to say there are some other opportunities for victory. Congress can put

progress ahead of partisanship by making it possible for the millions of Americans with disabilities who want to work but are afraid to because they would lose their Medicare or Medicaid, to do that, to go to work and keep their Government health care coverage.

The Senate has already passed, by a 99 to zero vote, the work incentives improvement act, to ensure that Americans with disabilities can gain the dignity of a job without fear of losing their health insurance. A bipartisan majority in the House has co-sponsored the same measure. I will sign it.

There is a modest cost associated with this bill for the Government. I have offered them offsets for that. And so far, they don't want to take that, either. But it would be a pity, when virtually everybody in the Congress knows this is the right thing to do, to nickel-and-dime this to death. We're talking about thousands and thousands and thousands of people's lives.

I don't know if you know anybody like this. I've had the privilege of meeting a substantial number of people who are disabled, who got to go into the work force because somebody made provisions for health insurance or because they were in an income category where they could keep their Medicaid for a while. And I've met even more who would go in a New York minute if they knew they could keep their Medicaid or their Medicare. And I've met a lot of employers who would hire them but who know they cannot afford their health insurance. So I implore you, do what you can to help us pass this. This is a bill that everybody's for, and the process is still fooling around with it because of a modest cost that can easily be offset. That is very important.

The third thing I ask for your help on doesn't require any more legislation, and it's consistent with a commitment you have already made, and that is to get children enrolled in the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Since the CHIP program went into effect, it has provided health coverage to over a million children whose families can't afford health coverage and who make too much to be eligible for Medicaid. I am grateful to you for helping us to create it and for helping us put it into effect. But as your president said, somewhere between 10 and 11 million children in America still lack health insurance. That's way over 15 percent. The majority could be covered under either CHIP or Medicaid.

We've still got 2 or 3 million kids out there who are Medicaid-eligible who aren't covered. If we can get word out to their families and sign them up—we know that children who lack health insurance have higher rates of treatable conditions like asthma, ear infections, vision problems. We know when a child can't see a blackboard clearly or hear the teacher precisely or pay attention to anything other than his or her own pained breathing, the kids aren't going to be able to learn.

CHIP and Medicaid can change all that for millions of people. And when we passed the CHIP program, we thought it would insure 5 million people, if we could also get the Medicaid insurance rates up, and solve at least half the problem. Now, 2 years later, we've only insured a million. But it was only this year, to be fair, that all 50 States had their programs in place. So we're now at the takeoff point, and we will be judged—you and I and all of us—on how well we do from here on out.

This year—or last year, I established an inner-agency task force to come up with some innovative strategies to get the word out to parents about CHIP and Medicaid. Today I'm releasing their first annual report, which details a lot of promising outreach efforts. Just for example, the Department of Agriculture, which administers the school lunch program, has added information on CHIP and Medicaid to applications it sends to every school district in America. Millions of parents who fill out their school lunch forms now will have a chance to learn about these health programs.

Other promising innovations are also in the works. Thousands of AmeriCorps and Vista volunteers who deal directly with low-income families every day will soon have information in their training manuals on how to enroll children in CHIP and Medicaid. Tens of millions of elderly Americans who may have grandchildren eligible for CHIP and Medicaid will soon be able to read about these programs in the annual letters they receive from Social Security and Medicare.

But as the Vice President has been saying for months and months and months, if we're going to bring health care coverage to more children, we have to start with where the children are, in the schools. That's why today I am issuing an Executive order to the Secretaries of Education, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services, directing them to find the most innovative school-based strategies now

being pursued at the State and local level, to report back to me in 6 months on how we can replicate them in every community in the country.

I'm also sending a letter to States, clarifying that they can use the CHIP fund for school-based outreach efforts. And we're going to dedicate over \$9 million in new research grants to find out what outreach methods in schools or elsewhere work best. I believe these things will go a long way toward bringing health coverage to our children. But we need help from the churches, from the YMCA's and the YWCA's, from all the community organizations. And we need help from all the physicians and the public health units throughout our country.

It is simply inexcusable that we're sitting here, and have been, with the money for 2 years to provide health insurance to 5 million kids, and 80 percent of them are still uninsured. And it is conceivable that we could do better than 5 million children with the money appropriated if we had effective enough outreach.

And to those of you who see a lot of people whose parents' first language is not English, I know we have trouble there. But I would implore you, do what you can, when you go back home, with your local groups and your local medical societies and your local health clinics and your local schools, to get them to do this. There is no stigma associated with this. Most people will walk through a wall to get their kids decent health care coverage if they know it is available.

This is simply a question—the average person who's not covered by this doesn't know CHIP from block. [*Laughter*] Or Medicaid from Lego, or whatever. You know, we've got to deal with people that—you know, most normal people worry about their lives, not Government acronyms. And we're dealing with—a lot of these folks don't know anything about this. And you can help to make sure, in your community, that the schools and the community groups and the religious organizations and everybody, is doing their outreach on this. It is profoundly important.

Now, let me just say this last point. If every child eligible for CHIP and Medicaid were enrolled, there would still be millions who lacked coverage. You know it, and I do, too. You know that I and Hillary and the Vice President, we have always believed it is wrong for any American, much less any child, not to have affordable,

quality health care. I know that the American Academy of Pediatrics believes that. I will keep working to change that as long as I am President. I will keep looking for ways to end this unconscionable and growing gap of uninsured care.

Our hospitals will continue to have problems—and again, I would say, this has nothing to do—and you can help us with this—this has nothing to do with the Government taking over health care. The Government's not taking over health care in the CHIP program or Medicare or Medicaid.

If we'd let these people—next to the kids, the fastest growing group of uninsured people are 55 to 65 years old, who retire and can't get employment-based health insurance anymore. We ought to let them buy into Medicare. You know, I get into all these fights with the insurance companies, and I hate to fight with them all the time. But the truth is America has a system of financing health care that dictates high levels of uninsured, which dictates enormous burdens on the health care system of the country and burdens on everybody that buys insurance.

And they can deny otherwise as long as they want to, but all you have to do is look around at other examples, and you know it's simply not true. There is no other conceivable explanation. It is the system by which we finance our care which has got us in the fix we're in now.

And so we are trying to do this, and we are trying to do the bill for the disabled, and there

are lots of other things we can do. But if you look at everything we do that's going to make a difference, it's because we have changed the financing. And those are facts, and you can get them out there.

For the last 6½ years, I have had the great honor to serve as President of this country. I have about a year and 4 months left, maybe a little more. I've worked hard to turn this country around and then to keep the American people always thinking about tomorrow, about the challenges and the opportunities of the new century and the new millennium.

Well, now we have turned America around. And the great test is whether we are going to take this moment and shape our tomorrows. That's what you do every day, every time you take some preventive measure, every time you do something to help a child. There may be some screaming and crying, but you know they're all going to be better off tomorrow.

I just would like to see all of us here in Washington take the same attitude toward the future of all our children's tomorrows that you take toward each child's tomorrow. If we do, America's best days lie in the new millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Joel J. Alpert, president, and Dr. Donald E. Cook, president-elect, American Academy of Pediatrics.

Memorandum on School-Based Health Insurance Outreach for Children

October 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Agriculture

Subject: School-Based Health Insurance Outreach for Children

The lack of health insurance for millions of Americans remains one of the great challenges facing this Nation. To help address this issue, I worked with the bipartisan Congress to create the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the single largest expansion of chil-

dren's health insurance in 30 years. The 1997 Balanced Budget Act allocated \$24 billion over 5 years to extend health care coverage to millions of uninsured children in working families. CHIP builds on the Medicaid program, which currently provides health coverage to most poor children, and together, these programs could cover most uninsured children.

Yet too few uninsured children eligible for CHIP or Medicaid participate. Barriers to enrollment include parents' lack of knowledge

about the options; cultural and language barriers; complicated application and enrollment processes; and the “stigma” associated with so-called welfare programs. The Vice President and I have made removing these barriers to enrollment a high priority. In 1997, I launched a major public-private outreach campaign called “Insure Kids Now.” Foundations, corporations, health care providers, consumer advocates, and others have participated through activities such as setting up enrollment booths at supermarkets and promoting the national toll-free number (1-877-KIDS NOW) on grocery bags, TV and radio ads, and posters. In addition, we created a Federal Interagency Task Force on Children’s Health Insurance Outreach in February 1998, which has implemented over 150 new activities to educate and train Federal workers and families nationwide about the availability of Medicaid and CHIP.

Today I am directing the Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, and Agriculture to focus children’s health insurance outreach on a place where we know we can find uninsured children: schools. State experience indicates that school systems are an ideal place to identify and enroll uninsured children in Medicaid or CHIP because schools are accepted by parents as a conduit for important information. In addition, health insurance promotes access to needed health care, which experts confirm contributes to academic success. We have learned that children without health insurance suffer more from asthma, ear infections, and vision problems—treatable conditions that frequently interfere with classroom participation; and children without health insurance are absent more frequently than their peers. As we strive for high standards in every school and classroom, it is essential that we help families ensure their children come to school ready to learn.

Therefore, I hereby direct you, in consultation with State and local agencies, to report to me a set of recommendations on specific actions to encourage and integrate health insurance enrollment and outreach for children into schools, consistent with the mission of your agency. This report shall include:

- Specific short- and long-term recommendations on administrative and legislative actions for making school-based outreach to enroll children in Medicaid and CHIP an

integral part of school business. These may include:

- Technical assistance and other support to school districts and schools engaged in outreach;
- Suggestions on how to effectively use the school lunch program application process to promote enrollment in health insurance programs;
- Lists of practices that have proven effective, such as integration of outreach and enrollment activities into school events such as registration, sports physicals, and vision and hearing testing; and
- Model State CHIP and Medicaid policies and plans for school-based outreach.
- A summary of key findings from the national and regional conferences scheduled for this fall on the topic of school-based outreach. These conferences will bring together national and State education officials, Medicaid and CHIP directors, public policy experts, and community-based organizations to examine the use of schools to facilitate the enrollment of children in Medicaid and CHIP; evaluation tools to monitor the effectiveness of current school-based outreach efforts; and best practices in school-based outreach and enrollment for children’s health insurance.
- Recommendations on methods to evaluate CHIP and Medicaid outreach strategies in schools. Performance measures should be an integral part of school-based CHIP and Medicaid outreach strategies, as they can inform policy-makers on the effectiveness of these strategies, as well as help to identify areas of improvement.

I direct the Department of Health and Human Services to serve as the coordinating agency to assist in the development and integration of recommendations and to report back to me in 6 months. The recommended actions should be consistent with Medicaid and CHIP rules for coverage of appropriate health- and outreach-related activities. They should be developed in collaboration with State and local officials as well as community leaders and should include recommendations on fostering effective partnerships between education and health agencies. These recommended activities should be complementary, aggressive, and consistent

with my Administration's overall initiative to cover uninsured children.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on World Population Growth *October 12, 1999*

Today we mark the day that the world's population reportedly reaches 6 billion. It took just 12 years—from 1987 to today—for the world's population to expand from 5 to 6 billion people. We should be thankful that people today live longer and healthier lives than ever before. But over the next few years, this rapid growth and its effect on our environment and quality of life will pose difficult challenges for all of us.

In 1994 the United States helped forge a consensus at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Egypt, on a comprehensive approach to stabilizing world population growth. We agreed to work with other nations to help prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS, to improve the status of women, to enhance educational opportunities for children, and to support voluntary family planning and related health care.

My administration has made important strides in meeting these objectives. At home, we have increased funding for family planning and reproductive health services, which have helped reduce teen pregnancies and abortions. Overseas, we have invested more than \$5.5 billion in over 100 countries on health and population initiatives and on women's empowerment.

We have also worked to protect our environment and ensure that it can sustain the development needs of a growing population. We are

learning that technology can help developing countries grow while bypassing some of the environmental costs of the industrial age. We must promote that technology so that we can address both climate change and the challenge of providing clean energy for all the world's citizens.

Finally, we have recognized that the best way to stabilize population growth is to fight poverty and to build healthy, growing economies in the developing world. The debt relief package the world's wealthiest nations agreed to in Cologne this year will help us do that. Last month, I went even further, announcing that the United States will forgive 100 percent of the debt owed us by the world's least developed countries if they will use the savings to address basic human needs. And I committed the United States to a new effort to accelerate the development of vaccines for diseases that devastate the developing world.

As we mark this day, the central question we face is not simply how many people will live on this planet, but how they will live. We must refuse to accept a future in which one part of humanity lives on the cutting edge of a new economy, while another part lives on the edge of survival. And we must work for the day when all people have the education, health, security, safe environment, and freedom to lift their lives.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act *October 12, 1999*

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 214 of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Expansion Act of 1990 (19 U.S.C. 2702(f)), I transmit herewith

to the Congress the Third Report on the Operation of the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 12, 1999.

Remarks at the Eighth Millennium Evening at the White House October 12, 1999

[The First Lady began the program making brief remarks and introducing the evening's featured speakers: Dr. Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, who discussed the evolution of Internet technology; and Dr. Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research, who discussed advances in genetic research and biotechnology.]

The President. We have had many wonderful nights here, but I don't think I've ever been more stimulated by two talks in my life. Thank you, Dr. Cerf. Thank you, Dr. Lander.

I would like to also say a word of appreciation to Hillary. I think that, as our time here draws toward its close, it's clear that she has been I believe the most active and innovative First Lady since Eleanor Roosevelt, for perhaps these Millennium Evenings will last longer in the imagination of America than virtually anything any of us have done, and I thank her for that.

Also, being term-limited does have its compensations. Normally, at this time of year, in this kind of year, I'd be doing something else tonight. *[Laughter]* Yesterday I called the Vice President to rub it in and describe what I would be doing tonight. *[Laughter]* And I was having a very good time turning the screw about how fascinating this was going to be. And finally, he said, "That's okay, you need to be there more than I do." *[Laughter]* The jokes about my technological and scientific limitations are legion around the White House. *[Laughter]*

So I have been thinking of all these questions. Do I really want a mouse smart enough to go to Princeton? *[Laughter]* Won't it be sad to have an Internet connection with Mars if there are no Martians to write to or E-mail us? *[Laughter]* I am glad to know that the total connection of the Internet to the nervous system of human beings is a little ways out there in the future. I had been under the impression that that has already occurred among all children under 15 in America. *[Laughter]*

This is an amazing set of topics. Let me say just one other thing. I really loved seeing—on a slightly sad note, I loved seeing that wonderful, famous picture of Wilt Chamberlain and Willie Shoemaker. Some of you may know the great Wilt Chamberlain passed away today, one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century. So I hope you will have him and his family and friends in your thoughts and prayers tonight.

This is a fitting thing for us to do in the White House, because innovations in communication and technology are a very important part of the history of this old place. In 1858 the first transatlantic telegraph transmission was received here in a message that Queen Victoria sent to President Buchanan. Later, the first telephone in Washington, DC, was located in a room upstairs, and we now have a replica of that telephone in the same room upstairs. The first mobile phone call to the Moon was made here by President Nixon 30 years ago. Even these Millennium Evenings have made their own history. This is where we held the first-ever cybercast at the White House.

So I want to thank the speakers for building on all of this and telling us what we can look forward to in the future and for reminding us that as we unlock age-old mysteries and make what we can think more possible to do, there are ways to do it that bring us together as a society.

So I would like to begin the questioning, if I might, with a question to Dr. Lander, because it bears on a great deal of the work we've done.

You talked about how we were 99.9 percent the same, but how if you looked at how many permutations there were in the one-tenth of a percent left, we could still be very different. I think it's very interesting—and I talk about this all the time—that as we're on the edge of this new millennium and we have these evenings and we imagine this future that you have sketched out to us, this is what we all like to think about, how exciting, how wonderful, how

unbelievable it can be. The biggest threat to that future is how many of us on this globe are still in the grip of the most primitive of human limitations, the fear of the other, people who are different from us. And we see all over the world, from Bosnia and Kosovo to the Middle East to Northern Ireland to the tribal wars in Africa, how easily the focus on our differences—that one-tenth of one percent—as what matters can lead first to fear and then to hatred and then ultimately to dehumanizing people who are different.

And it's very interesting, as someone who grew up in the segregated South and lived with the whole terrible and yet beautiful struggle of the civil rights years, to think that there were in my hometown people who were dehumanizing other people because of the one-tenth of one percent difference between them is quite an awesome thing to contemplate.

So I would like to ask you, if you could say in ways that would make sense to us, explain to us a little bit what is it that makes us the same and what is it that makes us different? And how could we communicate this scientific knowledge to people in a way that would diminish the force of racism and other bigotry in the world in which we live?

[Dr. Lander responded to the President's question. Then, White House Millennium Council Director Ellen Lovell led the question-and-answer portion of the evening. One of the questions concerned the legal status of privacy rights.]

The President. Let me just say this. We've been working on this, and it's very important to me because I'm a fanatic about this issue. I want unlimited scientific discovery, and I want unlimited applications. But I think we don't want people to lose their sense of self and the fragility of their personhood, here, in some sort of assault. So we've been working on this.

What you said sounds great, but it's not as easy to do as it sounds. So I think it might be helpful, if I could just ask Secretary Shalala, who is in charge of one piece of this, which is our efforts to protect the privacy of medical records, just to talk a little bit in practical terms about what we're doing to respond to this young man's question.

Donna, would you? There's a mike.

[Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala noted the relative lack of Federal

protection of an individual's health information, citing that video rental records were more secure. She also noted that a person's State of residence could make a difference.]

The President. But let's deal with two hard questions here, real quick. I think this is important. Question number one, pretty soon if the genome project is brought to fruition, according to what Dr. Varmus told me, when I spent a day out there, it will become normal in some point in the not-too-distant future for young mothers to go home with their babies from the hospital with a map of their genetic future. You may not want to know about Alzheimer's, but you could know about things that even if you can't cure you could delay, defer, or minimize. So you get that.

Now, the mother and the father are employed by someone, and they provide family health insurance. Since private insurance is based on a reasonable approximation of risk—I don't agree with the way we finance health care in this country. You all know that, but that's a fight I didn't win here in the last 7 years. If it's based on an assessment of risk, what should the insurance company have a right to know? And if the insurance company doesn't have a right to know, haven't you undermined the whole basis of privately funded insurance based on risk—question one. Question two for you.

Dr. Cerf. We don't get to answer that one?

The President. Yes, I want you to answer that, but I want you guys to talk. Question two, this is the problem we face in a much more grave sense in dealing with the prospect of cyberterrorism or something. It's one thing for us to write laws that protect privacy of records. But you just got through—in answering Omar's question, you were talking about how, well, but all these kids are always figuring out, well—among the things they're figuring out is how to break into various systems all the time. So even if we had perfect laws, how are we going to protect privacy when we're dealing with all of these creative geniuses out there working through the net? Respond to those two questions.

[Dr. Lander replied that insurance companies' right to know depended on whether insurance was about matching rates to risks or about sharing risks not chosen. The question-and-answer portion of the evening continued and included a question from the Internet by Danella Bryce

in Sydney, Australia, about technology's effect on alleviation of growing numbers of the disadvantaged in world population.]

The President. Can I give—you said that we got 6 billion people last night. Half of them live on \$2 a day; 1.3 billion live on \$1 a day or less. Those are the numbers behind what Ms. Bryce is asking.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. If I might just interject. I don't know the answer to this, but I've spent a lot of time thinking about it. This woman, Ms. Bryce, she works, and she's talked about she works in sustainable development. A big problem in poor countries, they totally destroy the environment to try to develop, and then they don't have anything upon which to develop. The biggest problem in our hemisphere is Haiti. If you fly over the island of Hispaniola, you know when you're going from the Dominican Republic to Haiti, because in all the years when it was governed by dictatorships, they just tore down all the trees and—if any of you know anything about it, know this.

The real question is—we used to have certain assumptions about development in a poor country: that if you wanted ever to build a middle class life for a substantial number of the people, yet have X amount of electric generating capacity, you had to have Y number of roads, and you had to have Z number of manufacturing companies, no matter what they did to greenhouse gases, and that eventually you get around to building schools and universal education, and then 30 or 40 years later you start letting the girls go to school with the boys and there is this sort of thing that would happen.

I do believe that the question, the real question is if you're running a country like this, should you put this sort of infrastructure development first? That is assuming you've got a base level of electricity necessary to run a system. Should you do this first because this gives you the possibility to skip a whole generation of development that would otherwise take 30 years in the economy and in education? And I think the answer to that, at least, is, maybe—at least, is, maybe. That I think is really the question that this woman is asking.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. If I could just give you one example, because I think this may have also

relevance for remote, physically remote areas in America, Appalachia, the Native American reservations, things of this kind.

We were talking before we came in here tonight. I was out in northern California the weekend before last. And I was talking with a lot of people who work for eBay, and they were telling me that there are now, in addition to the employees of eBay, over 20,000 people who make a living on eBay, buying and selling and trading, and that a fair number of these people were actually people who once were on welfare, who moved from welfare to work. That is, from—and presumably a lot of them work, didn't have a lot of formal education. They had made this jump, and a market had been created for them, where they lived, that otherwise would be alien to their own experience. They wouldn't have been able to go down to the bank and get a loan and on and on and on.

Now, last year we made and this year we will make, through our aid programs in foreign countries over 2 million microenterprise loans to poor people, to help them start their businesses in Africa and Latin America and Asia. If you could somehow marry the microenterprise concept to setting the infrastructure of the Internet out there, I do think it's quite possible that you could skip a generation in economic development in a way that would reinforce rather than undermine the environment.

[The question-and-answer portion of the evening continued.]

The President. Did you say you expected the penetration of the Internet to equal that of the telephone by 2006?

[Dr. Cerf confirmed the Internet would equal the size of the telephone system by 2006 and, thereafter, exceed both telephone and television.]

The President. I want to get to the genes, but I think we should answer that question, too. The whole question of whether we're going to develop a digital divide in our country, I think, is a very, very serious one. Our administration, especially the Vice President, when we rewrote the Telecommunications Act, we fought very hard not only to get people to participate in NetDay to hookup every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000—I think we'll get there by the end of the year; functionally, we'll be just about there—but also, to get the Federal Communications Commission to

adopt an E-rate which would subsidize the cost to poor schools and poorer hospitals and poor areas and isolated rural areas, so that everyone could have access in the schools.

Now, but the divide won't be bridged until the parents of those children have that in their home. So I think we ought to have as a goal at least to make access to computer technology and to the Internet as universal as telephone access is. And I think until we achieve that, there will be a digital divide, so we ought to try to hasten that day and promote whatever policies we can afford or we can achieve to hasten that day, because until we do, there will be a digital divide.

Dr. Cerf. I agree with that. In fact, it's a goal. A personal goal of mine is to see, literally, Internet everywhere.

The President. Now, what about the gene? That goes to patenting and all that, doesn't it?

[The discussion and question-and-answer portion of the evening continued. The First Lady then introduced the outgoing Director of the National Institutes of Health, Dr. Harold E. Varmus.]

Dr. Varmus. I assume by "outgoing" you mean I'm leaving as opposed to my social behavior. *[Laughter]*

The President. You mean, as if an outgoing head of NIH were an oxymoron? *[Laughter]*

[Dr. Varmus made brief remarks about the role of genetics in cancer research at NIH.]

The President. Before we go on, I just want to say—we sort of glided over this—this man has done a magnificent job at the NIH for a long time, and I am very grateful. We thank you for it, for your service to your country.

[The question-and-answer portion of the evening continued.]

Ms. Lovell. I think you just summed up the whole evening. And I'm going to give the President the last minute.

The President. Well, you know, that great humorist Ogden Nash once said, "Progress may be all right, but it's really gone on too long." *[Laughter]* And I was thinking that if he were here tonight, he would have to revise his opinion.

This has been an astonishing evening for me and for Hillary and I hope for all the American people and the people throughout the world who have been a part of this.

I want to thank you both. I want to just leave you with one thought: There are public responsibilities involved here, particularly for basic research. We have been very successful, and never more successful than under the leadership of Dr. Varmus, in getting strong bipartisan, nonpartisan support for investments in health. And I think that it's obvious that we can all see that as in our self-interest and as in the public interest. We want to live forever, and we're getting there.

But I think it's quite important also not to forget our responsibilities for basic research in other areas as well. And one of the things that we will come to know as the intersection of your two disciplines, informatics and genomics, come together, then we will have to study even more closely how all this that we know about the human body and its development interacts with changes in the environment.

So other areas of research will be also important, into things like global warming and climate change and the sustainability of the environment. And what I hope we can do is to build a broader consensus, as we look into the new millennium, for the whole research enterprise in those areas where it will never be productive in the beginning, or profitable for people like you, to do the beginning. And then we can find these things, and then the American entrepreneurial genius will take off.

And so I leave here with a renewed commitment to trying to help people like you get started. We may not understand it, those of us in politics, but we have an obligation to help you find it.

And when the first mouse graduates from Princeton, I will invite you both to deliver the commencement address. *[Laughter]*

Thank you, and good evening.

NOTE: The White House Millennium Evening program began at 7:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to basketball Hall of Famer Wilt Chamberlain; and retired jockey Willie Shoemaker. The discussion was entitled "Informatics Meets Genomics." The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, Dr. Cerf, Dr. Lander, Secretary Shalala, Ms. Lovell, Dr. Varmus, and the participants in the question-and-answer portion of the evening. The discussion was also cybercast on the Internet.

Remarks at George Washington National Forest, Virginia October 13, 1999

Thank you very much, Peter Pinchot, Secretary Glickman, Under Secretary Lyons. I also want to acknowledge Mike Dombeck, the Chief of the Forest Service, and George Frampton, the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality.

There are many, many things I'd like to say today, but before I begin, there has been—there was a development in the news today that I need to make a comment on, because I believe this is my only opportunity to see the press and, through them, to speak to the American people.

Philip Morris Company Admission

So I would like to just take a moment to note that after years of denial and deception, the Philip Morris Company has admitted that cigarette smoking causes lung cancer and other diseases. This formal acknowledgement comes far too late, but still we must all welcome it. It can be the beginning of clearing the air.

It certainly makes clear, as I've said for years, that the tobacco companies should answer for their actions in court. They should stop marketing their products to children. And certainly, they should do much more to reduce youth smoking. So this is a good day for the cause of public health and our children in America.

Forest Roadless Areas

Now, Peter talked about his grandfather and Theodore Roosevelt. One of my proudest possessions—some of you know I collect old books about America. I just finished reading a fascinating account by Frances Perkins, the first woman to serve in the Cabinet, who was President Franklin Roosevelt's Labor Secretary during his entire tenure, about her 35-year relationship with Roosevelt. One of my proudest old American books is a first printing of the proceedings of the very first Governors' conference, held at the invitation of Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. The subject was the conservation of America's natural resources.

In my private dining room at the White House I have a picture of Theodore Roosevelt and all those Governors, signed by all the Governors with whom I served in 1992, when I was elected President. That first Governors' con-

ference remains one of the most important ever held in the White House. So much of what we've done as a nation to conserve our natural resources extends from that day. Peter's grandfather was a guiding spirit behind that conference.

Theodore Roosevelt, himself, said of Gifford Pinchot, "If it hadn't been for him, this conference neither would have nor could have been called." Gifford Pinchot used to say that we must prefer results to routine. I like that a lot. [Laughter] And let me say that, in my view, no one illustrates that principle in our public life today better than Mike Dombeck, who has done such a remarkable job of returning the Forest Service to the vision of stewardship on which it was founded. And I thank you, sir.

A century ago, when Mr. Pinchot was first dreaming up his plan to protect our forests, this vista looked very different than what we see today. In fact, it was more wasteland than forest. According to one eyewitness, and I quote, "Weather-white ghosts of trees stood on the desolate slopes as a pitiful, battle-scarred fragment of the glory that was once a virgin forest. Not only were the slopes nearly bare, tanneries and dye plants had poisoned the lakes and the mountain streams. The deer and black bear and turkey nearly were wiped out. The land and water were so thoroughly abused that most people thought the area had no value at all."

I know that they don't agree with that now because we have so many of the fine local officials from this area show up here today. I thank them for their presence, and they can be proud of what they represent.

Visionaries like Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, the other men and women of the Forest Service who have cared for this land since 1917, made those dark descriptions a part of history. Nowadays, hundreds of thousands of visitors come here every year to hike, swim, bike, hunt, fish, or just to breathe the fresh air and take in the beautiful sights. The land that once no one wanted is now a thriving forest everyone can enjoy.

This kind of land has been important to me since I was a boy, where I learned by walking the Ozark and Quachita National Forests of my

home State that national forests are more than a source of timber, they are places of renewal of the human spirit and our natural environment. At the dawn of the new century we have the opportunity to act on behalf of these forests in a way that honors the vision of our forebears, Roosevelt and Pinchot.

Within our national forests there are large parcels of land that don't contain roads of any kind and, in most cases, never have. From the beautiful stretch of the Alleghenies that we see here to the old-growth canyonlands of Tahoe National Forest, these areas represent some of the last, best unprotected wildlands anywhere in our Nation. They offer unparalleled opportunities for hikers, hunters, and anglers. They're absolutely critical to the survival of many endangered species, as you have just heard. And I think it's worth pointing out they are also very often a source of clean and fresh water for countless communities. They are, therefore, our treasured inheritance.

Today we launch one of the largest land preservation efforts in America's history to protect these priceless, back-country lands. The Forest Service will prepare a detailed analysis of how best to preserve our forests' large roadless areas and then present a formal proposal to do just that. The Forest Service will also determine whether similar protection is warranted for smaller roadless areas that have not yet been surveyed.

Through this action, we will protect more than 40 million acres, 20 percent of the total forest land in America in the national forests, from activities such as new road construction which would degrade the land. We will ensure that our grandchildren will be able to hike up to this peak, that others like it across the country will also offer the same opportunities. We will assure that when they get to the top they'll be able to look out on valleys like this, just as beautiful then as they are now.

We will live up to the challenge Theodore Roosevelt laid down a century ago to leave this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us.

It is very important to point out that we are not trying to turn the national forests into museums. Even as we strengthen protections, the majority of our forests will continue to be responsibly managed for sustainable timber production and other activities. We are, once again, determined to prove that environmental protec-

tion and economic growth can and must go hand in hand.

Let me give you an example, because I've seen a lot of people already saying a lot of terrible things about what I'm doing today and how it is going to end the world as we know it. *[Laughter]* This initiative should have almost no effect on timber supply. Only 5 percent of our country's timber comes from the national forests. Less than 5 percent of the national forests' timber is now being cut in roadless areas. We can easily adjust our Federal timber program to replace 5 percent of 5 percent, but we can never replace what we might destroy if we don't protect these 40 million acres.

As the previous speaker said, today's action is the latest step taken under the administration of Vice President Gore and me to expand our children's natural treasures. Over the past 6½ years, we've protected millions of acres, from the Yellowstone to the Everglades, from the ancient redwoods of Headwaters to the red rock canyons of Utah. We're working now to save New Mexico's spectacular Baca Ranch.

As Secretary Babbitt has said many times, our administration has now protected more land than any in the history of the country except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

I have also proposed an unprecedented \$1 billion lands legacy initiative, with permanent funding over the years to guarantee for the first time ever a continuing fund for protecting and restoring precious lands across America. This initiative represents the largest investment in protecting our green and open spaces since President Theodore Roosevelt set our Nation on this path nearly a century ago. It would allow us to save Civil War battlefields, remote stretches of the historic Lewis and Clark Trail, nearly half a million acres in California desert parks and wilderness areas. It will also allow us to meet the stewardship challenges of the new century by helping communities save small but sacred spaces closer to home.

Unfortunately, this Congress seems intent on walking away from this opportunity. They're trying to slash lands legacy funding by a full two-thirds this year alone, with no action at all to ensure permanent funding in the years ahead. This is not an isolated case, unfortunately. Once again, the leaders of the Republican majority are polluting our spending bills with special-interest riders that would promote overcutting in our forests, allow mining companies to dump

more toxic waste on public land, and give a huge windfall to companies producing oil on Federal lands. I have vetoed such bills before because they were loaded up with antienvironmental riders. If necessary, I will do so again.

So, as Congress completes its work on the Interior bill, again I ask the leadership to send me a clean bill that adequately funds the lands legacy initiative and other priorities. But let me be clear: If the Interior bill lands on my desk looking like it does now, I will give it a good environmental response. I will send it straight back to the recycling bin. *[Laughter]*

Ever since that first Governors' conference back in 1908, conservation has been a cause important enough to Americans to transcend party lines. I hope, somehow, we can make it a bipartisan, even a nonpartisan, issue again. Theodore Roosevelt was a great Republican President. Franklin Roosevelt was a great Democratic President. President Nixon signed a bill creating the Environmental Protection Agency. Over and over again in the last 7 years in which I have had the honor to serve as President, I have worked with people who were both Democrats and Republicans on conservation issues.

Again I have the feeling that this is not a partisan issue anywhere but Washington, DC, and perhaps in a few other places throughout the country. We can't afford that.

When I was a boy growing up in my hometown, it was in a national park, and I could never be in the downtown of my hometown, which was a big city by Arkansas standards, 35,000 people—that even if you were anywhere downtown, you weren't more than 5 minutes walk from the woods.

I know what this can mean to our children and our future. When I was Governor, I was proud that, after leaving office after 12 years, we had—a higher percentage of our land in Arkansas was timberland than it was on the day that I took office, for the first time. And we always did this across party lines. No State was

more active in using the Nature Conservancy to buy land and set it aside, and we always did it across party lines.

When people walk through these woods and run into one another, they may talk a lot of things, but I'll bet you very few of them say, "Are you a Republican or a Democrat?" I'll bet you've never asked anybody that on a mountain trail.

We want this for our children forever. And it is important that we set a good example. Earlier, Mr. Pinchot talked about the deterioration of the rain forests and the loss of biodiversity around the globe. If we want to help other people meet those challenges and the even larger challenge of climate change, we have to set a good example. We have the wealth and security to do it. We also have no excuse, because now we have the scientific knowledge and the technical means to grow the economy while we improve the environment.

It is no longer necessary to grow a modern economy by destroying natural resources and putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. In fact, we can create more jobs by following a responsible path to sustainable development.

So I hope this day will be important not only for our forestlands but the preservation of fresh water and biodiversity and recreational opportunities. I hope it will be the first step in America resuming a path of responsible leadership toward the environmental future we will increasingly share with our neighbors all across the globe. And I hope all of you will always be very proud of the role you have played in this special day.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. at Reddish Knob Overlook. In his remarks, he referred to Peter Pinchot, environmental consultant, Pinchot Institute for Conservation, and grandson of Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service.

Memorandum on Protection of Forest Roadless Areas

October 13, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture

Subject: Protection of Forest "Roadless" Areas

At the start of this century, President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated this Nation to the conservation of natural resources—our land, our water, our wildlife, and all the other precious gifts nature had bestowed upon us. One of America's great central tasks, he declared, is "leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us."

In pursuit of that goal, President Roosevelt established new protections for millions upon millions of acres across America. His remarkable legacy includes 5 national parks, 18 national monuments, and dozens of wildlife refuges. Among his most notable conservation achievements were the consolidation of 65 million acres of Federal forest reserves into the National Forest System, and the creation of the United States Forest Service to ensure wise stewardship of these lands for future generations. In this effort, he was guided by Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service and a founder of America's conservation movement.

Today, the National Forest System has grown to 192 million acres of forests and grasslands in 46 States and territories. These lands provide a broad array of benefits to the American people. They support rural industries, sustain fish and wildlife, generate drinking water for 60 million Americans, and provide important recreation opportunities to an increasingly urban population.

Over the years, unfortunately, our Nation has not always honored President Roosevelt's vision. Too often, we have favored resource extraction over conservation, degrading our forests and the critical natural values they sustain. As the consequences of these actions have become more apparent, the American people have expressed growing concern and have called on us to restore balance to their forests.

My Administration has made significant strides in improving the management of our Federal forestlands. Beginning with the adoption of a comprehensive, science-based forest plan for the Pacific Northwest, we have sought to strengthen protections for wildlife, water quality, and other vital ecological values, while ensuring

a steady, sustainable supply of timber and other commodities to support stable rural economies. The new forest planning regulation proposed last month represents another major step in that direction.

It is time now, I believe, to address our next challenge—the fate of those lands within the National Forest System that remain largely untouched by human intervention.

A principal defining characteristic of these lands is that they do not have, and in most cases never have had, roads across them. We know from earlier inventories that there are more than 40 million acres of "roadless" area within the National Forest System, generally in parcels of 5,000 acres or more. A temporary moratorium on road building in most of these areas has allowed us time to assess their ecological, economic, and social values and to evaluate long-term options for their management.

In weighing the future of these lands, we are presented with a unique historic opportunity. From the Appalachian Mountains to the Sierra Nevada, these are some of the last, best unprotected wildlands in America. They are vital havens for wildlife—indeed, some are absolutely critical to the survival of endangered species. They are a source of clean, fresh water for countless communities. They offer unparalleled opportunities for hikers, campers, hunters, anglers, and others to experience unspoiled nature. In short, these lands bestow upon us unique and irreplaceable benefits. They are a treasured inheritance—enduring remnants of an untrammelled wilderness that once stretched from ocean to ocean.

Accordingly, I have determined that it is in the best interest of our Nation, and of future generations, to provide strong and lasting protection for these forests, and I am directing you to initiate administrative proceedings to that end.

Specifically, I direct the Forest Service to develop, and propose for public comment, regulations to provide appropriate long-term protection for most or all of these currently inventoried "roadless" areas, and to determine whether such protection is warranted for any smaller "roadless" areas not yet inventoried. The public,

and all interested parties, should have the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed regulations. In the final regulations, the nature and degree of protections afforded should reflect the best available science and a careful consideration of the full range of ecological, economic, and social values inherent in these lands.

I commend you, along with the Undersecretary for Natural Resources and the Environment, Jim Lyons, the Chief of the Forest Service, Michael Dombeck, and the entire Forest

Service for your leadership in strengthening and modernizing the management of our Federal forests—lands held by us in trust for all Americans and for future generations. With the new effort we launch today, we can feel confident that we have helped to fulfill and extend the conservation legacy of Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot, and to ensure that the 21st century is indeed a new century for America's forests.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on Floods and Mudslides in Mexico

October 13, 1999

On behalf of the American people, I want to express our deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives and homes in the devastating floods and mudslides in Mexico, which have taken hundreds of lives and left tens of thousands of people homeless. It was less than a month ago that Hurricane Floyd brought flooding to the States along our own

east coast, reminding us of the pain such tragedies can bring and of the importance of neighbor helping neighbor in times of crisis. In the days ahead, our thoughts and prayers will be with our good friends, the people of Mexico, as they work to rebuild from these terrible tragedies. As a people and a Government, we stand ready to help in any way we can.

Statement on the Conclusion of the Independent Counsel's Investigation of Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt

October 13, 1999

I am very pleased by today's announcement concerning Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt. As I said at the beginning of this inquiry, Bruce Babbitt is a man of the highest integrity, and I was convinced that he would be vindicated.

Secretary Babbitt's record of superb stewardship of our Nation's lands speaks for itself, and I look forward to his continuing service to our country, its people, and its extraordinary God-given resources.

Statement on Proposed Hate Crimes Legislation

October 13, 1999

It has been a year since the murder of Matthew Shepard, and 2 years since I first proposed to strengthen the Nation's hate crime laws. During this time, hundreds of Americans have been injured or killed, simply because of who they are. In response to this epidemic of violence,

people around the country have joined me in calling on Congress to pass this important legislation.

Earlier this year, the Senate passed my legislation, which, if enacted, would strengthen current law by making it easier to prosecute crimes

based on race, color, religion, and national origin and by expanding coverage to include crimes based on sexual orientation, gender, and disability.

Congress has the opportunity to complete work on that legislation and to send it to me

for signature. I call on Congress to do the right thing and enact hate crime legislation before the end of this session. The Nation cannot afford to wait.

Statement on the Military Coup d'Etat in Pakistan

October 13, 1999

The events in Pakistan this week represent another setback to Pakistani democracy. Pakistan's interests would be served by a prompt return to civilian rule and restoration of the democratic process. I urge that Pakistan move quickly in that direction.

I am sending my Ambassador back to Islamabad to underscore my view directly to the military authorities and to hear their intentions. I will also be consulting closely with all concerned nations about maintaining peace and stability in South Asia.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Telecommunications Payments to Cuba

October 13, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, Public Law 104-114, 110 Stat. 785, I transmit herewith a semi-annual report "detailing payments made to Cuba

... as a result of the provision of telecommunications services" pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 13, 1999.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Food Aid Convention 1999

October 13, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Food Aid Convention 1999, which was open for signature at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, from May 1 through June 30, 1999. The Convention was signed by the United States June 16, 1999. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Convention.

The Food Aid Convention 1999 replaces the Food Aid Convention 1995. Donor members continue to make minimum annual commitments that can be expressed either in the quantity or, under the new Convention, the value of the food aid they will provide to developing countries.

As the United States has done in the past, it is participating provisionally in the Food Aid Committee. The Committee granted the United States (and other countries) a 1-year extension

of time, until June 30, 2000, in which to deposit its instrument of ratification.

It is my hope that the Senate will give prompt and favorable consideration to this Convention, and give its advice and consent to ratification

by the United States at the earliest possible date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 13, 1999.

Remarks on Senate Action on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and an Exchange With Reporters *October 13, 1999*

The President. Good evening. I am very disappointed that the United States Senate voted not to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This agreement is critical to protecting the American people from the dangers of nuclear war. It is, therefore, well worth fighting for. And I assure you, the fight is far from over.

I want to say to our citizens, and to people all around the world, that the United States will stay true to our tradition of global leadership against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. The Senate has taken us on a detour. But America eventually always returns to the main road, and we will do so again. When all is said and done, the United States will ratify the test ban treaty.

Opponents of the treaty have offered no alternative, no other means of keeping countries around the world from developing nuclear arsenals and threatening our security. So we have to press on and do the right thing for our children's future.

We will press on to strengthen the worldwide consensus in favor of the treaty. The United States will continue, under my Presidency, the policy we have observed since 1992 of not conducting nuclear tests. Russia, China, Britain, and France have joined us in this moratorium. Britain and France have done the sensible thing and ratified this treaty. I hope not only they, but also Russia, China, will all, along with other countries, continue to refrain from nuclear testing.

I also encourage, strongly, countries that have not yet signed or ratified this treaty to do so. And I will continue to press the case that this treaty is in the interest of the American people.

The test ban treaty will restrict the development of nuclear weapons worldwide at a time when America has an overwhelming military and technological advantage. It will give us the tools to strengthen our security, including the global network of sensors to detect nuclear tests, the opportunity to demand onsite inspections, and the means to mobilize the world against potential violators. All these things, the Republican majority in the Senate would gladly give away.

The Senators who voted against the treaty did more than disregard these benefits. They turned aside the best advice—let me say this again—they turned aside the best advice of our top military leaders, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and four of his predecessors. They ignored the conclusion of 32 Nobel Prize winners in physics, and many other leading scientists, including the heads of our nuclear laboratories, that we can maintain a strong nuclear force without testing.

They clearly disregarded the views of the American people who have consistently and strongly supported this treaty ever since it was first pursued by Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy. The American people do not want to see unnecessary nuclear tests here or anywhere around the world.

I know that some Senate Republicans favored this treaty. I know others had honest questions but simply didn't have enough time for thorough answers. I know that many would have supported this treaty had they been free to vote their conscience and if they had been able to do what we always do with such treaties, which is to add certain safeguards, certain understandings that protect America's interest and make clear the meaning of the words.

Unfortunately, the Senate majority made sure that no such safeguards could be appended. Many who had questions about the treaty worked hard to postpone the vote because they knew a defeat would be damaging to America's interest and to our role in leading the world away from nonproliferation. But for others, we all know that foreign policy, national security policy has become just like every domestic issue: politics, pure and simple.

For 2 years, the opponents of this treaty in the Senate refused to hold a single hearing. Then they offered a take-or-leave-it deal: to decide this crucial security issue in a week, with just 3 days of hearings and 24 hours of debate. They rejected my request to delay the vote and permit a serious process so that all the questions could be evaluated. Even worse, many Republican Senators apparently committed to oppose this treaty before there was an agreement to bring it up, before they ever heard a single witness or understood the issues. Never before has a serious treaty involving nuclear weapons been handled in such a reckless and ultimately partisan way.

The Senate has a solemn responsibility under our Constitution to advise and consent in matters involving treaties. The Senate has simply not fulfilled that responsibility here. This issue should be beyond politics, because the stakes are so high. We have a fundamental responsibility to do everything we can to limit the spread of nuclear weapons and the chance of nuclear war. We must decide whether we're going to meet it.

Will we ratify an agreement that can keep Russia and China from testing and developing new, more sophisticated advanced weapons; an agreement that could help constrain nuclear weapons programs in India, Pakistan, and elsewhere, at a time of tremendous volatility, especially on the Indian sub-continent? For now, the Senate has said, no.

But I am sending a different message. We want to limit the nuclear threat. We want to bring the test ban treaty into force.

I am profoundly grateful to the Senate proponents of this treaty, including the brave Republicans who stood with us, for their determination and their leadership. I am grateful to all those advocates for arms control and national security and all the religious leaders who have joined us in this struggle.

The test ban treaty is strongly in America's interest. It is still on the Senate calendar. It will not go away. It must not go away. I believe that if we have a fair and thorough hearing process, the overwhelming majority of the American people will still agree with us that this treaty is in our interest. I believe in the wisdom of the American people, and I am confident that in the end, it will prevail.

Q. Mr. President, when you say the fight is far from over, sir, do you mean that you expect this treaty to be brought up again during your term in office?

The President. I mean, I think that we could have had a regular hearing process in which the serious issues that need to be discussed would have been discussed, and in which, as the Senate leaders both agreed yesterday when they thought there was an agreement and they shook hands on an agreement, would have resulted in next year being devoted to considering the treaty, dealing with its merits, and then, barring extraordinary circumstances, would have put off a vote until the following year.

By their actions today the Republican majority has said they want us to continue to discuss and debate this. They weren't interested in the safeguards; they weren't interested in a serious debate; they weren't interested in a serious process. So they could have put this on a track to be considered in an appropriate way, which I strongly supported. They decided otherwise.

And we, therefore, have to make it clear, those of us who agree, that it is crazy for America to walk away from Britain and France, 11 of our NATO Allies, the heads of our nuclear labs, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 32 Nobel laureates, and the whole world, having depended on us for all these decades, to lead the fight for nonproliferation. Therefore, we have to keep this issue alive and continue to argue it in the strongest and most forceful terms.

I wish we could have had a responsible alternative. I worked until the 11th hour to achieve it. This was a political deal. And I hope it will get the treatment from the American people it richly deserves.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House.

Remarks at a Democratic Leadership Council Gala *October 13, 1999*

Thank you. Let me say, first, it's good to be back. I want to thank Al From and Senator Joe Lieberman. And I have seen Senator Robb and Senator Breaux. I understand Senator Landrieu is here. I saw Cal Dooley, and I know there are some other Members of the House here. My former Chief of Staff and Envoy to Latin America, Mack McLarty, is here. I saw Harris Wofford, who has done a magnificent job with our national service program. And I know there are a lot of others here.

But I want to say something about Sam Fried, the gentleman who introduced me. First of all, he gave a good speech, didn't he? I mean, he's got a great gift in capturing our vision. And he also did the nicest thing imaginable; he said how much he liked my phrase about putting a human face on the global economy, which I use three times a day. He didn't tell you the truth. He gave me that phrase, Sam Fried. So he could either be a speechwriter or a Senate candidate from Ohio or anyplace else he wants to run. But I think we need to recruit people from the private sector to run for office with the DLC message. And thank you, my long time friend.

This conference is designed to talk about trade in the global economy in the information society. And I want to talk about that tonight. But I want to try to put it into some sort of context.

I began a conversation with many of you, and led by and prodded by Al From, 15 years ago now. Tonight we know some things about the Third Way and about our credo of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. We know some things tonight about that that we only believed 15 years ago. We know that if this credo is translated into meaningful ideas and real policies, that it's not only good politics, it's very good for America.

In 1992, when Al Gore and I went before the American people, we made an argument. And that's all it was; it was an argument. We said, "We want to put people first. We want a country that's run by opportunity, responsibility, and community. We want a new economic policy. We want a new crime policy. We want

a new welfare policy. We want a new environmental policy. We want a new foreign policy. We want to make America strong, America united, America a responsible partner and leader for peace and prosperity and security in the world." And it was just an argument. Thank goodness it was a good enough argument, under the circumstances, to win the election, thanks to an awful lot of you.

Tonight, it is not an argument anymore. We took those ideas; we took the specific commitments of policy; we implemented them. We did what we said we would do in our very specific campaign. And I've got to say something parenthetically, because I owe this to a lot of you in the DLC. I've always believed ideas matter. But when I ran for President, I violated all the conventional wisdom. We made more specific commitments on more issues than any candidate ever had who was a nominee of a major party. And a scholar of the Presidency, Thomas Patterson, said that we had kept a higher percentage of those commitments, even though we made a larger number of them, than any of the previous five Presidents.

And what really mattered to me is, when I went back to New Hampshire in February of this year, on the seventh anniversary of the New Hampshire primary, people there who pay attention to what you say, because you have to ask every individual 14 times for his or her vote, or you can't play there. And I love the place. You know, it was like running back home, but person after person after person came up to me on the street that day—not at the Democratic Party event at night, on the street—and said, "Mr. President, it's a good thing we've got an"—they had an unemployment rate of below 2½ percent—they said, "Things are good here, but the thing we really appreciate is you did what you said you would do."

It would not have been possible if I had not been part of the DLC. It would not have been possible if we hadn't thought through in advance what it was we wanted to do, if we hadn't gone from an identification of our guiding values to an analysis of the situation, to a description of what we wanted to achieve, to a strategy, to

specific tactics. This organization made that possible.

So let me say, first of all, it's not an argument anymore. The results are in. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, the highest homeownership in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history. It is not an argument any more; it works, and you should be proud of that.

The other thing I want to say is, a lot of our specific ideas have worked. The Vice President's leadership in reinventing government has given us the smallest Federal establishment since 1962, even though the most active executive initiatives in memory.

We have proved you could grow the economy and protect the environment. I went down to Virginia today to a national forest and announced that we were going to close 40 million acres of the nearly 200 million acres of national forest to roadbuilding, to preserve water quality and biodiversity and recreational quality.

We have proved that you can empower poor people to make the most of their own lives with the earned-income tax credit, the empowerment zone program, the community development financial institutions, and now the new markets initiative.

AmeriCorps, which was a DLC idea, national service has now enlisted over 100,000 young people in the service of our country at the community level in 5 years, a goal that took the Peace Corps 20 years to reach.

We also supported the Brady bill. We supported the family and medical leave law, two bills vetoed in the previous administration. And all of the objections to them turned out to be wrong.

So I say to you, you can be proud of that. We pursued an aggressive policy to become engaged in the rest of the world, to recognize that we live in an interdependent world in which we ought to lead. And whether it has been pursuing peace from the Balkans to the Middle East to Northern Ireland; to building self-capacity to prevent hardship through the Africa crisis response initiative to give the African nations the capacity to prevent future Rwandas; to developing economic capacities in poor countries; to our efforts to combat terrorism and the spread of the weapons of mass destruction, we

have made progress. And I thank you all for that.

Now, by contrast, it is interesting to me to watch the debate in the present election, which I'm not a part of, and to see how people try to say, "Well, maybe there can be a new Republican Party like there is a new Democratic Party." Remember this: They're like we were in '92; it's just an argument.

The Democratic Party—a heavy majority of the Democratic Party has come together to move forward. But their party still is overwhelmingly, including all those people they've got running for President—they supported that tax cut, which would have completely undermined our ability to save Social Security and Medicare and get this country out of debt over the next 15 years, and which they said they could pay for, even though now they admit they can't even pay for the money they've already spent this year. They all stuck with the NRA and the Republican congressional leadership, when we tried to close the gun show loophole, after we proved that background checks do not undermine people's legitimate hunting and sporting interests. They're over there opposing the hate crimes legislation in the face of painful evidence that we are still in the grip of bigotry. They're not for the employment nondiscrimination act.

We see that on so many other issues. On education, we're for high standards, no social promotion, making failing schools turn around or close down, and thousands of charter schools. They're still hawking vouchers, even though we know the Federal Government only provides 7 percent of the total educational expenditures in the first place. On health care, they're out there all against the Patients' Bill of Rights, even though their own Members, who were doctors, in the House of Representatives couldn't bear the position that the party had taken.

So I would say to you, I'm proud of where we are. I'm proud of where the Democrats are. I'm proud of where our party has gone. And I still believe that when it comes to defining the future, the American public will be with the new Democratic Party instead of the right wing of the Republican Party which is driving their agenda.

And we saw it again tonight when they rejected on a party-line vote the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, after it had been ratified by 11 of our NATO Allies, including Britain and

France, nuclear powers, endorsed by the President and four former Chiefs of Staff of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 32 Nobel laureate physicists, the heads of our own nuclear weapons labs. They basically said, "Don't bother me with that. I just don't think it's good." And it now has come out, of course, that there was a partisan commitment to vote against the treaty by more than enough to defeat it before it was ever brought up and anybody ever heard the first argument.

We are trying to work with Republicans, independents, and Democrats to move this country forward. That is the difference in the new Democratic Party. And we are still confronting a level of extremism and partisanship which is truly chilling for the long-term interests of America.

But tonight I ask you not to think about our differences with the Republicans but to think about the one remaining issue on which we have not forged a consensus within our party. And that is how we're going to respond to globalization, to the global economy, the information age, and the whole nature of how we relate to other countries in terms of economics, the environment, and trade.

For all of our changes, we had overwhelming majorities of both parties in both Houses voted for the Balanced Budget Act, overwhelming majorities of our party in both Houses voted for welfare reform. We are still not of one mind, and we do not have a consensus on the way forward with trade. So tonight I would like to talk to you about what I think we should do and where I think we should be, not only because I think we have serious responsibilities to the rest of the world but because we know that, until the Asian financial crisis, 30 percent of our growth in this marvelous expansion came from the expansion of trade and the opportunities that we found there.

I believe a strong, properly constructed global trading system is good for all the nations of the world. I know it's good for America because of the evidence of what has happened here. Today, the worst of the global financial crisis is behind us, and I think the time has come to take an important step forward. I believe we can make our economy even stronger and make open trade an even greater force for peace and prosperity in the new century.

I know some believe that isolating ourselves from the world will shield us from the forces

of change that are causing so much disruption, so much instability, and so much inequality. I understand why they fear it, but I disagree that they can hide from it. America can only seize the problems of the new century if we shoulder our responsibility to lead to a responsible system of worldwide trade.

If we fulfill that responsibility, if we lead boldly and resolutely, pairing solid principles with concrete proposals, we can fulfill our promise in the global economy and help other people as well. We can create for billions of people the conditions that allow them to work and live and raise their families in dignity, and I might add, we can give those nations the kind of greater prosperity necessary to have more responsible environmental and public health policies. We can expand the circle of opportunity, share the promise of prosperity more widely than ever, and in so doing also help to bring down walls of oppression in other countries. We can, in short, put a human face on the global economy.

How are we going to do it, and how are we going to begin? In a little more than a month's time, in Seattle, Washington, our Nation will host a gathering of leaders from government, business, labor, and civil society. That meeting of the World Trade Organization will launch a new round of global trade talks that I called for in my State of the Union Address last January.

We've had eight such rounds in the last 50 years, helping trade to grow fifteen-fold worldwide. It's no coincidence that this period has seen the most rapid sustained economic growth ever recorded. Every trade round in this half-century has served to expand frontiers of opportunity, to expand the circle of prosperity and the rule of law and the spread of peace. I want the round we launch in Seattle to do the same.

But I also want it to be a new kind of trade round for a new century, a round that is about jobs and development, a round about broadly shared prosperity, about improving the quality of life and work around the world. I want to ensure that the global trading system of the 21st century honors our values and meets our goals.

Of course, different nations will bring different perspectives and different interests. To reach a truly global agreement, of course, we've got to work together in good faith. America will do its part.

Tonight I want to set out our agenda for Seattle and the ways we intend to expand opportunity from the world's oldest business, farming, to its newest, electronic commerce.

First, we want to ensure that in this round agriculture is treated as fairly as other sectors in the global economy. That's long overdue. In America, farmers are the lifeblood of our land, as they are in so many other places. They help to fuel our unprecedented prosperity. Unfortunately, too few of our farmers are reaping the bounty they themselves have sown. Flood and drought and crop disease, as well as the financial crisis in Asia, have threatened the livelihoods not only of many farmers but of some entire farm communities.

Every American has a stake in the strength of agriculture. So let's be clear: One way we can revive the rural economy in America is to open markets abroad. The family farmer in America finds trade not an abstraction. It is vital to the bottom line and to their survival.

America is the largest exporter of agricultural products in the world. One in every three acres planted here is growing food for abroad. Five years ago, during the last trade round, we joined with our trading partners to put agriculture on the WTO's agenda. In Seattle, we should move forward fairly but aggressively to expand our opportunities for farmers and ranchers.

We must eliminate export subsidies. All farmers deserve a chance to compete on the quality of their goods, not against the size of other countries' Government grants. In the European Union, fully half of the overall budget is spent on agricultural subsidies. The EU accounts for 85 percent of the world's farm export subsidies—85 percent. This stacks the deck against farmers from Arkansas to Argentina to Africa. In Seattle, we'll work to end this unfair advantage and level the playing field.

At the same time, we have to lower tariff barriers. Tariffs remain much too high, and on average, they're 5 times higher abroad than they are in America. And we must work to reduce the domestic supports that distort trade by paying farmers to overproduce and drive prices down. These steps will help farmers to produce the vast and varied variety of food for the best possible prices. The benefits will accrue not just to them but to the global fight against hunger and malnutrition.

We should also see that the promise of biotechnology is realized by consumers, as well as

producers, and the environment, ensuring that the safety of our food will be guaranteed with science-based and transparent domestic regulation and maintaining market access based on that sound science.

Second, we can lift living standards worldwide if we level the playing field for goods and services. Manufacturing remains a powerful engine of our own economic growth; it generates nearly a fifth of our GDP and two-thirds of our exports. It employs more than 18 million Americans in good jobs. This sector has grown since 1992, accelerated greatly by expanded trade, boosted by agreements made at previous trade rounds. If the Asian crisis has hurt our manufacturers—and it certainly has—it's because expanded trade is vital to their economic health, and it will remain so.

Since 1948, we have cut major industrial nations' tariffs on manufactured goods by 90 percent. Where they remain too high, we can do better, beginning in Seattle where we'll join other nations in pressing to lower barriers even further, some entirely and immediately.

Eight key industries, from an environmental technology to medical instruments to chemicals to toys, stand ready to take this step now. They account for nearly a third of our exports. So let's take that step at Seattle and set ambitious goals for other manufacturing sectors.

And there's one special aim we should achieve at Seattle: We should follow the lead of Korea and Hungary and work together on an agreement to promote transparent procedures and discourage corruption in the \$3.1 trillion government procurement market worldwide.

We should set equally ambitious goals for services. Trade is no longer just agricultural and manufactured goods. It's construction and distribution and entertainment. America is the world's largest exporter of services, in quantity and quality. And though we've made really important advances in agreements on financial and communication services, too many markets remain closed to us. In Seattle, I want to open those markets more fully and unlock the full creative and entrepreneurial potential of our people.

Third, we have to have a trading system that taps the full potential of the information age. The revolution in information technology can be the greatest global force for prosperity in this century. Last year, in the U.S. alone, electronic commerce totaled about \$50 billion. That

number may reach \$1.4 trillion in 3 years. Three years later almost half our work force will either be employed by the new information industries or rely on their services and products.

Around the world, the number of Internet users may reach 1 billion in 5 years. Now, currently, no country charges customs duties on telephone calls, fax transmissions, E-mail, or computer links when they cross borders. That's the way it should be. The lines of communication should not crackle with interference.

Last year the world's nations joined the U.S. in placing a moratorium on tariffs on E-commerce. In Seattle, we should pledge to extend that ban and reach a second agreement to eliminate remaining tariffs on the tools of the high-tech revolution.

Fourth, as I have often said, in the immortal words of Sam Fried, we must put a human face on the global economy. We're Democrats; we've got to make sure this deal works for ordinary people. We need to ensure working people everywhere feel they have a stake in global trade, that it gives them a chance for a better life, that they know that spirited economic competition will not become a race to the bottom in labor standards and environmental pollution.

I know to some people in some nations open trade seems at odds with these basic human goals, but I think the opposite is true. A strong system of trade and a dialog like the one we'll begin in Seattle are our best means to achieve those goals.

For those of us who believe the global economy can be a force for good, our defining mission must be to spread its benefits more broadly and to make rules for trade that support our values. It is nothing more than an international commitment to doing what we're trying to do here with the new markets agenda and with the empowerment zones. I really believe, if we work it right, we can bring the benefits of enterprise to the people and the places in America that have not yet felt it, from Appalachia to the Mississippi Delta to the Indian reservations to the inner cities. And I feel that way about the rest of the world.

So I ask you to support our efforts to have international organizations work to protect and enhance the environment while expanding trade and to have a decent regard for the need to have basic labor standards so that people who work receive the dignity and reward of work.

The American agenda in Seattle includes a thorough review of the round's environmental impact, as well as win-win opportunities that benefit both the economy and the environment. We will continue to ensure that WTO rules recognize our right to take science-based health, safety, and environmental measures even when they are higher than international standards.

In Seattle, the WTO should also create a working group on trade and labor. And I know you're going to have some labor people here tomorrow, and I congratulate you on that. We have got to keep working on this and banging our heads together until we reach a consensus that is consistent with the reality of the modern world and its opportunities and consistent with the values that we both share.

How can we deny the legitimacy or the linking of these issues, trade and labor, in a global economy? I think the WTO should commit to collaborate more closely with the International Labor Organization, which has worked so hard to protect human rights and to ban child labor, and with the International Environmental Organization. To facilitate this process, in the last year or so, I have gone to Geneva twice, once to talk about new trade rules for the global economy and once to meet with the ILO to talk about the necessity of banning child labor everywhere in the world.

This organization needs to be on the forefront of integrating our objectives and trying to build a global economy that will promote open trade and open prosperity and lift the standards of living and the quality of life for people throughout the world. They should be reinforcing efforts, not efforts in conflict.

I also believe that the WTO itself has got to become more open and accessible. You know, every NGO, just about, with an environmental or a labor ax to grind is going to be outside the meeting room in Seattle, demonstrating against us, telling us what a terrible thing world trade is. Now, I think they're dead wrong about that. But all over the world, when issues come up, a lot of people representing these groups have some legitimate question or legitimate interest in being heard in the debate. And the WTO has been treated for too long like some private priesthood for experts, where we know what's right, and we pat you on the head and tell you to just go right along and play by the rules that we preach.

The world doesn't work that way anymore. This open world we're trying to build, where anybody can get on the Internet and say anything, is a rowdy, raucous place. And if we want the world trading system to have legitimacy, we have got to allow every legitimate group with any kind of beef, whether they're right or wrong, to have some access to the deliberative process of the WTO. And I hope you will support that.

Finally, let me say, we have got to expand the family of nations that benefit from trade and play by the rules. In Seattle and beyond, we have to be guided by Franklin Roosevelt's vision, a basic essential to a permanent peace is a decent standard of living for all individual men and women and children in the world. Freedom from fear is eternally linked with freedom from want.

It was this understanding that led the generation of postwar leaders to embrace what was still a revolutionary idea: that freedom, not just of commerce but of governments and ideas and human transit, was the surest route to prosperity for the greatest number of people. This new round should promote development in places where poverty and hunger still stoke despair.

We just went over, I think in the last 24 hours, 6 billion people on the face of the Earth. Half of them live on \$2 a day or less; 1.3 billion live on \$1 a day or less. One of the reasons that I want to expand the reach of global trade is because I want more people to be able to lift themselves up. One of the reasons I want to expand the reach of global technology is that I believe if we work to bridge the digital divide here at home and around the world, we can help poor people in poor countries skip 20 or 30 or 40 years in the ordinary pace of development because of the explosion of technology. And I believe we can prove to them that they grow a middle class and grow a wealthy country without have to pollute the atmosphere, as their forebears did in the industrial era. I believe that.

But for those who share our views and our party, we must make clear there is no easy way to this. We can't get this done if we're not willing to build a global economic system and tear down these trade barriers and trade with people more and give them access to our markets and try to get our technology and our investments into their markets and build the right kind of partnership.

We can't just say we want all these things and then always find some reason to be against whatever trade agreement is worked out. We have got to have a global trading system, and we're either going to keep pushing it forward, or we're going to fall behind.

Let me just say, to kind of amplify this, there are some specific things that I hope we will do to show that we're acting in good faith. I hope we will get congressional approval in this session of Congress to expand our trade with Africa and the Caribbean Basin. I have proposed two initiatives there. There is broad bipartisan support for it. I hope and pray we will get that out of this session of Congress.

I hope we will bring more countries into the WTO in Seattle. Thirty-three nations are applying for WTO membership today. Two-thirds once had communist command and control economies. It is remarkable and hopeful to all the—listen to this—Albania, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia wanting to enter the world trading system.

This is not charity. This is an economic and political imperative. It is good for us because we want more trading partners. Never forget, your country has 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of its wealth. We've got to sell something to the other 96 percent if we want to hold on to our standard of living. And the more people we bring into our network of possibility, the better they do, the better we'll do. It is very, very important to remember this.

It's also important to remember that as these countries that are new to the experience of freedom and the rule of law and cooperation with other nations that has no element of coercion in it—they are new to all this—the more they have a chance to be a part of it, the more they will like it and the more they will become a part of an international system of democracy and law that is so important to the future of our children.

In that same spirit, I am still determined to pursue an agreement for China to join the WTO on viable, commercial terms again, not as a favor but to reinforce China's efforts to open, to reform its markets, to subscribe to the rules of the global trading system, and, inevitably, as more and more people have access to more and more information, more and more contacts, to feel that stability comes from openness and not repression of thought or religion or political views.

What is at stake here is more than the spread of free markets or the strength of the global economy, even more than the chance to lift billions of people into a worldwide middle class. It is a chance to move the world closer toward genuine interdependence rooted in shared commitments to peace and reconciliation.

This is a moment of great promise, a moment where we have to lead. A lot of things happen in this country that send mixed signals to people around the world that I regret. And most of them come out of the initiative of the other party in Congress: the failure to pay our U.N. dues; the failure to embrace the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; the abysmal budget for foreign affairs, when we can spend a little money in helping our neighbors and get untold benefit; and the zeroing out of our market-oriented initiative to meet our responsibilities to reduce global warming.

But one thing is still on our plate: We have not granted renewed fast-track authority; we are not pursuing the Free Trade Area of the Americas; we haven't yet passed the Africa trade initiative and the Caribbean Basin one, although I think we might get that done, because in our party, we have not been able to resolve these conflicts.

They've got a lot more work to do in their party than we do in ours, as I explained at the outset. We have worked through where we are on budget discipline, on economic management, on foreign policy, on environmental policy, on crime policy, on education policy, on health care policy. There has been an enormous modernization of the thinking and direction of the Democratic Party, and we can be proud

of it. But we can't go to the American people and say we have a whole vision for the future that will be a unifying vision, until we get over this one last big hump.

This is an exciting issue, and it is a difficult issue. And the labor people who will come here tomorrow have real interests at stake which ought to be heard. The environmental community people have real interests at stake which ought to be heard. But we're going to globalize one way or the other, and we'll be at the front of the line or the back or somewhere in the middle. And I believe it is profoundly in our interest and in the interests of the world for America to be leading the pack.

And I promise you, if we take initiative, it will lead to a cleaner environment and higher labor standards and more values that are consistent with ours, including letting more people be part of the process.

So what you are doing here is real, real important. It's our last big challenge to be the party that reflects the values, the heart, and the dreams of 21st century America.

Good luck, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; Senator Joseph I. Lieberman and Representative Calvin M. Dooley, cofounders, New Democrat Network; event chair Samuel P. Fried, senior vice president and general counsel, The Limited, Inc., who introduced the President; and Thomas Patterson, professor of Government and the press, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Videotaped Remarks to the National Summit on Community Food Security *October 12, 1999*

Good afternoon, and thank you for taking the time to participate in this first-ever summit on community food security. Thank you, Secretary Glickman, for your leadership in this vital area.

Sometimes it's hard to comprehend that in the middle of the strongest peacetime economy in our Nation's history, when poverty is at a 20-year low and incomes are rising all across America, there are still people in our country

who go to bed hungry. More than 3 million children suffer from hunger at some point during the year. And nearly 1 in 10 American households are at serious risk that an expensive car repair or an unexpected rent increase could make them go hungry. That kind of deprivation is simply unacceptable in our land of plenty.

From the earned-income tax credit to Medicaid to child care, our administration has carried out a new approach to help lift people out of poverty by forging a new social contract that rewards work, promotes responsibility, and helps families who need it.

Last July, I took executive action to help families gain access to food stamps. Secretary Glickman is leading our efforts to launch a nationwide food stamp public education campaign, and all of you gathered here today are critically important to that effort. I ask each and every one of you to join with us in our partnership to ensure families get the help they need.

Our work is far from done. While the Federal Government continues to be deeply involved in the fight against hunger, our nutritional safety net alone can't conquer the problem.

The solution lies in new and innovative partnerships with grassroots efforts. For too long, Government programs haven't done enough to capitalize on community expertise. And likewise,

community efforts have often not taken full advantage of the Government resources available to them. This conference is about building stronger partnerships, about bringing all the parties to the table and forming stronger ties among the Federal Government, State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector, nonprofit groups, the faith community, and private citizens. The more we work together, the better we can do in meeting the challenge of hunger.

Thank you again for your participation and for the hard work you do and the dedication you show every single day in the fight against hunger.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 2:50 p.m. in Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building for broadcast to the summit on October 14 in Chicago, IL. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 14. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference October 14, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Thank you. In recent days, members of the congressional majority have displayed a reckless partisanship. It threatens America's economic well being and, now, our national security.

Yesterday, hardline Republicans irresponsibly forced a vote against the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. This was partisan politics of the worst kind, because it was so blatant and because of the risks it poses to the safety of the American people and the world.

What the Senate seeks is to abandon an agreement that requires other countries to do what we have already done, an agreement that constrains Russia and China, India and Pakistan from developing more dangerous nuclear weapons, that helps to keep other countries out of the nuclear weapons business altogether, that improves our ability to monitor dangerous weapons activities in other countries. Even worse, they have offered no alternative, no other means of keeping countries around the world from developing nuclear arsenals and threatening our security.

In so doing, they ignored the advice of our top military leaders, our most distinguished scientists, our closest allies. They brushed aside the views of the American people and betrayed the vision of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy, who set us on the road to this treaty so many years ago.

Even more troubling are the signs of a new isolationism among some of the opponents of the treaty. You see it in the refusal to pay our U.N. dues. You see it in the woefully inadequate budget for foreign affairs and includes meeting our obligations to the Middle East peace process and to the continuing efforts to destroy and safeguard Russian nuclear materials. You see it in the refusal to adopt our proposals to do our part to stem the tide of global warming, even though these proposals plainly would create American jobs.

But by this vote, the Senate majority has turned its back on 50 years of American leadership against the spread of weapons of mass destruction. They are saying America does not need to lead, either by effort or by example.

They are saying we don't need our friends or allies. They are betting our children's future on the reckless proposition that we can go it alone, that at the height of our power and prosperity, we should bury our heads in the sand, behind a wall.

That is not where I stand. And that is not where the American people stand. They understand that to be strong, we must not only have a powerful military, we must also lead, as we have done time and again, and as the whole world expects us to do, to build a more responsible, interdependent world.

So we will continue to protect our interests around the world. We will continue to seek from Congress the financial resources to make that possible. We will continue to pursue the fight against the spread of nuclear weapons. And we will not—we will not—abandon the commitments inherent in the treaty and resume testing ourselves.

I will not let yesterday's partisanship stand as our final word on the test ban treaty. Today I say again, on behalf of the United States, we will continue the policy we have maintained since 1992 of not conducting nuclear tests. I call on Russia, China, Britain, France, and all other countries to continue to refrain from testing. I call on nations that have not done so to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. And I will continue to do all I can to make that case to the Senate. When all is said and done, I have no doubt that the United States will ratify this treaty.

Partisanship also threatens our economic security. Exactly one week from today the continuing resolution I signed on September the 30th to keep the Government running will expire. And yet, Congress is not even close to finishing its work. At this time of unprecedented prosperity we must ask ourselves why is the congressional majority so unwilling or unable to make the tough choices? Why would we not be willing—or why would they not be willing to send me a responsible budget that saves Social Security, that strengthens and modernizes Medicare, that honors the priorities of the American people, and that clearly continues to pay down our debt keeping interest rates low and the economy growing?

When I signed the continuing resolution 2 weeks ago, I urged Congress to roll up its sleeves and finish the job the American people sent them here to do. I said they should stop

playing politics, stop playing games, start making the necessary tough choices. Instead, we have the Republicans lurching from one unworkable idea to the next. Instead of sending me bills I can sign, the congressional majority is still using what the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and others have called budget gimmicks, to disguise the fact that they are spending the Social Security surplus. Their own Budget Office says so.

We've even seen them try to raise taxes for our hardest pressed working families. Now, they're talking about across-the-board budget cuts that could deny tens of thousands of children Head Start opportunities, drastically reduce medical research, sacrifice military readiness, jeopardize the safety of air traffic control. One day they raise the spending; the next day they talk about cutting it again.

I say to the congressional majority, enough is enough. We've got a job to do for the American people. It is not that difficult. Let's just do it. We can work together. We can fashion a budget that builds on our economic prosperity and continues to pay down the debt until it is eliminated in 2015 for the first time since 1835, that extends the life of the Social Security Trust Fund to 2050, the life expanse of almost all the baby boomers, and that invests in our people and our future, especially in our children's education.

The American people want a world-class education for their children. They want smaller classes, more qualified teachers, more computers in the classrooms, more after-school programs for the children who need it, more Head Start opportunities to ensure that our children all start school ready to learn. The majority so far has failed to come forward with a plan that protects these goals. I believe these goals are worth fighting for, and that's what this debate is all about.

They want us to keep making their communities safer; that's what the American people want. They want us to stay with the plan that has resulted in the lowest crime rate in 26 years. They want us to continue to put more cops on the beat and get guns out of the wrong hands. The majority wants to take us off that course and derail our progress. I want to keep us on track in education, in crime, in the budget, in Social Security, in Medicare.

The American people want us to stand up for the environment by preserving our treasured

landscapes and enhancing our community's quality of life. The majority would roll back our progress there, too. I want to build on it. That's what this debate is all about.

I want to work with Congress to fulfill these important obligations. We have proved we can do it with the welfare reform bill, with the Balanced Budget Act, with the budget last year, in the teeth of a partisan election season, which made a big downpayment on our goal of 100,000 teachers. We need it again, a workable, bipartisan budget process. We don't have that today. We've got a week to go. They've got to go to work.

There are legitimate differences of opinion. But we can put an end to reckless partisanship, to gimmicks and gamesmanship. We can put people first and make a principled, honorable compromise. We can work for a season of progress, not a winter of politics. And I am committed to do just that.

Thank you.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Mr. President, hasn't the treaty rejection really wiped out our moral authority to ask other nations around the world to stop testing? And was there—do you think there was a personal element in the Republican—a personal vendetta against you in the turn-down, Republican—

The President. Well, to answer the first question, let me say I had the occasion to run into three Ambassadors last night, of nations that strongly support the test ban treaty. And they were concerned. They didn't know what to say to their governments back home.

And what I told them was that we were in a battle with the new isolationists in the Republican Party. They see this treaty against the backdrop of the failure to pay the U.N. dues and the failure to shoulder some of our other responsibilities, the failure to pass a bill that would meet our obligations to the Middle East peace process and our obligations to keep working with the Russians to take down their nuclear arsenal.

But what I told them was the American people always get it right, and we are not going to reverse 40 years of commitment on non-proliferation, that the treaty is still on the Senate calendar, that it will be considered, that we have

to keep working forward, and that I have no intention of doing anything other than honoring the obligations of the treaty imposed on the United States.

So I urged them not to overreact, to make clear their opposition to what the Senate did, but to stay with us and believe in the United States because the American people want us to lead toward nonproliferation.

Now, as to the second element, there were a number of partisan considerations, including some bad feelings between the Republicans and Democrats in the Senate, because the Republicans didn't want to bring this up at all, and then they didn't give us a legitimate process when they did. If you compare the debates here, one day of hearings here, with 14 days on the Chemical Weapons Convention, over 20 days on the INF Treaty under President Reagan, this was not a legitimate process.

Now, I know some people made some personal remarks on the floor of the Senate in the debate, but you know, it's been my experience that very often in politics when a person is taking a position that he simply cannot defend, the only defense is to attack the opponent. And that's what I took it as, a form of flattery. They knew they didn't have a very strong case, and so they were looking for some excuse for otherwise inexcusable conduct, and it didn't bother me a bit. I think it only exposed—

Q. It wasn't revenge against you?

The President. No, I think it only exposed the weakness of their argument. I think that it had a lot more to do with what's going on in the Senate and what they think will happen this year and next year. But I say that because if it did, that would be even worse for them. I mean, the idea that we would put the future of our children in peril and the leadership of America for a safer world in peril for some personal pique, I think is unthinkable.

I just think when you've got—sometimes, I've seen people when they've got a very weak argument and they know they don't have a very strong position, they think that maybe they can deflect the analysis of their vote and their argument by attacking their opponent. That happens from time to time, and you can't take it too seriously.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]?

2000 Election

Q. A question about politics, Mr. President. Do you agree with Vice President Gore's characterization of Bill Bradley as a disloyal Democrat? And how much of a difference would it make if Senator Bradley were the Democratic nominee, instead of Vice President Gore?

The President. I am not a candidate in the Democratic primary, and I do not think I should become one. I had to do that twice before, and I enjoyed it very much, but I don't get a third shot.

So what I would say to you is, as all of you know, I think Al Gore has been, by far, the best Vice President in history. He's certainly had more influence over more areas. I think that he is doing well in his campaign. I think he made a good decision to go home to Tennessee. And I expect him to win. But I expect to support the nominee of my party, as I always have. And I think that I can serve no useful function by talking about anything other than the issues. If you want to ask me an issue question related to any of them, I'll be glad to answer it. But I'm not going to get into that kind of horse racing.

Yes, Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters]?

Situation in Pakistan

Q. Given the military coup in Pakistan, are you now more concerned about the prospect of a war between India and Pakistan, and what can you do to calm tensions?

The President. Well, obviously, we have been in touch with the Pakistanis. We don't like it when military leaders forcibly displace elected governments, and we made that clear. We've had our differences with Pakistan over the years that have been sometimes sharp, we've also had strong alliances in many areas. I still believe Prime Minister Sharif did the right thing to take the Pakistani troops behind the line of control and defuse what could have turned into a war, even a nuclear exchange. And so I appreciate that.

And I would hope that the military government will soon transition to a civilian one. And I would hope that nothing would be done at this time to aggravate tensions between India and Pakistan. India just had an election. Prime Minister Vajpayee has now been returned for another period of service. I think they have an

opportunity to resume their dialog and to deescalate the tensions.

Again, let me say to India and Pakistan, do not take yesterday's vote as a sign that America doesn't care whether you resume nuclear testing and build up your nuclear arsenals. We do care. You shouldn't do it. It's not necessary. It will hurt your economy and endanger your future. That's our message to Pakistan, and we hope they will move to a civilian government as quickly as possible.

Claire [Claire Shipman, NBC]?

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. To what extent do you think that you and the White House bear some responsibility for the outcome of the vote yesterday? There have been a lot of people heavily involved, supporters of this treaty who say the White House didn't begin an effective lobbying effort early enough. And I wonder whether you also think that the year of scandal played some role in that, that the White House was just unable to work on this—

The President. No.

Q. —in the way it should have.

The President. For one thing, since I signed this treaty—let's look at the facts here—I've spoken about this 30 times or more. We always start a big public campaign in terms of White House events and other things. Go back, and look at this. Look at NAFTA. Look at the Chemical Weapons Convention. Go back. When we know that we're on a hearing schedule and we're going to have a vote, until we were given 8 or 10 days notice, we had no earthly idea there would ever be hearings, much less a vote on this.

So this whole thing came as a complete surprise to us when we realized that we had 8 or 10 days on a subject that we thought they had decided in a very determined way not to bring up, because Senator Helms had made it clear that he didn't want to bring it up, and he wouldn't even talk about it until he disposed of two other treaties that he said were ahead of it in his consideration. We had no earthly idea that it was going to be on the Senate calendar.

So we did our best. We kept asking. And we thought if we ever got a yes, the yes would be like the yes we got on chemical weapons. "Yes, we can have this vote in a couple of months. We'll have 2 or 3 weeks of hearings."

If we had had a normal process, you would have seen a much more extensive public campaign. There was simply no time to put it together. But I talked about this over and over and over again in many different contexts. And I think that, given the time we had, we did the best we could.

And besides that, once it became clear to me that they not only were going to force this close vote but that they weren't going to do what they do in every single treaty where there's serious consideration, namely, to allow the Senators of both parties to offer safeguards, to offer reservations, to offer clarifications, so that the treaty means something.

If you remember, the only way we ever passed the chemical weapons treaty is when the Senate—including Senator Helms—participated with us in a process that led to over 20 explicit safeguards and reservations. That's what the Senate is supposed to do. We said, ourselves, that we thought the treaty required six safeguards that we hoped would be put on it. And they said, "Not only are we going to make them vote on the treaty, we're not going to let you put your safeguards on there." So I think that ought to give you some indication of what was afoot here. We did the best we could with the time we had.

Q. [Inaudible]—the criticism has been not the public lobbying effort but behind the scenes—the sense that for a long time the Republicans were lobbying against this treaty when the White House wasn't lobbying very effectively on Capitol Hill.

The President. You know, first of all, I just don't accept that. They told us that they had no interest in bringing it up. It wasn't going to come up. We had no reason to believe we could do it. Before we can lobby the Members, we have to have some sense that we're lobbying them for something. And every time you talk to somebody, they say, "Well, that's not even scheduled. That's not going to come up." And I think the interesting thing is how many made commitments before they heard any arguments one way or the other.

John [John King, Cable News Network?]

Q. But Mr. President, given the importance you've placed on this, why did you wait until 5:15 yesterday to first call the Senate majority leader? And as part of the same question, if you were the Government of China and publicly stated on the record that you're looking to mod-

ernize your nuclear arsenal, why would you not take this now as a green light to test, and will you do anything to try to convince the Chinese not to do so?

The President. Well, let me answer the first question first. The one thing I did not want to do, once it became obvious—I had nothing to do with the schedule the majority leader imposed on the treaty, and I had no advance knowledge of it, so I couldn't have talked to him before then.

At that point, he had contact—I believe he and his office—he, personally, and his office, had contacts several times a day with Mr. Berger every day from then on out. What we were trying to do was to preserve the opportunity—just to deal with the question Helen asked in the beginning, you know, if anybody was out there saying, "Well, this is about President Clinton," and we were trying to preserve the opportunity for him and Senator Daschle to make an agreement so that the Senate could do this; the Senate could put it off, could schedule hearings, could deal with it in an orderly fashion.

Then, as you may know, the night before the vote, Senator Lott and Senator Daschle did, in fact, reach an agreement to put it off. And Senator Lott apparently was unable to convince enough of his caucus to honor the agreement he had made, so he had to withdraw. And it was at that point that I called him to see if there was anything else we could do.

But we were in constant contact with his office, and Mr. Berger talked to him innumerable times. I would happily have talked to him. I thought I was giving him some protection not to do it so that he and Senator Daschle could make an agreement, and they could say the Senate did it out of a concern for the national interest, because it was manifestly the right thing to do. And I think Senator Lott believes today that putting it off was the right thing to do. I'm sorry it didn't happen.

Chinese Nuclear Testing

Q. And the question on China?

The President. Oh, China. Let me say—well, I will say again, the Chinese have taken the position we have, that they won't test. I hope they will continue to honor it. All I can tell you is, we're not going to test. I signed that treaty. It still binds us unless I go, in effect, and erase our name. Unless the President does that and takes our name off, we are bound by

it. And we've not been testing since '92. So the Chinese should have every assurance that, at least as long as this administration is here, we support nuclear testing.

Now, if we ever get a President that's against the test ban treaty—which we may get; I mean, there are plenty of people out there who say they're against it—then I think you might as well get ready for it. You'll have Russia testing. You'll have China testing. You'll have India testing. You'll have Pakistan testing. You'll have countries abandoning the nonproliferation treaty.

The reason I wouldn't make a commitment to Senator Lott not to bring this treaty up next year—let's just put that out on the table—apart from the President's prerogative, constitutional prerogative, there is a substantive reason. Four years ago, we got all the countries that were in the nonproliferation treaty—even more than have signed the test ban treaty, I think 176 of them—and they say they're either not going to develop nuclear capacity, or if they have it, they won't share it. It's very, very important.

And a lot of the countries that were edgy because their neighbors had nuclear capacity or because they had nascent nuclear capacity and they wanted to develop it more, they really wanted to know was there going to be a test ban treaty? So that if they stopped dead in their tracks, they wouldn't be discriminated against by people who were a little ahead of them, who could test. And the United States took the lead in assuring them we would continue to work until we got a test ban treaty. So we did. And that's why I was the first person to sign it, not only because I believe in the test ban treaty but because I think it is essential to reinforce the nonproliferation treaty.

Consider how each of you would feel if you were running a country and you thought you had the scientific capacity to develop these kinds of weapons and you had neighbors with them you felt threatened by, but they were a little ahead of you, and they could test and you couldn't.

So the reason I—what I told Senator Lott was, I said, "Look, I believe if next year we have indications that three or four or five countries are going to bail out on the nonproliferation treaty, I could come to you, and I could convince you that we should bring it up. And therefore, I cannot promise not to bring it up. But, barring some international emergency, I wouldn't bring this treaty up until I thought

we could get it ratified." To me it's not a matter of personal credit, it's a matter of leaving in place for the future a framework that will maximize the safety and security of the American people and minimize the prospect of nuclear conflict around the world.

So that's where it is. I hope very much that people will see in the steadfast determination of this administration and of the American people, the determination to stay on this path. And I hope they will stick with us. I think if we ever have a President and a Senate not for this test ban treaty, then all bets are off. You will see a lot of testing, and they will bail on the NPT. That's what I think will happen, and we will be in a much, much more dangerous world. But we are not there today, and I hope I can discourage people from going there.

Mark, [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio] and then Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Sir, just as you had experts saying, advocating the ratification of the treaty, the Republicans had experts saying that the treaty was dangerous. Why can't you accept the vote as a good faith expression of that opposition, rather than as a partisan attack?

The President. Oh, I have said every time that there were some Republicans who believed that in good conscience. The reason I can't accept it as only a matter of conviction are the following reasons.

Number one, they had a lot of people committed who didn't know very much about the treaty, who were asked to commit before there was ever an argument made.

Number two, the objections about the treaty essentially fall into two categories. One is that, notwithstanding the heads of the weapons labs, the entire military establishment and General Shelton's last few predecessors as Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs, and these 32 Nobel laureates, there are people who say, "I don't care what they all say; I just don't believe it. I just don't think that they can preserve the security of the nuclear arsenal without testing. Even though we're spending \$4.5 billion a year, and we're going to spend more, and we're far more likely to be able to do that than any other country in the world, I just don't believe it."

Now, my answer to them was, so we put an explicit safeguard in the treaty which says,

when we have evidence, which we don't have now, that we cannot maintain the reliability of the nuclear deterrent, if at that time it is still necessary for us to do so, then we will have to give notice and withdraw. That's what you have these safeguards for. That's in our supreme national interest.

The other major argument against the treaty was that there can be some cheating because you can't always be sure, for underground tests under 5 kilotons and particularly under 1 kiloton. The answer to that is, that's true now. And this treaty makes it more likely that we will catch such things.

That wasn't a good argument, because this treaty would give us over 300 sensors around the world. And those sensors are far more likely to pick it up. This treaty would give us the possibility of onsite inspections, something we don't have now. And this treaty would give us the possibility of marshaling a much sterner rebuke to any country that violated it than we do now.

There were other objections that were more minor, compared to these two big ones. That's why we offered these six safeguards, and invited the Senate to offer more. There were objections like this to the Chemical Weapons Convention. There are always going to be objections from the point of view of the country that feels it's in the strongest position. And that's why we have a process, an orderly process in the Senate, to allow the Senate to put these safeguards on. I think that's what Senator Byrd was saying yesterday when he voted "present" and condemned the process.

You know, keep in mind, I didn't ask them to ratify the treaty as it was written. I asked them to ratify the treaty with the six safeguards that would address those two major objections and some of the others.

Sarah, and then—[inaudible].

Deployment of U.S. Troops Abroad

Q. Do you think the American people agree with you on the fact that we send armed soldiers to every place in the world where there's a conflict?

The President. Do I think what now?

Q. Do you feel that we, the American people, agree with the policy that we send armed soldiers to other parts of the country when we're not involved, but they're having an armed conflict, and we send soldiers over there anyway?

The President. Yes, but I think—

Q. Do you think the American people agree with that?

The President. Let me say this. I think that the safer we make the world and the more we reduce the likelihood of war, the less likely we are to send people there. But you know, this is another argument for cooperation, however.

There's another point I'd like to make. The heads of the Governments of Britain, France, and Germany took the extraordinary step of writing an op-ed piece—we don't have any better allies—they took the extraordinary step of writing an op-ed piece asking us to ratify this treaty and, in any case, not to defeat it. This was also an amazing rebuke to our allies. We say, "Okay you guys are with us every time we need you, the Gulf war, the Balkans, always in NATO, you're there, but you ask us to do something for your common safety, go take a hike." And you know, I think that's a very tenuous position.

If you look at what we did, we took a very leading role in trying to stop the violence and promote the integrity of the referendum in East Timor, a long way away. The Australians, the New Zealanders, the other countries in that region, they stepped right up and took the lion's share of the burden. They didn't expect America to do that. They asked us to help them with certain services that we are capable of providing, but they stepped right up. They looked to us and say, "You know, keep leading the world toward nonproliferation. We'll do this work with you." We say to them, "Go take a hike." I think it was a very dubious decision.

Go ahead.

Fiscal Year 2000 Budget

Q. Mr. President, a question on the budget. Are you saying that you would veto a Republican plan for across-the-board spending cuts? And since they are adamantly opposed to your tobacco tax hikes and your loophole closings, and both of you don't want to spend the Social Security surplus, what is the way out of this box to avoid another Government shutdown?

The President. Well, first of all, I would veto a bill that I thought—here at the moment of our greatest prosperity, when we've got a surplus, if they wanted to cut education and gut our efforts to put more teachers in the schools, our efforts to give kids after-school programs,

our efforts to do all of the things we're trying to do in education—hook up their computers to the schools by 2000, the Internet, all the classrooms to the Internet by 2000—all these things we're trying to do, would I veto that? I would. I would have to do that. I would have no choice. It would be unconscionable to think that America, at its moment of greatest prosperity, when we've got our first surplus in 30 years, is out there cutting education and several other areas. So, yes, I would.

Secondly, I know for ideological reasons they don't want to raise the tobacco tax, but just yesterday one of their long-time allies, Philip Morris, acknowledged that cigarettes cause cancer. And we know that more needs to be done to get our kids off tobacco. And we know that raising the price of a pack of cigarettes is one of the best ways to do it. So we—you know, they don't have to agree to raise it as much as I proposed, but it would help to sit down and negotiate that. If they don't like my offsets, what are their offsets? Maybe there are some other things we could agree on. We won't know unless we have a serious conversation.

I think the best way to do this is to avoid spending the Social Security surplus, even though it's been done every year for at least 16 years and was done before in times of deficits. This is a new thing, you know, not spending it. The only reason they're proposing not to spend it is that we have non-Social Security surplus, though much smaller.

There is a good reason not to spend it. And the good reason not to spend it is, number one, it will help us to pay down the debt and get this country out of debt in 15 years, for the first time in 165 years. Number two, it enables us to achieve interest savings, and those interest savings, I believe, for 5 years should be put back in the Trust Fund, and that will run the life of Social Security out to 2050 and take into account the retirement of all the baby boomers. So I hope we can do it.

But in order to do it, we're going to have to make some hard decisions. But it looks to me like, though, the decisions that I propose to make are less hard than slashing education at a time of great prosperity when you've got the biggest and most diverse student population in history or raising taxes on poor people, which was another one of their proposals or all these gimmicks. I mean, they proposed—for example, if they do this 13-month thing, you know, where

they just, we spend the money this year but play like we're spending it next year, then they're just going to make an even bigger headache. We'll have the same headache next year. And we'll be here a year from now, and you will be asking me these same questions.

They say that the ordinary operations of the Pentagon are an emergency. That's one of the things they're considering. The ordinary operations of the Pentagon are an emergency. I think that will come as a surprise to people who have been working there for 10 or 20 years.

Susan [Susan Page, *USA Today*].

2000 Election Issues

Q. Mr. President, every 4 years the American people revise and adjust what they're looking for in the President they're about to elect, often, in reaction to the President who is about to leave office. And I wonder if, looking ahead, what you think Americans are looking for in the President they'll elect next year? And if there are ways in which those qualities or qualifications are different from what they were looking for in 1992 and 1996 when you were elected?

The President. Well, I think that one big difference is the country is going to be in good shape instead of bad shape. And so they're going to be—right now, unless something unforeseen happens, by next February we'll have the longest expansion in history, peacetime or wartime. We'll have a 26-year-low in crime rate, a 30-year-low in the welfare rolls, a 29-year-low in unemployment, first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. We'll have—the social fabric of America will be mending. And the economy is lifting. We have a low in poverty rate of 20 years.

So I think they'll be looking for things and thinking about—and they will know that they have a chance to shape the future in a way that we've not had in my lifetime. And so, I can only tell you what I think. What I think they will be looking for is someone who will offer big ideas about how to make sure that we deal with the aging of America, as we double the number of people over 65, how we deal with the explosion of children and their increasing diversity.

I hope that they will say—we see a little bit in this debate on the gun safety issue in the Senate now. I hope they will say, "Oh, it's fine we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years. We want to vote for somebody that'll make this

the safest big country in the world.” And I hope they will say that they are now much more concerned than they were able to be in ’92, when people were worried about how they were going to get from one month to the next, that they really, really want us to make a sustained effort to bring opportunity to all the people and places that are still trapped in poverty. And I hope they will say that—they’ve been given a new issue now. I hope they will say that they don’t want America to adopt a new isolationism, they want us to lead into the future. So there is a different sort of thing there. I also think that they want somebody who can deal in a sensitive way with the continuing evidence we have of violence in our country and of people manifesting all kinds of bigotry, that in its most extreme version you see in the killings in the Middle West and the shootings at the Jewish community school and all of that.

But it’s a different world. On balance, it’s better, but I think we’re much more sensitive than we were 7 years ago to the problems of the poor among us, and that’s a good thing. And I think we’re much more sensitive to the problems of discrimination and violence against people because of their race or their religion or their sexual orientation.

You know, I hope that they will want someone, and I hope who will try as hard as I have tried and maybe be more successful—although I think they’ll have to make some changes in Congress to do that—to create a genuine, constructive, bipartisan atmosphere. We get it here, but we get it about once a year, and it doesn’t last long enough to suit me. When we get it, great things happen. [Laughter]

Mary, [Mary McGrory, Washington Post] did you have a question?

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty

Q. Yes, sir. I was wondering if you have any plans to protect the ABM Treaty, which will almost certainly be the next target of the Senate Republicans, looking to start Star Wars?

The President. As you have—all of you have reported this, we have continued to work on missile defense. We spend quite a good deal of money on it. Some preliminary tests are encouraging. If we have the potential to protect our people against missiles that could be loaded with nuclear weapons or chemical or biological weapons, coming at us from other countries—and this does not include the Russians with

whom we have this ABM Treaty but all of these other countries that are trying to get missile technology—and it would be the responsible thing to try to deploy such a system.

The problem is, any such system, even a ground-based one, would violate the literal terms of the ABM Treaty. Now, there are—as you’ve said, Mary, there are people in the United States Congress who would like to just tear up the ABM Treaty and go on. I, personally, think that would be a terrible mistake. Look, we are—for all of our ups and downs and rough edges, we are working with the Russians, and we have made real progress in reducing threats as a result of it. And let me just tick off a few things. They continue to reduce their nuclear arsenals. If they ratify START II, we’ll take our nuclear arsenals to 80 percent below their cold-war high. We’re prepared to go into START III negotiations with them if we do. They’ve also taken their troops out of the Baltics, and they’ve gotten nuclear weapons out of all those other former Soviet republics.

We’re getting something out of this, this partnership. And we, I think, would be very foolish to just discard the ABM Treaty.

So what we’re trying to do is see whether or not we can work with the Russians in a way that enhances their security and ours, to share some of the benefits of these developments, and to go forward in a way that convinces them that they’re not the problem. We’re also trying to do other things to minimize the problem. As you know, we’ve been working very hard with North Korea to try to end the missile program there.

So I do not want to throw the ABM Treaty away. I do think it is the responsible thing to do to continue to pursue what appears to be far more promising than many had thought, including me a few years ago, in terms of missile defense. But we have to try to work the two things out together. And I’m confident that if the Russians believe it is in their security interest to do so, that we can. And that will happen if we work with them. If we just scrap the ABM Treaty, it won’t happen, and our insecurity will increase.

Bill [Bill Plante, CBS News], go ahead. I’ll take both of you, just one after the other. Go ahead.

Judge Susan Webber Wright's Decision

Q. Mr. President, you've never commented on Judge Wright's decision that you intentionally lied in the Jones deposition. Do you accept her finding? And if not, why have you or your attorneys not challenged it?

The President. When I am out of office, I will have a lot to say about this. Until then, I'm going to honor my commitment to all of you, to go back to work. I haven't challenged anything, including things that I consider to be questionable, because I think it is wrong. The American people have been put through enough, and they need every hour, every day, every minute I can give them thinking about their business. And so until I leave here, as I understand it now, all this is finished, and I don't have to comment on it. And unless there is some reason I legally have to, I'm not going to say anything else that doesn't relate to my responsibilities as President as regards to that. When I'm done, then I can say what I want to say.

Go ahead.

Dismantling of Strategic Arms Controls

Q. Mr. President, one of the arguments that some of your closest friends in the Senate make about this situation with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty is that the Republicans aren't just after that treaty or the ABM Treaty, that really what they want to do is embark on the full dismantling of all strategic arms controls. We've known it since the end of the cold war.

The Republican argument is that arms control is an illusion and a delusion, that it lulls us into a false sense of security, and that it drains our will to maintain our military might. What do you think of those arguments? What's your response to them?

The President. Imagine the world we will live in if they prevail. I mean, imagine the world we will live in if they prevail. That's what I think of them. I mean, look, are we more secure because we made an agreement with the Russians to reduce our nuclear arsenals? I believe we are. Are we more secure, given the economic and political tensions in that area that we made an agreement with the Russians to take those nuclear weapons out of Kazakhstan and Ukraine and Belarus? I believe we are. Are we more secure because other countries are not testing nuclear weapons and can only do so much in

the laboratory? I believe we are. I think these arms control agreements have created a climate in the world which has helped to make us far more secure and helped to reduce the likelihood that nuclear weapons will ever be used again.

If the United States, with all of our wealth, all of our strength, more nuclear weapons than anybody else, says we are so insecure that we want more, more, more, what in the wide world could we ever say to the Chinese; to the Russians, who I hope will not be on their backs economically forever; to the Indians and the Pakistanis, who I hope will not be on their backs economically forever, to the Indians and the Pakistanis, who have all kinds of arguments, one against the other, and involving other countries; to countries that believe we are too aggressive in the world already and don't share a lot of our political or our philosophical views?

You know, I'm glad you said that. You're right. They don't believe that, and they think we ought to go it alone. It doesn't bother them that we don't pay our U.N. dues. It doesn't bother them that we're giving the Pentagon money in their budget that the Pentagon didn't ask for and say is not necessary for our national security, but they won't fund a decent investment in diplomacy and helping to lift the world's poor in places where people are trying to make democracy take root; that we're not funding our obligations under the Middle East peace process, our obligations to help the Russians continue to dismantle their nuclear weapons. That's right, and they do believe that. And I go back to what Mark said, there are—I don't believe they're yet the majority in the Republican caucus, but they are a very, very potent minority. And they do believe this. But I think they're wrong. And the American people must understand that this is one of the choices they now have to make.

Q. Mr. President, you said imagine a world without these agreements. Please give some examples of what you're driving at, because they said it's going to be a terrific world without these agreements, that America is going to be safer without the agreements than it is with them.

The President. First of all, we're all tied in knots now over this budget, right? I mean, it's totally unnecessary, but we are. We shouldn't be. Now, can you imagine if we had no arms control agreements? Let's just suppose we tore

them all up tomorrow—nothing, no non-proliferation agreement. Then this same crowd would be coming in and saying, “Well, now there’s no nonproliferation agreements, you know, and here’s a list of 12 countries that we think they have two scientists who can figure out how to put together a small nuclear weapon. And there’s no Chemical Weapons Convention or Biological Weapons Convention, so they’ve got those labs chugging right along here. And therefore, we need you to increase the budget for all this to the labs and the Pentagon by another \$30 or \$40 or \$50 billion a year. So, I’m sorry, we’ll just have to get out of the business of funding education. We can’t afford to invest any more in health care. The American people just have to figure out what to do on their own.” It would totally erode the fabric of our domestic climate.

Meanwhile, what happens overseas? Countries that could be putting money into the education and health care and development of their children, whether they’re democracies or military dictatorships or communist countries, will be sitting there saying, “Well, you know, we’d like to lower the infant mortality rate. We’d like to lower the hunger rate. We’d like to lower the poverty rate. We’d like to raise the literacy rate. But look at what the Americans are doing. Look at what our neighbors are doing. Let’s spend half our money on military.” It would be great for the people that build this stuff, but for everybody else it would be a nightmare.

Consider the Japanese, coming out, we earnestly hope, of their long economic slump, having honored, since World War II, their commitment to be a non-nuclear state and to spend a small percentage of their income on defense. What in the world would they do in such a world? And if they had to divert 4, 5, 6 percent of their gross national product to defense, what kind of economic partner would they be?

What would happen in Latin America, the area which has been the area that was the greatest growth for us in trade? After we have worked so hard, you’ve got Brazil to renounce its nuclear program. You’ve got former adversaries working together in trade agreements. What would happen if they all of a sudden got antsy and decided, “Well, you know, we have no national status. Our people, you know, we’ll have the same elements in our country saying we can’t defend ourselves. We’ve got to

have a biological program, a chemical program, a nuclear program.”

I mean, you know, all this sounds good. But the idea that the best way for us to go forward—since right now, at this particular moment in history, we enjoy the greatest wealth and the greatest power—is to build this big old wall and tell all of our friends and neighbors to go take a hike. “We’re not cooperating with them anymore. As far as we’re concerned, any might be an enemy, and anything you want to do with your money is fine with us, because we have more money than you do, so whatever you do, we’ll do more.”

I think it will be a bleak, poor, less secure world. I don’t want my children and my grandchildren or your children or your grandchildren to live in it. They believe that. I will do everything I can to stop it.

Yes.

Senate Action on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Q. Sir, isn’t it wishful thinking for the Democrats to think they can beat up on the Republicans next year over this treaty vote? Yes, public opinions show that most Americans do support the treaty. But you were not able, despite your 30-plus public appearances, you were not able to light a fire under public opinion. Can’t the Republicans just walk away from this without any damage, particularly in the post-cold-war era? Isn’t it true that Americans just don’t worry about the nuclear threat?

The President. I think there is something to that. But you know, it was interesting; as I understand it, one of the reasons this came up—from what my Republican friends in the Senate say—is that the Republicans were worried that the Democrats would keep beating on this next year if they didn’t bring it up and dispose of it this year, and they were afraid it would be a political issue. I never wanted it to be a political issue. I never wanted the Chemical Weapons Treaty to be a political issue. I never thought this stuff would be a political issue. I always thought we’d have a bipartisan consensus to do what had to be done.

So they may have made it a political issue now, and it may or may not have any impact. But I will say this. I will say again—I believe the American people eventually—I think they will stay where they are, and I think we’ll eventually get this treaty ratified. But it may be

in every democracy—you know, the people decide what they care about. I told Senator Lott that I did not expect that this would ever be such a big issue. I think it might be now, and the people have to decide. This is part of the choices a free people make, and it's an important choice, and we'll just see what they do.

Yes, go ahead.

Protests at the World Trade Organization Meeting in Seattle

Q. Labor unions have stepped up their criticisms of the World Trade Organization and plan to demonstrate at the talks next month. You've sought to answer some of their concerns, but it's not likely that you're going to answer all of them before then. Is that going to weaken the U.S. negotiating position in the talks?

The President. No, because there will be a lot of people from other countries there demonstrating against it, too. [Laughter] I mean, you're going to have—there will be a lot of people there against it. And I think—I want to say two things. First of all, I am committed to launching a new trade round which will expand opportunities for us and for others on a fair basis. For example, if we stop export subsidies to agriculture, 85 percent of which are in Europe today, it would benefit farmers in my home State of Arkansas, but it would also benefit farmers in Argentina and farmers in Africa. And I would like to see that done.

I would like to see us make a commitment that electronic commerce would continue to be tax free. And I would like to see us continue to make progress in other areas, because 3 out of 10—30 percent of our growth came from trade-related growth, until the Asian financial crisis, and because I think it's the best way to lift labor standards and to give countries the money they need to protect their environment. So I will continue to push for this.

Now, having said that, I don't think it's such a bad thing that all these people are coming to Seattle to demonstrate. Why? Because I went to Geneva to speak to the WTO, and then I went back to Geneva to speak to the International Labor Organizations to say that particularly those of us in the wealthier countries have a heavy responsibility to try to put a more human face on the global economy. And that means you have to bring labor interests and environmental interests into these deliberations, that not only do these factors have to be consid-

ered but the people themselves have to be heard. I think it is very important. And so we have proposed, for example, a trade and labor group, coming out of the WTO. We want to see more work done in the environmental area.

But the point I'd like to make is—if you'll just let me get off on this one little area in which I have an obsession—I think that, while I'm all for big ideas—you asked me about what the next campaign should be about; I'm all for big ideas—the world is still largely in the grip of a big idea that isn't true anymore. And that big idea is that in order for any country that's not rich to get rich, they have to burn more fossil fuels and put more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, because that's the way we got rich, and that's the way the British got rich, and that's the way other countries got rich. And that's not true anymore.

The whole economics of energy and the economy have changed. And we could have a revolution in the environment with more trade and investment in available, presently available, environmental technologies and alternative energy sources. That's just one example.

But it won't necessarily happen automatically. And just as—look at the domestic market in America. We have about the freest markets you can imagine here. It's easier for—if any of you folks could leave what you're doing, if you weren't so devoted to it, and go make more money probably doing something else, you could get venture capital; you could come up with some idea; you'd fooled around with your computer so much you could probably start some new Internet company and be worth a couple hundred million dollars in no time. And that happens all the time. [Laughter] You know, those of you who are over 25 may be too old to do it, now. That's where all the money—[laughter].

But you know, we have an open economy. But what makes it work? We've got a Federal Reserve that works. We've got a Securities and Exchange Commission that works. We've got protections for consumers. We've got protections against monopolies. We have intermediate institutions.

The trading system and the financial system, the global financial markets and the global trading system, are creating a global economy. We need some intermediate involvement from labor and environment, just to name two, to make sure that we build an economy that benefits

everybody and that literally has a more human face on it.

And so I'm actually not all that upset those folks are coming to Seattle. I welcome them. But if their fundamental view is, if we had less trade instead of more, that every economy could be self-sustaining and the environment would be better and people would make more money, I think that is simply not true. And I think you can demonstrate that's not true. So I want an expansive trade round that helps America and helps them, too.

Let me just make one final point. I have done everything I could to get the wealthy countries to do more for the poor countries. We're trying to pass an Africa trade initiative here, and a Caribbean Basin initiative. And it does have bipartisan support. Let me say that I'm grateful for the Republicans that are helping us with it. And I think we've got a chance to pass it this year. We're trying to get debt relief for the poorest countries in the world.

So I'm sympathetic with all these negative feelings. But one of the things that spawns these kind of negative feelings is, these folks feel like they've been shut out. They think the WTO is some rich guys' club where people get in and talk in funny language and use words nobody understands and make a bunch of rules that help the people that already have and stick it to the people that have not. That's what they think. And so if we're going to change their perception, we've got to listen to their protests and bring them into the tent and go forward taking these concerns into account.

Gun Buy-Back Program

Q. Mr. President, you have alluded several times to anticrime initiatives, and a big part of your anticrime initiatives are gun buy-back programs. Recent studies that are coming out—that have come out—that are coming out show that a lot of people that hand these guns in are old shotguns that don't work. They're from the attic. They're from the basement, whatever. They're really not the kinds of guns that were used in Los Angeles in some of the high profile crimes that the nation has been so fixed on in recent months.

Basically, I'm wondering, are you concerned that in putting so much focus on these buy-back programs that other initiatives like they've tried in Richmond, that have proven successful, and in Philadelphia, might languish as a result?

The President. Well, first let me say that I do believe that the gun buy-back programs will get all kinds of guns. And obviously, if you wanted the money and you didn't care about the gun, those are the easiest to give up. If you've got some old gun that doesn't work and you want \$25 or whatever you get for it, it's a good way to get it.

But keep in mind there are over—I don't know what the exact number is—but there is almost one gun for every person in America. There are way over 200 million guns in America. And all the new gun purchases, handgun purchases at least, require background checks. So I still think the more you can get done with that the better. I still think the more the better.

I agree with the import of your question, however. It would be a great mistake to emphasize that to the exclusion of law enforcement strategies that plainly work like the one in Richmond, like the one in Boston that led to no child being killed by gun violence in nearly 2 years. It would be a great mistake to think that's a substitute for closing the loopholes in both our assault weapons bill and the Brady bill, especially the gun show loophole. It would be a great mistake to think that that could substitute for our efforts to put 50,000 more police officers on the street in the areas that still have crime rates that are still too high.

So I think we should stick with the gun buy-back program. I think we're spending about \$15 million on it, not an enormous amount of money, but it should be only one part of a very comprehensive strategy.

Yes, in the back.

Japan

Q. Mr. President, about steel imports from Japan. Why are you delaying your decision under Section 201 charges against Japanese steel wire? The ITC was divided; your advisers are divided, according to Mr. Sperling yesterday. Does that mean that you don't see any compelling reasons for taking action to protect domestic producers? And also, next, about CTBT, does Japan have any special role to play in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons?

The President. Let me answer the first question first. You answered the first question for me. I have delayed a decision because the ITC was divided, and my advisers are divided. So I have to make the decision. [Laughter] And it's a complicated issue, and I'm trying to work

it through. And I only got the background material on it, oh, in the last few days. And as you know, we've been otherwise preoccupied with the test ban treaty. So I only looked at it, I don't know, yesterday, the day before, even at first blush.

So it's a decision that I will have to make and for which everyone can hold me responsible, because our people have not yet been able—they can't resolve all the details themselves. I will do what I think is right. You should not infer from the fact that a decision has been made that I will grant no relief, because I have not decided whether to grant relief or not. And I will decide in the most timely fashion I can.

Now on the second question you asked, which I think is the far more important question, I think in a way Japan may be in a unique position to play a role of global importance now. Why? Because Japan is by far the wealthiest, strongest country in the world without a nuclear program. And if the Japanese say—go to the Chinese and say, "Don't start testing;" go to the Indians and say, "Don't start testing;" go

to the Pakistanis and say, "Don't start testing again;" say, "We want to stay where we are; we want to live in a 21st century world where our competition is commercial, not military, where we're worried about ideas, not atoms," I think it will have a very important effect in this period when people are going to try to sort out how they feel about what I've said at this press conference today as against the vote last night.

So I personally believe Japan can play a remarkably positive role. And I have great confidence in Prime Minister Obuchi; he's done a terrific job. And I hope that Japan will play that role.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 182d news conference began at 2:04 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan; Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India; and Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan.

Remarks Dedicating the United States Secret Service Memorial Building *October 14, 1999*

Thank you very much, Secretary Summers, Director Stafford, Commissioner Peck, Monsignor Vaghi, Ms. Worley, Congressman Kolbe and Congressman Hoyer, Sergeant at Arms Livingood, Mr. Berger, Secretary Johnson. And I especially appreciate the presence of three former Directors of the Secret Service here today, Eljay Bowron and John Magaw and Stu Knight. I thank them for coming.

I thank the Marines for giving us such wonderful music today. Didn't they do a great job? *[Applause.]* I think that's the only thing I'm going to miss more than Air Force One when I'm gone, having music everywhere I go, provided by the Marines. *[Laughter]*

I wanted to be here for a number of reasons today. At first, I just wanted to look out and see some friendly faces. I just finished a press conference. *[Laughter]* It's nice to do that. I wanted to see this beautiful building, and I knew I would be given the experience of seeing this beautiful building. I want to thank Larry

Cockell for letting me come in the front door today. *[Laughter]* You know, usually when I go into a building the Secret Service makes me go into an underground parking garage, past all the garbage—*[laughter]*—up the service elevator. You think—the last time I went to the Hilton here, I have been in the service entrance so much that they had an employee in every section of the Hilton Hotel, in every part of—*[inaudible]*—they met me when I came in, and they gave me a laminated employee ID card. *[Laughter]* Just something else I owe to the Secret Service.

I also was hoping that I might get another invitation to try out some more of the Secret Service training that I got at Beltsville, with Hillary, a couple of years ago. We're still looking for that escape pod on Air Force One. We haven't found that yet. *[Laughter]*

I want to also say how much I appreciate the leadership that Brian is giving to the Secret Service. The only apprehension I had about his

becoming the Director was that he wanted to extend the protection of the PPD to country music singers and motorcycle gangs—[laughter]—and I had to draw the line somewhere.

Actually, I came here most of all to say thanks. I compliment the architects, the contractors, and all those involved in the construction of this magnificent building. And I do believe it will reinforce all the values and sense of community that Brian talked about.

Harry Truman once said, the Secret Service was the only boss he had as President, with the exception of Mrs. Truman. And even when I don't like it, I have to admit that's true. And I came here to say thank you on behalf of Hillary and Chelsea and myself. I know Hillary wanted to be here today. I can't tell you how—I feel about the Secret Service the way I sometimes feel about some of my friends in the Congress: I like them a lot more than they like me.

They've had to put up with me on so many different occasions, under such stress. You know, you wake up in the morning, and you're worried about something else, and you take it out by being a little short. You're impatient because you're tired and you've got a headache. They have to put up with all of it and act like you're still President, even when you're not acting like it; you're really being a person.

I think of all the sacrifices that the Secret Service and the PPD has made. I think about all these long, exhausting trips we take. I've seen the worried look in the agents' eyes whenever I get out and make some spontaneous stop into an unmaggged crowd. A lot of times at night, I'm working late, and I come down, and I walk in between—sometimes after midnight—between the office and the house, and the agents are always there. And I often wonder how many children they have and how hard it must be for them to be awake while their children are sleeping and sleeping while their children are awake.

Sometimes, I just worry that they're going to have a heart attack on the job. I never will forget the first time—all the Secret Service who have been in PPD know this—there's this sort of, this elaborate little electronic guard system out around the White House. And if anything triggers the alarm, if you'll forgive me, all hell breaks loose for the Secret Service. You know, they're convinced that, you know, 45 terrorists

are storming the gates; they have to do it. That's why we're all so taken care of.

Anything, any little old thing, can trigger that deal. And I remember the first time that happened. I didn't know it. I was up on the third floor of the White House, and the Residence is on the second floor, and I didn't know what happens. So what happens is, the elevator stops, and the SWAT team occupies the staircase with their semiautomatic weapons.

So they're all looking for somebody that's invading the White House. I come tromping down the staircase to the third floor; this guy comes rushing up on the second floor. I look up, and there he is with his weapon pointed at me, and I thought: This would be a heck of a note for the Secret Service. [Laughter] "Clinton killed by agent protecting the President." [Laughter] That poor—I think he still has nightmares about that. [Laughter]

We're all laughing about it, but this is a hard job. And it's an important job. And it's important, the protections that are provided to other people and all the other things the Secret Service does, and I want to say more about that in a moment. But especially, I want everyone to know—I want Larry and Donny and all the people on PPD and all their predecessors to know how profoundly grateful I am for the way my wife and my daughter and I have been treated and genuinely cared for and protected, whether we like it or not. It has made an enormous degree of difference in the confidence with which I think the American people can express toward their Government, and we are all in your debt.

I also want to thank you for naming this building after the 32 brave men and women who gave their lives in guarding our democracy and in whose memory the building now stands. Ten of those 32, I'm sad to say, lost their lives during my Presidency, including the 6 in the Oklahoma City bombing, one of the most difficult events in my life.

You have honored their memory in two ways: First, by naming this building in their honor; and second, by using this building to continue your mission and their mission. Most people know the Secret Service as these sort of mysterious, stone-faced figures that are either steely eyed or masked behind sexy sunglasses, protecting Presidents and visiting world leaders. They don't know much about the ongoing efforts of the Secret Service to protect the integrity

of our financial system, but that's a proud history that stretches back 130 years now.

When our country was awash in counterfeit currency after the Civil War, America turned to the Secret Service. When three Presidents were assassinated in four decades, America turned to the Secret Service, broadening the mandate at the beginning of this century to include protective duties.

Now, with the new challenges we face in a new and rapidly changing world, America still turns to the Secret Service. You are out there every day, fighting telecommunications fraud, credit card fraud, computer crimes, counterfeiting, abuses of Government programs, taking on your investigative and protective assignments across the country and all around the world.

Regardless of the times or the tasks, there has always been a thread of honor and integrity, trust, and true confident performance, also, a remarkable ability to adapt to change and chal-

lenge. Those values are symbolized in this building. It is a solid, solid building, standing on a firm foundation but looking toward the future.

So, today, I'm honored to join you in dedicating this building and honoring the memory of those who gave their lives for what you do every day and in saying a special, special word of profound appreciation for the many sacrifices so many have made for me and my family and our country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:47 p.m. in the Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Monsignor Peter J. Vaghi, pastor, St. Patrick's Church, who gave the invocation; and Debra L. Worley, headquarters consolidation project manager, and Larry Cockell, Special Agent-in-Charge, Presidential Protective Division, U.S. Secret Service.

Statement on the Nomination of Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart To Be United States Space Command Commander in Chief and Related Positions

October 14, 1999

I am pleased to nominate Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart, United States Air Force, to be Commander in Chief, United States Space Command; Commander in Chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command; Commander, Air Force Space Command; and Department of Defense Manager for Space Transportation Systems Contingency Support. If confirmed by the Senate, General Eberhart will succeed Gen. Richard B. Myers.

General Eberhart currently serves as the Commander of the Air Combat Command. Over a distinguished career, General Eberhart has gained extensive operational and planning experience and demonstrated tremendous leadership ability. A Command Pilot, he commanded the 10th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the 363d Tac-

tical Fighter Wing, U.S. Forces Japan, and the 5th Air Force, as well as Air Combat Command. His broad professional experience also includes significant tours on the Joint Staff and Air Staff in the Pentagon and on the staff of Commander in Chief, U.S. Air Forces, Europe.

General Eberhart assumes the post of Commander in Chief, United States Space Command, at a time when U.S. capabilities in space have become critical to our economic prosperity, our position of leadership in the world, and our national security. He will be charged with protecting and extending those capabilities, and as well as taking on new responsibilities for information operations. I have the utmost trust and confidence in his ability to do so.

Statement on the Nomination of Gen. Richard B. Myers To Be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

October 14, 1999

I am pleased to nominate Gen. Richard B. Myers, United States Air Force, to be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If confirmed by the Senate, General Myers will succeed Gen. Joseph J. Ralston.

General Myers currently serves as Commander in Chief, United States Space Command; Commander in Chief, North American Aerospace Defense Command; and Commander, Air Force Space Command. He brings to the position of Vice Chairman extensive operational and planning experience as well as proven leadership ability. During this distinguished career, General Myers commanded the 335th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the 325th Tactical Training

Wing, the 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, U.S. Forces Japan, the 5th Air Force, and U.S. Pacific Air Forces. He is a Command Pilot with more than 3,900 flying hours, including combat missions in Vietnam. His broad professional experience also includes significant tours on the Joint Staff and Air Staff in the Pentagon.

General Myers assumes the post of Vice Chairman at a time of diverse challenges for our Armed Forces, ranging from preserving and enhancing military readiness to modernizing and transforming our forces to maintain our military superiority in the 21st century. I have the utmost trust and confidence in his ability to meet these challenges.

Statement on the Nomination of Gen. Joseph J. Ralston To Be Supreme Allied Commander Europe

October 14, 1999

I am pleased to announce that I have nominated Gen. Joseph J. Ralston, United States Air Force, to succeed Gen. Wesley K. Clark, United States Army, as Supreme Allied Commander Europe. This nomination is subject to the approval of the North Atlantic Council's Defense Planning Committee. Upon Defense Planning Committee approval of his nomination as Supreme Allied Commander Europe, I intend to send forward to Congress General Ralston's nomination to serve as Commander in Chief, United States European Command.

General Ralston's distinguished career spans three decades, with significant operational and policy experience. He established impeccable credentials as a military commander while commanding the 68th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the 56th Tactical Training Wing, the U.S. Alaskan Command, the 11th Air Force, and the Air Combat Command. He has served with

great distinction as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff over the past 3½ years, providing excellent advice and support for two Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairmen and two Secretaries of Defense.

This is a time of significant change within the North Atlantic Alliance, as NATO continues the work of building a secure and undivided Europe. General Clark is doing an extraordinary job as Supreme Allied Commander Europe. He led Allied forces to a brilliant victory in Operation Allied Force and is demonstrating similarly impressive leadership as KFOR provides the security necessary to build a lasting and just peace in Kosovo. I know he will continue his dynamic leadership of NATO forces in Europe during the remainder of his tour. I have utmost confidence that General Ralston will be a worthy successor.

Statement on the Death of Former President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania October 14, 1999

On behalf of the American people, Hillary and I extend our deepest sympathies to the family of former President Julius Nyerere, to President Mkapa, and the people of Tanzania. President Nyerere's death is a great loss for Tanzania, for Africa, and for the international community as a whole.

President Nyerere was a pioneering leader for freedom and self-government in Africa. Many African leaders sought his guidance as they crafted their own new societies.

President Nyerere dedicated his life to a vision rooted in the belief that all people have

a responsibility to protect those who cannot protect themselves. He practiced this ethic personally, aiding not only courageous African leaders but also ordinary victims of regional conflict; he opened Tanzania's borders to refugees from wars in Mozambique, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo, and Uganda.

President Nyerere's legacy of determination and compassion lives on in the generous people of Tanzania today. We join our friends in Tanzania and Africa in celebrating his achievements and mourning his death. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family and his fellow citizens.

Memorandum on Individual Training Accounts for Federal Employees October 14, 1999

*Memorandum for the Director of the Office of
Personnel Management*

*Subject: Individual Training Accounts for
Federal Workers*

Thank you for forwarding the options and recommendations of the Task Force on Federal Training Technology on establishing individual training accounts (ITAs) for Federal employees.

Your report provides a thoughtful and thorough review of the ways ITAs may be used to improve the quality of training available to Federal workers. The skills needed by Federal workers, the technologies available for training, and the institutions capable of delivering high-quality training are all changing rapidly. Individual employees may be in the best position to discover opportunities in this fast changing market; ITAs can give them needed flexibility.

Improving the efficiency and quality of Federal Government services in the years ahead will require educated workers to fill new jobs and allow incumbent workers to continuously upgrade their knowledge and skill base. We have an obligation to explore the use of new technologies to provide cost-effective, high-quality, and accessible training to ensure that we provide the kind of working environment that attracts and retains outstanding working men and women.

After reviewing your report, it is clear that ITAs merit further exploration because of their potential for improving Federal training. The Task Force points out that while a number of private firms, State governments, and foreign governments are currently implementing ITAs, the programs are not fully tested. I support the Task Force recommendation that Federal agencies should begin a series of pilot projects and develop tools for evaluating their success. I therefore direct that OPM work with the Task Force to develop a guidance for agencies to use in developing and evaluating ITA pilot projects.

I understand that the Task Force also is making steady progress in developing recommendations for Federal agencies to make effective use of technology to improve training opportunities. I look forward to reviewing the final Task Force report and learning more about the development of the demonstrations of advanced learning technologies being proposed by the Executive departments. Particularly valuable are the Task Force's recommendations regarding how agencies can use their combined procurement power to stimulate development of high-quality training technologies conforming to standards used in commercial and university instruction. Your

work will serve not only to strengthen the Federal workforce and ensure that the American taxpayers receive the best service possible, but can also accelerate the development of technologies useful in schools and companies throughout the Nation.

I appreciate your leadership, the commitment of the Task Force, and the dedicated service of your staff, particularly Emzell Blanton, the Executive Director of the Task Force, in ensuring the success of this important effort.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks to the NCAA Men's and Women's Basketball Champions October 14, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Well, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the White House. I want to say a special word of welcome to Purdue Coach Carolyn Peck and UConn Coach Jim Calhoun and their wonderful teams; and we're honored to be joined by two Members of Congress from Connecticut, John Larson and Nancy Johnson.

Usually, you know, the Members of Congress, they stand in front of the team, and I shake hands with them, and then I go shake hands with the team. And I started shaking hands with the UConn team, and Nancy Johnson was the fourth person in the line, and I wondered what position she could possibly have played. [*Laughter*]

Well, we're delighted that they're both here, and the two Connecticut Senators, Joe Lieberman and Chris Dodd were also here. They had to go vote, and they're going to try to get back before we finish. But we thank them for coming.

It's a great honor for me today to welcome the Purdue Lady Boilermakers and the UConn Huskies, two talented basketball teams who remained focused enough to win the most coveted prize in college basketball. It's a kind of a joke around the White House that I am a fanatic basketball fan, that I frequently misbehave during the NCAA tournament—[*laughter*—especially if the Arkansas Razorbacks aren't playing well that year.

But I studied these teams very closely. I'd like to—I think that I would like to begin by making two acknowledgements that are important to the human element of basketball. First of all, the Lady Boilermakers lost one of their teammates, Tiffany Young, last August in a car accident, and her parents are here. And I'd like to acknowledge their presence and thank them

for coming. Would you—well, they're here somewhere. There they are.

And in this week, I can't help noting that on Monday we lost one of the greatest basketball players of all time, Wilt Chamberlain, whose dedication, determination, and performance inspired countless Americans, most of whom never scored 100 points in a single game.

Wilt Chamberlain once said, in his rather wry and funny way, "They say nobody is perfect. Then, they tell you practice makes perfect. I wish they'd make up their mind." [*Laughter*] One thing is clear. With practice and talent, UConn and Purdue got pretty close to perfect. They both beat two very talented Duke Blue Devil teams.

This was a season of firsts. First time a men's team from New England had won the NCAA tournament since Harry Truman lived in the White House; the first time the Purdue women or the UConn men ever won a national championship.

Let me begin by saluting the Lady Boilermakers. All America was awed by your performance. I understand it was fueled by power naps and peanut butter. [*Laughter*] If that's true, I think I'll stay with them both. [*Laughter*]

They had a dazzling 34–1 season record. I told the coach when we were starting this that I happened to see one night, on television, their early-season victory against Tennessee. Because, you know, Tennessee's coming here has become a kind of regular event—[*laughter*—Coach Summitt and her husband and her wonderful son have become friends of ours. And Al Gore was in a slump the next day. [*Laughter*] And he said, "Well, they must have had an off night." And I said, "Al, I watched the game. They didn't have an off night." [*Laughter*] "That Purdue

team is great. It's going to be hard for anybody to beat them." And it turned out to be right.

I want to mention the extraordinary contributions of the co-captains of the team. MVP Ukari Figgs turned around the final game with 18 points. All-American Stephanie White-McCarty amassed the second-highest number of points in the history of Purdue.

Basketball is a team effort. It depends upon everyone working together and relies heavily on good leadership. The Boilermakers had a lot of both. As the first African-American woman ever to win the NCAA championship as a coach, Carolyn Peck has demonstrated extraordinary leadership, carrying Purdue to two Big 10 tournament championships in only two seasons. And I'm glad she's back here with her team today. She's just finished her first season as a pro coach, where she missed the playoffs, I think she said, by one game. And next year is your second season; you've got to deliver. And we wish you well. *[Laughter]* So I'd like to call on Carolyn Peck and give her the microphone now. Thank you.

[At this point, Coach Peck made brief remarks.]

The President. I also want to acknowledge, before I leave the State of Indiana, the presence here of a man who has been my friend for 20 years, the former Senator from Indiana and the father of the current Senator from Indiana, Mr. Birch Bayh. Thank you, Senator. Thank you. I'm glad to see you. Thank you.

Now, the Huskies. I watched them all year, too. They won 34 games, and they were supposed to be a big underdog in the championship. They had a team that was determined not to be defeated. Richard Hamilton's outside touch and the tough defensive play of Ricky Moore and Khalid El-Amin gave them a 77-74 down-to-the-wire thriller that will never be forgotten by people who love basketball.

I also want to say that I'm glad Richard is coming to Washington to help the Wizards. We need it. *[Laughter]* Jim Calhoun's achievements as the Huskies' coach are tremendous. He's the only coach in NCAA history to win 250 games at two different Division I programs. He's the winningest coach in UConn history, with the third most wins in all of college basketball in the last six seasons.

When I called Jim to congratulate him on the victory, we had a wonderful talk about a lot of things, and I'll always remember our con-

versation. But I told him, and I thought that the Duke coach, Mike Krzyzewski, gave him and these fine young men the ultimate compliment; you can only imagine how disappointed he was. He has all those great players; they were supposed to win everything easily. It was a fabulous game.

The truth is, UConn was better than they thought they were. And it was—at a moment of enormous disappointment, he got before the national television cameras, and he said, "We did not lose this game. We were defeated by a better team." And that says a lot about this coach and these players.

So, Coach, the microphone is yours.

[Coach Calhoun made brief remarks, and the team captains presented a jersey and ring to the President.]

The President. Look at this. I think it's a little big for me, don't you? *[Laughter]* Thank you. I really love this, thank you.

Now, when does practice start? *[Laughter]*

Coach Calhoun. I'll see you Saturday morning at 11.

The President. Thank you very much.

Coach Peck. Can we make a presentation?

The President. Sure. Give them another hand, guys. *[Applause]*

[Coach Peck and the team's senior captains presented a jersey to the President.]

The President. I can wear this. It's the right size, right? It's the right size. I love it.

[A Purdue senior captain thanked the President and congratulated the University of Connecticut Huskies.]

The President. You know, in a year and a half when I'm not President anymore, people will, all of a sudden, start treating me as an elder statesman or something, and they will all want my advice on various things. One of the things people ask me all the time is, isn't it hard to keep your feet on the ground and the sense of basic humility when, you know, the Secret Service are with you, you fly around on Air Force One, every need is just at your fingertips? And I think I will have two pieces of advice: One is, have regular press conferences; that'll cut you down to size. *[Laughter]* And the other is, always meet with the champions of the men and women's NCAA basketball tournament. They will make you feel very small.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:08 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Tiffany Young's parents, Gloria and Billy Ray Young; and Pat Summitt, coach, University of Tennessee Lady Volunteers, her husband, R.B. Summitt, and son, Tyler.

Remarks on Unveiling Public Service Announcements on Youth Violence October 15, 1999

The President. Thank you very much, Epatha; welcome back to the White House. She was here back in February, again trying to help children, when we unveiled the PSA to help our children get the health care they need. So she is becoming the Federal Government's number one volunteer for America's children, and we're grateful for her.

I think she knows that if she and the rest of us could do enough for our children in a preventive and preparatory way, we'd put a lot of police officers and actors playing police officers out of work—[laughter]—because we wouldn't have nearly as much trouble. I thank you so much.

Attorney General Reno and Secretary Shalala, thank you both for your commitment to helping our children and to unifying our Government's resources, not having a lot of little, indistinct programs that are separate, one from another.

I want to thank all of those who are here supporting this campaign. Thank you, Dr. Roz Weinman, from NBC. Thank you for everything you've done. I want to thank the ADL national director, Abraham Foxman, the Human Rights Committee's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, the people from La Raza, and all the other groups that have supported this endeavor.

I'd also like to acknowledge the young people behind me. They're from Eastern High School in Washington, DC, and they are actively and personally working to prevent youth violence. They are the symbols of the people we are trying to empower with this public service campaign, and we ought to give them a hand. [Applause]

Six months ago next week we will observe the half-year anniversary of the tragedy at Littleton, Colorado. As awful as it was, we all know it was not an isolated event. We have seen since and we saw before, in a string of violent incidents at school and in the fact that 13 young

people lose their lives every single day to gunshots in ones and twos, that our children—notwithstanding the fact that we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years and a dramatic drop in the murder rate—are still subject to a nation that is too dangerous and can be made safer.

That is why we have asked every sector of our society to get involved in the search for solutions to youth violence, to hatred, to the absence of control, to environmental and cultural factors that need to be dealt with. We've asked people to help at home and school, in Hollywood and in the heartland, in our State capitals and in the Nation's Capital.

In August we helped launch the national campaign against youth violence, to pull together commitments from people and organizations from all different walks of life. Although this new campaign is not even 2 months old, it has already made a remarkable start. Over the coming months, it will roll out a major media campaign, begin supporting antiviolence concerts and townhall meetings, in-school and after-school programs, and sponsor a city-by-city effort to shine a spotlight on the local initiatives that are producing the most promising results.

The executive director of this national campaign, Jeff Bleich, is here with us today. I introduced him when we named him, but I want to thank you again for your great work.

Today we are pleased and grateful that NBC is making its own commitment to protect our children from youth violence. As part of its "The More You Know" campaign, NBC has created a series of ads that speak to parents and children about how families can help to stop violence and hate before they start. I would like to now stop and show one of these ads, which features Epatha and her "Law & Order" colleague, Angie Harmon. So could we show the ad?

[At this point, the public service announcement was shown.]

The President. Thank you, thank you, and thank you. [Laughter]

This ad and others like it will be seen by millions of viewers every day. In clear and powerful terms, they will convey the message that stopping violence and intolerance begins at home. They say if you're a parent, you owe it to your children to sit down with them, to draw them out, to give them a comfortable opportunity to express their fears, to give you early warning if there's a problem you need to address.

The thing I like best about it is the message I think every parent ought to try to give every child: If you've done something wrong, tell me. It's okay. It's not the end of the world. Before it gets too bad, tell me.

As you saw, these ads also provide an 800 number and a web address, so viewers can immediately get the best advice from national organizations which deal with these issues every day.

I look forward to continuing to build on the progress that NBC, its national partners, and the fine actors who appear in this campaign have started. It's a wonderful example of what you can accomplish, with the power of television, to send out positive messages to parents and children alike.

I also want to emphasize that we are going to change the way we in the Federal Government do our part, along the lines that the two Cabinet members here have long advocated. Youth violence has many origins and so many facets. Not just one but many of our Cabinet agencies are working to provide solutions. And they should be. They get contacted by people all over the country. Today I had this year and last year's winner of the Points of Light Award in the White House for pictures. And an enormous percentage of these national winners were people who were involved in trying to keep our kids out of trouble and give them good things to do.

So we see responses ranging from community policing to mental health to after-school programs to job opportunities. To respond to what Donna and Janet have talked to me about for years—Janet sent me another memo just a couple of weeks ago about how we've got to get the Government to work together on this—we

are creating a new Youth Violence Council. The job of the Council will be to coordinate, accelerate, and amplify all the antiviolenence efforts now coming out of our Cabinet agencies, so that they will work together, not at cross purposes; they will waste less money and make the money they have go further; and they will touch more children's lives.

So I want to thank you, Madame Attorney General, and you, Secretary Shalala, for your suggestion, and we will do this.

I also want to say again that it is my strong conviction that preventing youth violence requires Congress to do more. It has been 6 months since Littleton now. Congress has had more than ample time to analyze and act on the elements of this problem. They have had more than enough time to recognize that one of the biggest problems of intentional and accidental violence against our children is the appalling ease with which young people can gain access to guns.

And yet, after a very encouraging vote in the Senate last May—when the Vice President was able to break a tie and pass legislation that makes a lot of sense, among other things closing the Brady background check loophole that didn't apply to gun shows and flea market gun sales—there has been no action, because the leadership has done nothing but delay.

So again, I say to the Republican leadership, I know this is a tough issue for you; I know that nobody likes to make the NRA mad looking towards the next election. But we—when I went to the American people in 1992 and I said, "Let's adopt the Brady bill, and let's ban assault weapons," and I told all the hunters in my home State—which is about half the people that breathe down there, me among them—[laughter]—I said, "Look, I'm telling you this will not affect hunting. This will not affect sporting events. It will make our country a safer place." It was an argument no one knew. It's not an argument anymore. We have the results.

The Brady bill has kept 400,000 people who had criminal records or otherwise should not have had handguns from getting them, and we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. This is not an argument anymore. There is evidence. And we now know that a lot of people who shouldn't get these guns know they can go get them at a gun show or an urban flea market because there is no background check. There are loopholes in the assault weapons ban in

terms of the importation of inappropriately sized magazines, of ammunition clips, and other problems that we ought to address. So I would say again, the time to act is now. The country overwhelmingly supports this.

I want to give the House a pat on the back again for passing a decent Patients' Bill of Rights last week. They had to break the stranglehold of an interest group that had the allegiance of their leadership. They have to do it again. But if they do it, they'll feel real good about it, just like they did last week. *[Laughter]* You know, this is another one of those issues—it's not a particularly partisan issue except in Washington, DC, and we need to get free of all that and think about these kids.

I feel the same way about the hate crimes legislation. Since I first proposed the hate crimes bill—believe it or not, hundreds of Americans, like young Matthew Shepard in Wyoming or James Byrd in Texas, have been killed or injured simply because of who they are, because of their race, their faith, because they're gay. And I think this is important for America and important for our leadership at home and around the world.

What do I spend my time on around the world? If I'm trying to deal with peace in Ireland, what am I trying to do? Get people over their religious—if we try to make peace and avoid another Rwanda in Africa, what are we trying to do? Get people of different tribes not to kill each other. If we're trying to make peace in Kosovo and Bosnia, what are we trying to do? Trying to get people over their ethnic and religious hatreds. And on and on and on.

This is a deep thing in the human psyche that has been with us since the dawn of time. And of course the most stunning example of all is the struggle we are still making to harmonize and reconcile the people of the Middle East, in the very heart of the place that gave birth to all three of the world's great religions that hold there is one creator, God.

Now, when America is a force in all these places but at home, you have to read that a guy that hates people that aren't just like him shoots a bunch of kids at a Jewish community center and then drives around and kills a Filipino postman working for the Federal Government—he got a two-for—the guy was an Asian and a Federal Government employee. And you read there is a guy that belongs to something in the Middle West that he called a church,

even though they don't believe in God; they believe in the supremacy of white people. And he shoots a fine young man who was a basketball coach at Northwestern and then toodles down the road again and kills a young Korean Christian coming out of his church. And you see all these things happening.

It seems to me very hard to make the case that America, for our own sanity and our own humanity and for what we owe to the rest of the world, should not pass strong hate crimes legislation and do it without delay this year.

So again let me say, to every proposal someone can raise the objection, this will not solve every problem. If we did that, no one would ever do anything constructive. That's like saying if you decided to go on a diet and you stay on it 3 days, you won't lose the 20 pounds you want to lose. That's like saying, don't do this because even though you should do this, even when you do it, there are three other things you should do.

I mean, all these arguments don't make any sense. Look, I'm proud of the fact that I had the chance to be President when Americans believed we could lower crime again and where we have a 26-year low in the crime rate. But we have the highest murder rate of any civilized country in the world, still. The rate of accidental deaths of children by gunshots is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 industrial economies combined.

What I'm trying to do with this PSA is to mobilize the American people to save our children, so the next President can say America is the safest big country in the world. Why don't we have a big goal here? It's nice to say that we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years; maybe by the time I leave office, we can say it's the lowest in 30 years. Maybe we'll really be chugging along here.

But don't you want to really be able to say, every time you look at a young person like this fine young boy here in this beautiful red sweater—*[laughter]*—that this child should grow up in the safest big country on the face of the Earth? Let's have a goal worth fighting for, for our children. And let's mobilize people to do what can be done now, in their families, and let's have nobody run and hide from the responsibility we all have to give that gift to our children in the new millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. in the Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to S. Epatha Merkerson and Angie Harmon, actresses on NBC's "Law & Order"; Rosalyn

Weinman, executive vice president, broadcast standards and content policy, NBC; Abraham H. Foxman, national director, Anti-Defamation League; and Jeff Bleich, executive director, National Campaign Against Youth Violence.

Memorandum on the White House Council on Youth Violence October 15, 1999

Memorandum of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Education, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy

Subject: White House Council on Youth Violence

Violence by youth and against youth is an issue that deeply concerns us all. Youth violence can be thought of as a juvenile crime issue, as a public health issue, and as a school safety issue. It affects every region and demographic group. As many recent incidents have made us aware, it is a problem that can strike with unexpected force—and that now demands uncommonly unified responses. That is why I announced, on August 17, 1999, that a nonprofit, nonpartisan "National Campaign Against Youth Violence" had been established to bring together all segments of society to help prevent youth violence.

The Federal Government already addresses many aspects of youth violence through its programs. I am particularly proud of the joint efforts of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the Secretary of Education in developing the Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative. These agencies also worked well together to help us respond quickly to the Columbine High School incident. I have read with interest the report of the Attorney General's Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. I look forward to the report that the Surgeon General in response to my May request is preparing on the causes of youth violence. The Secretary of Labor's efforts to address the needs of youth are also about to bear fruit, as high-poverty communities implement our new Youth Opportunity Grants, and as the Secretary and the Attorney General finalize their agreement for cooperative

work on those grants and on Labor's Youth Offender grant program.

With so many agencies and programs involved, and with the need for my Administration to work closely with different elements of State and local governments, tribes, schools, community groups, and families, it has become increasingly clear to me that the Federal Government needs a more effective policy coordination strategy for youth violence issues. Therefore, today I direct the Assistant for Domestic Policy to form a White House Council on Youth Violence to provide this policy coordination, to provide flexible and timely responses to the challenge of youth violence, and to ensure that our Nation's citizens are able to benefit from the Federal Government's many antiviolence initiatives.

Structure of the Council

The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy will chair the Council. The Office of the Vice President and the Office of Management and Budget will be regular participants. Four agency heads will be the regular program members of the Council:

- The Attorney General, responding to the juvenile crime aspects;
- The Secretary of Health and Human Services, responding to the public health aspects, including mental health aspects, and to family issues;
- The Secretary of Education, responding to the school safety issues; and
- The Secretary of Labor, responding to youth employment and out-of-school youth issues.

The Chair of the Council may add such other officials as he deems appropriate to further the purposes of this overall effort or to participate in specific aspects of it. For example, matters relating to public health aspects would involve

the Surgeon General. Matters relating to firearms control or drug abuse would involve the Secretary of the Treasury and the Director of National Drug Control Policy, respectively. Implications for economic development policies would call for involvement of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of Commerce. Comparable policies for Indian country would engage the Secretary of the Interior. Issues relating to community service opportunities for youth would involve the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The Chair, after consultation with Council members, will appoint staff members to coordinate the Council's efforts. The Chair may call upon the participating agencies for logistical support to the Council, as necessary.

Duties of the Council

1. *Develop a citizen's information hub.* The Council will develop and maintain a coordinated inventory of relevant agency programs and provide analyses of their effectiveness. It will make this inventory widely available in summary form—and upon request in more detail—through the services of the appropriate Council member, to elected officials, community groups, police organizations, school systems, parents, and others working on local solutions to these issues. The inventory and full texts of program reports and evaluations should be available on an easily accessible website. The availability of this compilation will be widely publicized.

2. *Produce reports on youth violence.* The Council will prepare or have prepared reports on various aspects of the problem of youth violence, describing, for instance, best practices in combating the problem. In doing so, the Council should consult with nonprofits, foundations, and other organizations that have conducted research and/or developed resources on the prevention of youth violence. In addition, the Surgeon General is now carrying out a broad study of the potential causes of youth violence. I ask that the Surgeon General consult closely with the Council in the development of the study so that I may have the benefit of participation of all the involved agencies in its analysis and findings.

3. *Expand the Safe Schools/Healthy Students model of collaboration.* This initiative of the De-

partments of Justice, Education, and Health and Human Services has evolved into a highly effective collaboration among the agencies. The Council will oversee this effort and examine options for improving its operations and applying the model to other governmental efforts. The Secretary of Labor will begin participation in the initiative through establishing linkages to Youth Opportunities and Youth Offender grants.

4. *Provide tools for parents to deal with the issue.* Many Federal programs address issues relating to strengthening the family and helping parents raise children. The Council will explore the possibility of devising a cross-program strategy to help parents address youth violence. It will also report on new tools emerging in both the private and public sectors to assist parents.

5. *Coordinate the Federal research agenda.* The Council will oversee coordination of agency research agendas and the development of needed cross-agency research collaborations. I ask the Council to seek to have this structure in place to support the planning for FY 2001 research funds, and where feasible, to improve the planned use of funds available from prior years.

6. *Develop further policy responses.* The Council will meet at the call of the Chair to discuss new findings from analyses of the youth violence issue and to consider new or modified Administration responses to it, especially those that involve more than one agency. Recommendations for initiatives will be discussed in the Council for consistency with overall coordinated policy before being presented for formal decision in the budget process. From time to time, the Council will report to me directly on the results of its efforts.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

cc: The Vice President
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of the Interior
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
The Director of the Office of Management and Budget
The Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy

Statement on the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize Award *October 15, 1999*

Doctors Without Borders (*Medecins sans Frontieres*) richly deserves the Nobel Peace Prize. They work around the world, under difficult and often dangerous conditions, to provide medical assistance to the victims of conflict and natural disasters. They have cared for the sick and the wounded at refugee camps in Kosovo and Timor, aided flood victims in the Philippines, treated disease in Sudan and Sierra Leone, Vietnam and Peru. Their work is emblematic of the commitment of so many people

of good will today to build a global community where compassion, cooperation, and progress increasingly know no borders.

I am proud that the United States Government has provided substantial annual assistance to Doctors Without Borders, and that we work together closely in times of crisis. Humanitarian relief of this kind is not only the right thing to do for our values; it also helps build peace and stability and thereby strengthens America's own security.

Statement on United Nations Security Council Action Against International Terrorism and the Taliban *October 15, 1999*

I applaud the U.N. Security Council for taking a strong stand against international terrorism today and demanding that the Taliban stop harboring Usama bin Ladin. The Security Council's resolution, which passed by a unanimous vote, will result in economic sanctions being placed on the Taliban if they do not deliver bin Ladin within 30 days to a country where he can be brought to justice.

The Security Council's action demonstrates the international community's understanding of the threat posed by bin Ladin and his network of terrorists. Despite the condemnation of scores of countries after the 1998 bombing of our Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Taliban has continued to allow bin Ladin and his network

to operate training camps, make threats against the United States and others, and plan terrorist operations from their bases in Afghanistan. Now the international community has spoken with one voice. The sanctions the U.N. has chosen parallel the unilateral ones that the United States placed on the Taliban in July and will result in the restriction of landing rights of airlines owned, leased, or operated by or on behalf of the Taliban, the freezing of Taliban accounts around the world, and the prohibition of investment in any undertaking owned or controlled by the Taliban.

The international community has sent a clear message. The choice between cooperation and isolation lies with the Taliban.

Joint Statement on Norway-United States Cooperation *October 15, 1999*

The President and the Prime Minister met today at the White House to review the many accomplishments of the enduring U.S.-Norwegian partnership and to explore new areas of cooperation.

Transatlantic solidarity and mutual security in NATO form the core of the U.S.-Norwegian

relationship. President Clinton reaffirmed the strong U.S. commitment to the security and defense of Norway. The two leaders reiterated their commitments to the Washington Summit's vision of an Alliance devoted to collective defense, capable of addressing current and future challenges, strengthened by and open to new

members, and working with others in a mutually reinforcing way to enhance Euro-Atlantic security and stability. They also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen European security and defense capabilities for crisis management.

The Prime Minister and the President expressed satisfaction that the concerted action of the NATO Alliance achieved an end to Milosevic's campaign of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and created the conditions for the safe return of refugees. They reaffirmed their strong commitment to democracy and the rule of law in Kosovo, and their support for the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe as a means of achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

The President congratulated the Prime Minister on Norway's essential contributions as Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE. The two leaders underscored the importance of arms control, in particular the 30-nation Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The United States and Norway agreed to intensify their efforts, together with other Treaty partners, to reach agreement on adaptation of the CFE Treaty for signature by Heads of State and Government at the November 18-19 OSCE Summit in Istanbul.

The United States and Norway share a vital interest in the development of a democratic, prosperous, and stable Russia. Russia has an opportunity to further entrench its transition to democracy by ensuring free and fair elections in the coming months for its parliament and president. The President and the Prime Minister recognized Russia's struggle against terrorism and reaffirmed their support for Russia's territorial integrity. They urged a constructive dialogue between the Russian government and legitimate leaders in the North Caucasus that could lead to peaceful resolution of conflict, and called on all concerned to avoid indiscriminate use of force and to respect human rights. The Prime Minister and the President agreed that increased international efforts are called for to deal with the problem of nuclear waste in Russia, including that from decommissioned nuclear submarines. The two leaders called on Russia to accept the 1993 amendment to the London Convention that establishes a mandatory moratorium on all dumping of radioactive waste at sea. They welcomed increased international cooperation through the Arctic Council and the Arctic Military Environmental Cooperation Program.

Working closely with local governments and communities, they pledged to promote sustainable development and protection of the fragile Arctic environment.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction with the work of the Barents and Baltic Sea States Councils and the extensive U.S.-Norway cooperation under the U.S. Northern European Initiative. They underlined the importance of fully integrating the Baltic countries into the European and trans-Atlantic community, and agreed to continue support for language training programs in Latvia and Estonia to foster social integration.

The Prime Minister and the President share concern over the growing dangers to international security posed by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in areas of conflict and post-conflict. They announced the establishment of a Norway-U.S. working group to marshal support for nations which agree to destroy surplus small arms.

The two leaders noted the extensive U.S.-Norwegian commercial relationship and affirmed that the United States and Norway attach great importance to the upcoming WTO round in Seattle. They recognized Norway's role as a major international supplier of oil and gas to the world, and agreed U.S. industry will remain a key partner in petroleum production on the Norwegian continental shelf.

The President expressed his appreciation for Norway's strong support of the Middle East peace process through the Oslo process, and saluted Norway's leadership role in the Palestinian donor effort. The two leaders agreed to intensify their efforts to achieve a lasting settlement in the Middle East and other conflict areas. They stressed the need to strengthen the United Nations' capabilities in responding to the challenges of a new Millennium. They agreed that the protection of human rights and dignity, eradication of poverty, and the safeguarding of the global environment were crucial to continued progress. The two leaders agreed to work together to reduce the debt of heavily-indebted poor countries and increase the support among creditors to maximize the benefits of the debt reduction initiative.

Finally, the two leaders agreed to continue the excellent cooperation between the two countries through ongoing dialogue on the full range of bilateral, regional and global issues that join the United States and Norway.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

The President's Radio Address

October 16, 1999

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we must do to make sure people with disabilities who are ready, willing, and able to work can be part of our Nation's prosperity.

Work is an awfully important part of who we are as Americans. It connects us with our communities and provides dignity for our families. Today, more Americans are working than ever before. Since 1993, in January, when I took office, we've had the largest peacetime expansion in our history and created more than 19 million new jobs. Unemployment is at a 29-year low; welfare rates, a 30-year low; poverty, a 20-year low, with the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

But in spite of the good economic news, there are people in places still not touched by our prosperity. Among them are almost three out of four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work but aren't working. This is not just a missed opportunity for them; it's a missed opportunity for all the rest of us, too.

If we want to keep our economy growing with continued low inflation and low unemployment, we must draw on the untapped potential of our people. That's why I launched our enterprise zone and enterprise community initiative 6½ years ago, under the leadership of Vice President Gore, to bring investment and jobs to rural and urban areas with high unemployment.

That's why I'm working now to pass our new markets initiative in Congress, to give Americans the same incentive to invest in poor communities in America we now give them to invest in poor communities in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and central Europe, and that's why I established a Presidential task force on the employment of adults with disabilities last year, to help remove the barriers that prevent people with disabilities from going to work.

In December Vice President Gore received the first set of recommendations by the task force, and I'm proud to say we've taken action

on every one. The budget I proposed last January would invest more than \$2 billion in health care, tax credits, and new technologies for people with disabilities. I also signed an Executive order to eliminate unfair barriers to Federal employment for people with psychiatric disabilities.

Today I announce new steps we're taking to ensure that when it comes to the employment of people with disabilities, the Federal Government leads by example. And today I'm releasing the first-ever Government plan to ensure positive career paths for people with disabilities in our Federal work force. I'm directing every Federal agency and department to take concrete action to expand opportunities for people with disabilities in all levels of the work force, from entry to senior ranks.

And I'm calling on all agencies to recruit and promote people with disabilities, to reach out to students with disabilities, to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities. I'm also calling on our Federal human resources agency, the Office of Personnel Management, to ensure that every agency gets the help it needs to fulfill these commitments. We are the Nation's largest employer. I want it to be a model for private industry, and this plan will help to do just that.

But there's more to do. One of the biggest barriers facing people with disabilities is the fear of losing their health insurance when they get a job. Under current law, many people with disabilities cannot keep their Medicaid or Medicare coverage if they work. This creates a tremendous disincentive to work, because they have to have health care, and neither they nor their employer can afford or often even find health insurance.

There's a commonsense, bipartisan bill to change that. It's called the work incentives improvement act. It was sponsored by Republican Senators Jeffords and Roth and Democratic Senators Kennedy and Moynihan. Simply put, it will make sure that people with disabilities don't

lose their health care when they gain a job. This bill passed the Senate 99-0. A bipartisan majority in the House has already cosponsored it. So I say to Congress: Don't water the bill down; guarantee its financing; and go ahead and send it to me so we can sign it without delay.

It will make money for America. It will make more taxpayers. And we'll be spending the Medicaid money regardless. Americans with disabilities who want to work shouldn't have to wait one more day.

After years of delay, last week the House of Representatives finally heard the voice of the American people and passed a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. By choosing progress over partisanship again, we can also pass the work incentives improvement act and keep America working and growing.

I urge the leadership to seize this opportunity. Make this a season of progress, not a winter of partisan politics. Let's finish the job the American people sent us here to do.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:39 p.m. on October 15 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 16. In his address, the President referred to Executive Order 13124 of June 4, 1999, entitled "Amending the Civil Service Rules Relating to Federal Employees With Psychiatric Disabilities" (3 CFR, 1999 Comp., p. 192). The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 15 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Hiring People With Disabilities in the Federal Government

October 16, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Hiring People with Disabilities in the Federal Government

Since I became President, we have created over 19 million new jobs and unemployment is as low as it has been in 29 years. Still, almost 75 percent of working-age Americans with severe disabilities remain unemployed. If this Nation is to live up to its promise of equal opportunity, and our economy is to continue to strengthen and expand, we must draw on the untapped energy and creativity of these millions of capable Americans.

One of the most glaring barriers to work for people with disabilities is that they frequently become ineligible for Medicaid or Medicare if they go back to work, putting them in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and employment. That is why my budget fully funds the Work Incentives Improvement Act, investing \$1.2 billion over 5 years in health care and employment services so that people with disabilities can work. This legislation was unanimously endorsed by the House Commerce Committee on May 19 and has been cosponsored by a majority of the

House of Representatives; it passed the Senate 99-0 on June 16. It is time for the Congress to finish the job and pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act immediately. People with disabilities who want to work should not have to wait one more day.

Vice President Gore and I have already taken a number of steps to increase the employment of people with disabilities. On March 13, 1998, I signed Executive Order 13078 establishing the National Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities to create a coordinated national policy to bring working-age individuals with disabilities into gainful employment. In December, the Task Force presented the Vice President with its first report, and I am proud to say we have taken action on all the Task Force's formal recommendations.

As we fight to ensure that all people with disabilities have the health care and other assistance they need to go to work, we must also lead by example and make the Federal Government a model employer of people with disabilities. On June 4, 1999, I signed an Executive order eliminating the Federal Government's stricter hiring standards for people with psychiatric disabilities, an issue highlighted by Mrs.

Gore earlier in the year. And last December, the Vice President asked the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop a plan to increase the representation of adults with disabilities in the Federal workforce.

Today I am pleased to release that plan, *Accessing Opportunity: The Plan for Employment of People with Disabilities in the Federal Government*, and the companion employment guide prepared by OPM. These documents give agencies detailed and practical information on ways to recruit people with disabilities for positions at all levels of government; provide opportunities

for students with disabilities; ensure career opportunities for people with disabilities; collect and maintain data to monitor their success; and provide reasonable accommodations for applicants and employees with disabilities.

I therefore direct you to implement this plan immediately within your departments and agencies and to bring qualified people with disabilities into the Federal workforce. This plan is proof of the Federal Government's commitment to empowering people with disabilities; now is the time for us to fulfill that commitment.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a National Italian American Foundation Dinner October 16, 1999

Thank you ladies and gentlemen. First of all, let me thank you for your warm welcome to Hillary and me. Thank you, Frank Guarini, for being my friend for all these years. Thank you, President Joe Cerrell. To all the distinguished guests here and the honorees, the Members of Congress, Gerry Ferraro, Ambassador Foglietta, Ambassador Rosapepe. To our distinguished Italian guests, Maria Bartiromo, Ambassador Salleo, and especially Foreign Minister Dini.

I would like to say a special word of appreciation at this point to the Prime Minister and the Government of Italy for standing with us and working with us for the cause of our common humanity in Kosovo and, before that, in Bosnia. We could not have done it without Italy, and I am grateful.

Justice Scalia and Cardinal Hickey and all the others here—you stole my line about 50 percent of my four Chiefs of Staff being Italian. The other two wish they were. [*Laughter*] I thank you for all the gifts from Campania, including the beautiful flowers for Hillary. We visited there when the 1994 conference of the G-7 nations was held in Naples. And we have been very blessed by our times there. I understand my friend Dick Grasso and the Barnes & Noble CEO, Leonard Riggio, are both from that region of Italy. I'm about to go back to Florence, and I'm only supposed to stay a day, so if I play hooky and stay an extra day I want 3,000 of you to write an excuse for me, just like I used to get when I missed a day of school.

I guess I ought to say, since this is baseball season, that I'm sure of one person who would like to be here tonight who can't be is Joe Torre. Now, I'm not taking sides in the baseball series, but the Yankees do have two Italian-Americans on their team, Joe and the catcher, Joe Girardi. And no city in America has been better to me than Boston, but the Red Sox haven't had an Italian since their pitcher Frank Viola retired. So I think we ought to get the Red Sox an Italian baseball player to balance out our equal opportunity agenda through the country.

You know, from the beginning of our country, Italian-Americans have made invaluable contributions. And I want to say a special word of thanks, not for all those which I could litanize, and you know them, but for the National Italian American Foundation's leadership for our efforts to build one America.

I'm very grateful that this is a country in better shape than it was 7 years ago when I first came here. I am very grateful for the chance that I have had to serve. I'm grateful for the Italian-Americans who have helped to ensure the success of our administration. I'm glad that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years and the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years.

But I have to tell you that the most important thing we have to do to get ready for the 21st

century, even more important than our efforts to continue to grow our economy, is to build one country out of our diversity. If we do, if the American people really can come to have that wonderful balance which enables us to celebrate our diversity and our unique ethnic and religious traditions, which makes America a very interesting place to live, and still say our common humanity is even more important, we'll figure out how to deal with all the other things.

Last year, one of only 2 years I've missed since I first came here 7 years ago, I was up for 9 days and nights at the Wye Plantation trying to keep the Middle East peace process on track. If you look around the world at how I have spent my time as your President—working for peace in the Balkans, among Muslims and Croats and Serbs, among Albanian Muslim and Serbian Orthodox Christians; for peace in the Middle East, among Arabs and Jews, among Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, Jordanians, and Lebanese; for peace in Northern Ireland among Catholics and Protestants; to set up protections against the kind of tribal slaughter we've seen in Africa among people who shared the same land, in one case in Rwanda, for 500 years—it is truly interesting that at the dawn of this new millennium, when we're exhilarated by all these technological and scientific advances that are being made—one man told me that when I have grandchildren they may be born with a life expectancy of 100 years; we know that our kids are using the Internet and talking to people all over the world and knowing things we couldn't know—isn't it interesting that, in this quintessentially modern era, our biggest problem is the most primitive and ancient of human failings: the fear of the other, people who are different from us?

And what a short step it is from fearing people to hating them to dehumanizing them, which legitimizes doing away with them. And isn't it interesting that at a time when the crime rate in America is at a 26-year low, we still have these vicious examples of a man shooting children at a Jewish community school and then going out and murdering a Filipino postman; another man saying he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but did believe in white supremacy, killing an Africa-American basketball coach in Illinois and then murdering a young Korean Christian as he walked out of his church; and all these other examples: the young gay man, Matthew Shepard, a year ago

this week being stretched out, literally, upon a rack; James Byrd being pulled apart in Texas because he was an African-American? Not because all Americans are like that—almost all of us aren't—but because in each of us there is this fragile scale, like the scale of justice Mr. Scalia must try to balance in his work, and in this scale we wake up every morning with some curious balance of light and dark, of hope and fear, and when the scale gets badly enough out of whack, the easiest thing to do is to strike out against the other.

So I say again to you, Italian-Americans have been subject to discrimination and bigotry in times past in America. You still are subject to stereotypes that I think are unfair and unrepresentative, to be kind about it. But it is because of the values you share with other Americans that we have a prosperous economy and a healing society. And we just have to remember that overall. Yes, I hope a lot of your children make hundreds of millions of dollars by starting Internet companies; yes, I hope that my plans to take care of the aging of America and save Social Security and Medicare will prevail; I hope our plans to elevate the quality of all of our schools will prevail; I hope I can convince both parties in Congress to resist temptation and save enough of this surplus to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835 over the next 15 years. I hope all of that. But remember this: The most important thing is to build one America out of this crazy quilt of all of us who live here.

Last week Hillary and I had the eighth of her millennial evenings at the White House. And we had an expert in the Internet, who helped to design the architecture of the Internet, and an expert in genomics, who talked to us about the human genome project and the miracles it will bring. He says one day the intersection of computers and gene studies will enable us to put digital, microscopic digital pieces in all parts of the human body to do even the repair work on shattered nerves to the spine. And we talked about all the miracles out there.

And the genomics expert said, "But what I want you to understand is that of all the possible permutations among people, with all many, many parts of every gene, 99.9 percent of us is identical to that of every other human being. And the genetic differences among groups—that is, individuals among the Italian community, for example—are more significant and greater than

the aggregate average genetic differences between Italians and Irish and Africans and Latins.” It’s important to remember. For people of faith, it reflects the wisdom of our Creator.

So I say again, I’m indebted to you for many things: your work ethic, your family ethic, your creativity, your energy, your passion. It made America a much more interesting place, and it fueled this remarkable run we have had. But your commitment to see that neither Italians nor any other human beings are subject to degradation and prejudice because of who they are, that we will learn to honestly and openly express our differences and enjoy our differences, but reaffirm our common humanity, make no mistake about it—just pick up the paper any day; look at the perils of the present day. We are in a conflict between modern possibility and primitive hatred. One America is the only answer, and you’re leading the way.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:37 p.m. in the ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Frank J. Guarini, chairman, Joseph R. Cerrell, president, and Geraldine Ferraro, board member, National Italian American Foundation; U.S. Ambassador to Italy Thomas M. Foglietta; U.S. Ambassador to Romania James C. Rosapepe; Italian Ambassador to the United States Ferdinando Salleo; Minister of Foreign Affairs Lamberto Dini and Prime Minister Massimo D’Alema of Italy; CNBC journalist Maria Bartiromo, event emcee; Cardinal James Hickey, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Washington, DC; Richard Grasso, chairman and chief executive officer, New York Stock Exchange; Joe Torre, manager, New York Yankees; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Statement on the 1998 Uniform Crime Report

October 17, 1999

The 1998 uniform crime report released by the FBI today shows that serious crime has continued to fall in every region of our Nation for the seventh straight year. The murder rate is at its lowest since 1967. The overall violent crime rate is down, and gun crimes, rapes, robberies, assaults, and juvenile crime have all dropped to their lowest levels in over a decade. This is good news for America’s families, and it shows we can indeed turn the tide on crime.

My administration’s strategy of 100,000 more police, fewer guns in the hands of criminals, thanks to the Brady law, and more tools for communities to combat crime is working to

make our streets safer and our communities stronger. But tragedies from Littleton to Los Angeles show that we must do more to protect our communities from gun violence. Even as crime falls, we must not let down our guard. That is why we must redouble our efforts to build on what works by fully funding our COPS program to put more police on the street and by passing commonsense gun legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Together we can make America the safest big nation in the world.

NOTE: This statement was embargoed for release until 6 p.m., October 17.

Remarks on Budget Negotiations and an Exchange With Reporters

October 18, 1999

The President. Good morning. I have just completed a meeting with my economic team to see what we can do to reach overall budget agreement with the congressional leadership. In

just 4 days the resolution that temporarily funds the Government will expire, and yet Congress still has not sent me a budget that maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down Social Security,

reforms Medicare, and honors the priorities of the American people, especially including education and including 50,000 more community police for our children, for our streets, and a steadfast commitment to preserve and protect our environment.

Now, there is an overwhelming consensus across our country, and even here in Washington, that we face no challenge more critical than the education of our children. When our children graduate, they will be the largest and most diverse group of graduates in our history. They will be in a vastly more global and complex and information-dominated economy than ever before. For their sake, and the sake of our continued prosperity, we have wisely made—as a people—education our number one priority.

That means shrinking class size while increasing quality by fulfilling our commitment to put 100,000 teachers in the classroom, something the Republicans in Congress supported last year. It means making sure our children are ready for the year 2000 by ensuring that every one of them has access to computers in their classrooms. It means keeping schools open after school and during the summer. It means expanding mentoring and Head Start. It means having strategies that impose high standards and accountability, give schools funds to turn around themselves if they're failing, but shuts them down if they can't turn around. It means more funds for charter schools.

Now, if we're going to make these critical investments and maintain our fiscal discipline to keep our economy strong, we're going to have to make tough choices, and we're going to have to make them together. There are 4 days until the continuing resolution expires. Inaction is not an option. I will do everything I can to meet our priorities in a responsible way.

As I have said repeatedly in recent weeks, indeed, for years, my door is open to members of both parties who are willing to work with us. If we're going to finish the job the American people sent us here to do—reach real results in educating our children, fighting crime, protecting our environment—then we have to put politics aside and seek common ground.

In that spirit, I am inviting the congressional leadership to come here and meet with me and our economic team at the White House, to see if we can agree on an overall budget framework. Yes, there are differences of opinion. But I don't

think they're so great that we can't make progress by working together in a genuine bipartisan spirit. I'm committed to doing so and to resolving the remaining differences. If the congressional leadership will join me, we can make this a season of real progress for our people.

Thank you.

Q. Sir, what about the spending caps on Social Security money? Are you willing to say before the congressional leadership comes here that you'll negotiate lifting the caps?

The President. Well, first of all, they've already been lifted. I mean, they have—they're into spending the Social Security surplus, and everyone but them—everybody else has acknowledged it. I mean, their own Congressional Budget Office says that. I have given them offsets. I will work with them with further offsets. I would like to see them do better on that.

But we can't not fund these critical education priorities. We can't not have an adequate environmental budget. And we can't not fulfill our responsibilities to the rest of the world. You know, I vetoed the foreign operations bill this morning because it seems to me to be the next big chapter in the new American isolationism, right after the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. There's no money to fund the Wye peace accord for peace in the Middle East, no money to fund our continuing work with the Russians to reduce their nuclear threat, no money to help us with debt relief to the poorest countries in Latin America and Asia, and several other problems.

So I think that—but on the other hand, according to Congressional Budget Office, they've already spent billions of dollars that are in the nongeneral revenue, or the Social Security revenue, portion of the surplus. I will work with them on offsets; I will work with them on getting a balanced budget out of here that meets all of our Nation's priorities.

But we need to sit down and do it together. You know, we can continue this standoff, and I will fight for what I believe in, as I have ever since they took over Congress in 1995. But in the years where we have worked together—in '96 and '97 and '98—we've produced good results for the American people. And we ought to do that in 1999, and that's my commitment.

Q. Is it inevitable that another continuing resolution will be necessary?

The President. I think probably, but it ought to be short. And you know, what I want to do is to put all these bills together and see what the real critical differences are. I know they're not going to do 100 percent of what I want them to do. But there are certain bottom lines for the American people that I have, that I have to fight for. And we need to see how all this spending works together and then do our best to agree on a responsible way to pay for it. And that's what I'd like to do.

And I'm not interested in being able to walk out of here and win a battle on whether they spent the Social Security surplus or not. As a matter of fact, they have, and it's been acknowledged for months, but that's not the point. The point is, we need a responsible budget here.

We're on a path to paying down America's debt. Because the tax cut was rejected, vetoed, we can still get America out of debt over the next 15 years; we can still extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund beyond the lifecycle of the baby boomers; and we can still have the funds to reform and modernize Medicare and meet these other priorities.

If you look over the 5-year period, if you look over the horizon here, this country is moving in the right direction, and we shouldn't allow these momentary difficulties to deter us from doing what is right now, so we can keep on the right path.

Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, on Pakistan, what's your reaction to General Musharraf's speech yesterday? There's no indication of any timetable for moving toward elections or for democracy.

The President. Well, a lot of what he said on the substance, including the conciliatory tone he took towards India, I thought was quite good. But I was quite disappointed that there was no commitment to a timetable to move toward democracy. And I certainly hope that will be forthcoming.

Carol Moseley-Braun's Nomination for Ambassador

Q. What do you think about Senator Helms' blocking Carol Moseley-Braun's nomination—reported obstruction?

The President. Well, I hope he won't do that. You know, again, there has been an unprecedented amount of playing politics with Ambassadors, here. And again, it sends a signal to

the rest of the world that there is a new isolationism in the country, that we don't really care whether we have Ambassadors in other places. We've got a hold on four other Ambassadors that—no one has questioned anything about their qualifications—for totally irrelevant reasons. And I think these things are not good for America.

So I would hope that Senator Moseley-Braun and the other Ambassadors would be quickly confirmed. And I will work as hard as I can to see that's done.

Support for Vice President Gore's Campaign

Q. Does it bother you, sir, that Vice President Gore says he may decide he doesn't need your help in the campaign?

The President. No.

Q. Why not?

The President. Because he has to. I agree with him. I think he ought to make that decision at the time, based on the—for one thing, no one can help anyone else in the campaign beyond a certain point. You can make phone calls; you can go door-to-door; you can volunteer; you can call your friends.

But when I was Governor, I remember one of the best elections I ever had was in 1984, when President Reagan—who was at his all-time peak of popularity in 1984 and got 62 percent of the vote, I think, running for reelection—came to my State to campaign against me, and I got the same vote he did.

And so, people are—elections—the American people know that in a representative form of government, they give the people that they vote for certain responsibilities. And then at election time, they're back in the driver's seat. So I think that that's a decision that we ought to make—or he ought to make at an appropriate time, just—I agree with what he said about it.

And I also think that it won't matter who says it, as much as it matters what is said. I just want the American people to make this judgment based on what's best for them. Who is the most likely to continue to change this country in the right direction? Who's the most likely to save Social Security and Medicare? Who's the most likely to advance childhood education? Who's the most likely to grow the economy and protect the environment? Who's the most likely to get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835? That's the only thing that matters.

This election is not about all the players that get written about in Washington. This election is about the American people. And they are perfectly happy to make the decision that is theirs every 4 years. And they will make it for themselves. And the candidates will be the major players; everybody else, to a greater or lesser degree, is in a subordinate role, as they always have been.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you, pool. Thank you.

Relationship With Republican Congress

Q. [Inaudible]—with the Republican leadership heading into this budget showdown?

The President. Well, you know, I have always had a very cordial relationship with Senator Lott and with Mr. Hastert since he's been there, the Speaker. And you know, even Mr. DeLay came up here the other day for this adoption event, and we had a good visit. I wouldn't—you know, I don't agree with them on the substance of a lot of this.

But I don't—I've said this a hundred times. Let me say it one more time. I have never, to the best of my knowledge, let political conflicts, even ones that had deeply personal overtones, get in the way of working with people who were also sent here. They were sent here, just like I was, by the American people.

And this is not an emotional issue. This is a job. We've got a job to do for the American people. We were hired to do it, and we need to do it. And so I feel good about it. And I hope that they'll come down here, and I hope we can work together and work something out. I'll do my best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House following a meeting with the economic team. In his remarks, he referred to Pakistani Gen. Pervez Musharraf, army chief of staff, who led a coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 12. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Foreign Operations Appropriations Legislation October 18, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2606, the "Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000."

The central lesson we have learned in this century is that we cannot protect American interests at home without active engagement abroad. Common sense tells us, and hard experience has confirmed, that we must lead in the world, working with other nations to defuse crises, repel dangers, promote more open economic and political systems, and strengthen the rule of law. These have been the guiding principles of American foreign policy for generations. They have served the American people well, and greatly helped to advance the cause of peace and freedom around the world.

This bill rejects all of those principles. It puts at risk America's 50-year tradition of leadership for a safer, more prosperous and democratic world. It is an abandonment of hope in our

Nation's capacity to shape that kind of world. It implies that we are too small and insecure to meet our share of international responsibilities, too shortsighted to see that doing so is in our national interest. It is another sign of a new isolationism that would have America bury its head in the sand at the height of our power and prosperity.

In the short term, H.R. 2606 fails to address critical national security needs. It suggests we can afford to underfund our efforts to keep deadly weapons from falling into dangerous hands and walk away without peril from our essential work toward peace in places of conflict. Just as seriously, it fails to address America's long-term interests. It reduces assistance to nations struggling to build democratic societies and open markets and backs away from our commitment to help people trapped in poverty to stand on their feet. This, too, threatens our security because future threats will come from regions and nations where instability and misery prevail

and future opportunities will come from nations on the road to freedom and growth.

By denying America a decent investment in diplomacy, this bill suggests we should meet threats to our security with our military might alone. That is a dangerous proposition. For if we underfund our diplomacy, we will end up overusing our military. Problems we might have been able to resolve peacefully will turn into crises we can only resolve at a cost of life and treasure. Shortchanging our arsenal of peace is as risky as shortchanging our arsenal of war.

The overall funding provided by H.R. 2606 is inadequate. It is about half the amount available in real terms to President Reagan in 1985, and it is 14 percent below the level that I requested. I proposed to fund this higher level within the budget limits and without spending any of the Social Security surplus. The specific shortfalls in the current bill are numerous and unacceptable.

For example, it is shocking that the Congress has failed to fulfill our obligations to Israel and its neighbors as they take risks and make difficult decisions to advance the Middle East peace process. My Administration, like all its predecessors, has fought hard to promote peace in the Middle East. This bill would provide neither the \$800 million requested this year as a supplemental appropriation nor the \$500 million requested in FY 2000 funding to support the Wye River Agreement. Just when Prime Minister Barak has helped give the peace process a jump start, this sends the worst possible message to Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinians about America's commitment to the peace process. We should instead seize this opportunity to support them.

Additional resources are required to respond to the costs of building peace in Kosovo and the rest of the Balkans, and I intend to work with the Congress to provide needed assistance. Other life-saving peace efforts, such as those in Sierra Leone and East Timor, are imperiled by the bill's inadequate funding of the voluntary peacekeeping account.

My Administration has sought to protect Americans from the threat posed by the potential danger of weapons proliferation from Russia and the countries of the former Soviet Union. But the Congress has failed to finance the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative (ETRI), which is designed to prevent weapons of mass destruction and weapons technologies from fall-

ing into the wrong hands and weapons scientists from offering their talents to countries, or even terrorists, seeking these weapons. The bill also curtails ETRI programs that help Russia and other New Independent States strengthen export controls to avoid illicit trafficking in sensitive materials through their borders and airports. The ETRI will also help facilitate withdrawal of Russian forces and equipment from countries such as Georgia and Moldova; it will create peaceful research opportunities for thousands of former Soviet weapons scientists. We also cannot afford to underfund programs that support democracy and small scale enterprises in Russia and other New Independent States because these are the very kinds of initiatives needed to complete their transformation away from communism and authoritarianism.

A generation from now, no one is going to say we did too much to help the nations of the former Soviet Union safeguard their nuclear technology and expertise. If the funding cuts in this bill were to become law, future generations would certainly say we did too little and that we imperiled our future in the process.

My Administration has also sought to promote economic progress and political change in developing countries, because America benefits when these countries become our partners in security and trade. At the Cologne Summit, we led a historic effort to enable the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries to finance health, education, and opportunity programs. The Congress fails to fund the U.S. contribution. The bill also severely underfunds Multilateral Development Banks, providing the lowest level of financing since 1987, with cuts of 37 percent from our request. This will virtually double U.S. arrears to these banks and seriously undermine our capacity to promote economic reform and growth in Latin America, Asia, and especially Africa. These markets are critical to American jobs and opportunities.

Across the board, my Administration requested the funding necessary to assure American leadership on matters vital to the interests and values of our citizens. In area after area, from fighting terrorism and international crime to promoting nuclear stability on the Korean peninsula, from helping refugees and disaster victims to meeting its own goal of a 10,000-member Peace Corps, the Congress has failed to fund adequately these requests.

Several policy matters addressed in the bill are also problematic. One provision would hamper the Export-Import Bank's ability to be responsive to American exporters by requiring that the Congress be notified of dozens of additional kinds of transactions before the Bank can offer financing. Another provision would allow the Export-Import Bank to operate without a quorum until March 2000. I have nominated two individuals to the Bank's Board, and they should be confirmed.

A third provision could be read to prevent the United States from engaging in diplomatic efforts to promote a cost-effective, global solution to climate change. A fourth provision places restrictions on assistance to Indonesia that could harm our ability to influence the objectives we share with the Congress: ensuring that Indonesia honors the referendum in East Timor and that security is restored there, while encouraging democracy and economic reform in Indonesia. Finally, this bill contains several sections that, if treated as mandatory, would encroach on the President's sole constitutional authority to conduct diplomatic negotiations.

In sum, this appropriations bill undermines important American interests and ignores the lessons that have been at the core of our bipartisan foreign policy for the last half century. Like the Senate's recent vote to defeat the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, this bill reflects an inexcusable and potentially dangerous complacency about the opportunities and risks America faces in the world today. I therefore am returning this bill without my approval.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support, one that maintains our commitment to protecting the Social Security surplus, properly addressing our shared goal of an America that is strong at home and strong abroad, respected not only for our leadership, but for the vision and commitment that real leadership entails. The American people deserve a foreign policy worthy of our great country, and I will fight to ensure that they continue to have one.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 18, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission

October 18, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 307(c) of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5877(c)), I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission,

which covers activities that occurred in fiscal year 1998.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 18, 1999.

Remarks on Assistance for Areas Affected by Hurricane Floyd and an Exchange With Reporters in Newark, New Jersey

October 18, 1999

The President. I want to begin my visit to New Jersey by announcing several steps our administration is taking, either today or previously over the weekend, to deliver Federal assistance to the citizens in the communities of New Jersey

that were hurt and are recovering from the flood damage caused by Hurricane Floyd. We're doing all we can, and I hope these steps will help.

Earlier today, I directed the Department of Health and Human Services to release \$5 million in LIHEAP funds to New Jersey for energy-related damage caused by the hurricane. The Low Income Energy Assistance Program makes funds available for emergency use to help at-risk families in times of weather distress and in the aftermath of natural disasters. The State can use the funds for utility repairs, for furnace and air conditioning replacement, for the removal of damaged insulation, and for energy costs related to the crisis.

Initially over the weekend, the Department of Housing and Urban Development announced the early availability of approximately \$34 million in HUD community development block grants for the counties hit hardest by Hurricane Floyd. These expedited funds, which normally would have been released in January of 2000, can be used by communities now for disaster recovery and for repairs to both homes and businesses—I know this has been a big issue up here—as well as to water and sewer facilities.

Last, on Saturday the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced a lump sum rental assistance of up to \$10,000 for individuals whose homes were damaged in the hurricane. We will continue to do all we can to help, and I hope that these measures will be particularly helpful. I have been following this very closely. I know there's been a lot of concern up here, particularly from businesses who felt that they needed more help than just the low-interest loans could provide. So I hope this early release of community development block grants will give them the help that they need.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, do you expect Republicans to make any concessions at your budget summit tomorrow?

The President. Well, I don't know. What I would like to see is the return to the spirit of working together that we had in 1996 and 1997 and 1998. We had plenty of arguments, but we banded together in all those 3 years to pass good budgets. We passed the welfare reform; we passed the Balanced Budget Act of '97; and we passed the remarkable budget in 1998 that, among other things, contained the 100,000 teachers. In the balanced budget, we had the HOPE scholarships, which have opened the doors of college to virtually all Americans—first balanced budgets, back-to-back, in 42 years.

So there has been this year something that I hoped we wouldn't have; there's been a return almost to the spirit they had in 1995. I don't understand that, and I thought that I did everything I could to reach out my hand to them early in the year to try to get the country back together, and I still hope we'll do that.

I still think that it's almost inexplicable that we're going through these really good times, and some people see good times as a luxury to indulge in division and diversion. To me, they impose an obligation to make the most of them. So you know, I'm just going to reach out a hand of friendship and hope that we can work together. We've done it on one of these bills, the VA/HUD bill. I think is quite a good bill, based on what I understand of it, and we can do it throughout. We can work through all of this if we just have the right attitude. I'm going to bring my right attitude to the meeting.

Vieques Island

Q. Sir, have you had a chance to consider the military's report on the Vieques Island?

The President. I have not. I think it's just been released. But I do know that Secretary Cohen said that he wanted to have further discussions and to try to talk to the leaders down in Puerto Rico, which is what I think ought to be done. The best of all worlds here would not only reach a good result, but it would reach a good result in a good way, and we would have a process which would restore a sense of trust and partnership between Puerto Rico and the Pentagon. An enormous number of Puerto Ricans have served with great distinction in the American Armed Forces, and to have the whole island, starting with the Governor and Congressman Romero-Barceló feel estranged from the Pentagon, not only over this but over the way the memorandum of understanding has developed since 1983, I think is a very bad thing.

So it may be that something good can come from this, and I think the fact that Secretary Cohen wants to actively reach out to the Governor and to that committee that has been appointed down there and have further discussions with them before making some sort of final recommendation to me is quite a good thing, and that's what I'm looking forward to.

Hurricane Floyd Disaster Assistance

Q. Mr. President, a lot of the frustration of the people in New Jersey over the flood situation is that—a lot of them have said this to me—is that when natural disasters occur, one, they're given grants very quickly, but they're saying, "Hey, here we are in the United States, and we have to deal with loans, SBA loans, and keep waiting and waiting."

The President. That's why I gave this community development block grant money early, because this money can be used as grants to do this kind of work. And I've been following this very closely. We spend a lot of money, if you will, in grants in America, but most of it is in repairing public facilities and in helping people get through immediate emergencies, which is about all we can do overseas as well. But

under unusual circumstances, we've seen this in other places.

In North Dakota, when they had that terrible flood—you remember in Grand Forks—we were able to release some community development block grant funds, which they were able to use not only for individuals but also for businesses who were so devastated that the low-interest loans were not enough.

So I'm hoping that this announcement I've made today will respond directly to what I have heard from the people of New Jersey needs to be done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:37 p.m. at Newark International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a New Jersey Democratic Assembly Dinner in Elizabeth, New Jersey

October 18, 1999

Thank you. Well, first of all, ladies and gentlemen, let me say I'm delighted to be here in Ray Lesniak's humble home. [Laughter] It's a beautiful place; we have a beautiful tent. It's a gorgeous New Jersey evening. When I got out of the airplane at the Newark airport and I looked up in the sky, it was just so beautiful, and I was so glad to be here.

I thank Representative Menendez for being here and for his friendship and support and his representation of you in the Congress. I thank Mayor Bollwage for hosting us; and my good friend Mayor Sharpe James, who is the only big city mayor in America who's also in the State Assembly—in the State Senate—it's liable to start a trend—[laughter]—which if you're a Democrat would be a very good thing to do. [Laughter] So, Sharpe, I think at the next mayors' conference you ought to suggest to all of our other mayors they should run for the State Senate or the State Assembly. It would be a good thing.

Chairman Giblin, thank you for your work. Senator Codey, Assemblywoman Weinberg, and to all the other members of the Assembly here, all the other mayors that are here. Mr. Corzine,

thank you for being here and for offering yourself for public office.

I got tickled, you know, I'm always learning about New Jersey, and I love it. What Ray didn't say was that we had the biggest improvement in our vote in the margin of victory from '92 to '96 in New Jersey of any State in the entire United States of America. And I am so very grateful for that.

So here's what I learned about New Jersey politics tonight. Lesniak, the Pole—[laughter]—introduces Bob Janiszewski. Doria, the Italian, pronounces it properly and calls him Janiszewski. [Laughter] Now, that's because if you're not in the family you've got to be politically correct—[laughter]—but if you are, you want to say the guy's name in the way that can get the most votes. [Laughter] It was fascinating, I loved it.

Let me say, I met—you know, Bob had me, in October of 1991, 8 years ago this month, to the Hudson County Democratic dinner. And I was hoarse; I could barely talk. I thought, you know, I saw this guy, and I didn't know whether he was going to bounce me out of the room or put his arm around me, and as

strong as he is, I might not survive either one. [Laughter] And I wanted so badly to make a good impression, I couldn't even talk. Maybe that's why most of the people there supported me. I don't know. [Laughter]

But since then, the friendships that I have enjoyed here, the support that I have received from here, and the opportunity we've had to work together has meant more to me than I can say. And you've been so good to me, to the Vice President, to our family in the administration. I just can't thank you enough.

You might ask—Joe said, well, I'm the only President that ever came here for the Assembly candidates. Now, if I were running for reelection you might understand that. What am I doing here tonight? Well, if Ray Lesniak asked me to empty my bank account—meager though it is—fly to Alaska to meet him tomorrow morning, I'd probably do it. I feel deeply indebted to him, and I'm glad his wonderful family is here tonight.

But I came here tonight not only out of a sense of gratitude and indebtedness to people like Joe and so many others here who have helped me over the years but also because I think this is quite important. And I'd like to ask you just to take a few minutes with me and think about where our country has come from, where we are now, and where we're going, and how these Assembly races fit into it.

You know, when I ran for President in 1992, it's almost impossible to remember what the country was like. We had high unemployment, stagnant growth, stagnant wages. We had increasing social division; crime was up; welfare was up; all the social problems were up. We had had serious incidents of civil disobedience out in Los Angeles. We had political gridlock in Washington. Our country was divided, and there was no unifying vision that would bring the people together, and it seemed to me that someone ought to run.

And at the time, the incumbent President, Mr. Bush, was at over 70 percent approval in the polls, in the aftermath of the Gulf war. But it seemed to me that somebody ought to run and say, "Look, this country is going through a lot of changes, and we have a lot of challenges and a lot of opportunities. And we're not going to either meet the challenges or seize the opportunities unless we have a vi-

sion that will bring us together and move us forward."

And so I went around the country. I declared—to show you how much frontloaded this process has become, I didn't even declare for President until this month in 1991. This race has been going on ever since my daughter was in diapers, for—this year I think. [Laughter] And I said, "Look, I believe we need to bring this country together around a set of simple values and new ideas: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. I believe we need to look to the future and understand that we can get rid of this deficit and still invest in education, that we can protect the environment and still grow the economy, that we can help labor and business, and that all these either/or choices that have been put on us from Washington for years and years and years will not get us where we want to go."

I also said I thought we needed a new set of partnerships in America between Government and business and labor and between the Federal Government and the State and local government. We needed to focus on empowering our citizens to make the most of their own lives and challenging them to serve in whatever way they could.

All these things were just arguments in '92. And luckily for me and the Vice President, the country gave us a chance. They said, "Okay, we heard your argument. We'll give you a chance." But it's not an argument now. There's evidence. The results are in, and after nearly 7 years in office, we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, the highest homeownership ever, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, the lowest murder rate in 32 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and we've reduced the size of the Federal Government; it's the smallest it has been in 37 years. It's not an argument anymore. We're going in the right direction.

And along the way, we proved you didn't have to give up other things. The air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We've set aside more land and protected it than any administration in the history of this country, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We've immunized 90 percent of our children

against serious diseases for the very first time. A hundred and fifty thousand young Americans have now served in AmeriCorps. The HOPE scholarship and other financial aid have virtually opened the doors of college to all Americans who are willing to work for it. And 15 million Americans have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law.

Now, the question before America in the elections of 1999 and 2000 is what are we going to do now? Where are we going now? Are we going to say, "Well, we're doing so well, we can indulge ourselves in petty politics and meanness and just power positioning of the moment?" Or are we going to say, "Hey, this is the chance of a lifetime. Once in a lifetime a country is in this kind of shape—a great country, leading the world—and we have to use this once in a lifetime chance to basically build the 21st century of our dreams for our children and our grandchildren and for a safer and more prosperous world?"

In order to do that, we have to challenge the American people, and you have to challenge the people of New Jersey to think big and to be big. I know what I think the big challenges are. And when I tell you, you'll see why I'm here tonight.

One, we have to take care of the aging of America. The number of people over 65 in this country will double in the next 30 years. I hope to live to be one of them. *[Laughter]* When that happens, there'll only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. So meeting the challenges of the aging of America requires us to do a number of things.

Number one, to save Social Security and stretch out the life of the Trust Fund until it encompasses a life expectancy of all the baby boomers. That's worth fighting for.

Number two, to save and reform Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit. To let people between the ages of 55 and 65 buy into Medicare, because people who lose their health insurance at that age almost never find another job with the same sort of health care guarantees. We ought to have a long-term care tax credit. That's a tax cut I wish my Republican friends would embrace, because so many families are having to take care of their parents or disabled relatives in long-term care.

The second thing we've got to do is meet the challenge of our children. We have more children from more diverse backgrounds by far

than at any time in our history, in State after State after State, not just in places like New Jersey and New York and California. My State, Arkansas, is one of the top two States in America in the percentage growth of Hispanic children in our schools. Our whole country is becoming more diverse. And yet we know that, while we have the best system of colleges and universities in the world, we do not give all of our children a world-class education.

We need higher standards, and we need more support. If we're going to have no social promotion, which I favor, we also should have summer school and after-school programs for the kids who need it; 100,000 teachers for smaller classes, which gives great results, and every classroom in this country should be hooked up to the Internet. And we ought to build or modernize thousands and thousands of schools. And if my initiative passed, we could help you get that done here in New Jersey.

So, the aging of America and the children of America; the third big challenge we have is to help the families of America in an age where almost everybody with children is also working. I think we need to broaden the reach of the family leave law. I think we need to toughen the enforcement of equal pay for equal work. It is still not a reality. Women still don't get equal pay, and that is very, very important. I'm the only guy that I know made less money than his wife every year we were married until I became President. *[Laughter]* This is something I'm doing for the rest of you. *[Laughter]* I feel very strongly about it.

We ought to pass the patients' protection bill. We ought to do more for child care for working families. We ought to raise the minimum wage. These things are important. We ought to expand health care coverage, especially to children of lower income working people.

The fourth thing we've got to do, I believe, is to set as a national goal that we're going to make America the safest big country in the world. Yes, the crime rate is the lowest in 26 years. That's good. The murder rate is the lowest in 32 years. In spite of these horrible school shootings, children are less likely to be killed today than they were 7 years ago. I'm proud of that. But does anybody seriously believe this country is as safe as it ought to be? And if it's not, why should we stop until America is the safest big country in the world?

Now, I have a proposal to put 50,000 more police on the street—the first 100,000 did a good job—and to put them in the highest crime areas of the country. The Democrats in Washington, we're trying to pass proposals for reasonable gun restriction, for child safety locks, for closing the gun show loophole, which has no background checks at gun shows and urban flea markets, and doing a number of other things. But we shouldn't stop. We shouldn't say we're satisfied with where it is, because we shouldn't be.

The next thing we ought to do is to make this economy work for all Americans. You know as well as I do that right here in New Jersey there are people and places that have not been touched by this economic recovery. We've worked very hard on this. The Vice President has run our remarkably successful empowerment zone program. But we want to double the number of those empowerment zones, and we want to make sure that with our new markets initiative that people who have money to invest get the same financial incentives to invest in poor neighborhoods in America we give them to invest in poor neighborhoods in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia, and throughout the world. Because people here who want to go to work ought to have a chance. If we don't do something now, when our economy is so prosperous and when our unemployment rate is so low to give people who don't have work the chance to have it, we will never get around to it. Now is the time to do that.

Let me just say one other thing, maybe in some ways the biggest idea of all. People are asking me all the time if we've repealed the business cycle, because we now have the longest peacetime expansion in history. We haven't. But one of the things we know is that if we keep an open economy and we keep competing and this technological revolution continues and we educate more and more of our people, we'll do better. But you all know that one of the reasons we're doing better is because we took a \$290 billion deficit and turned it in to \$115 billion surplus, and that drove down interest rates, and it increased investment; it increased jobs; it increased incomes; it lowered home mortgage rates; it lowered college loan rates; it lowered car interest payment rates and credit card rates. It made us more prosperous.

If my plan in Washington is adopted, to save Social Security and Medicare, it will enable us

to pay down the debt over the next 15 years, so that 15 years from now this country could be out of debt for the very first time since—listen to this—Andrew Jackson was President in 1835. Now, why should the nominally more liberal party be for getting us out of debt? Because it's good for poor people who want jobs; it's good for middle class people who want affordable credit; it will give us a stronger, longer-running prosperity. And when we do get into trouble, it won't be nearly as bad as it otherwise would have been. And I hope every Democrat will stand up for that and stick up for that. That's why I vetoed that Republican tax bill, because we never would have gotten out of debt and we wouldn't have had any money left to invest in education and health care and the environment.

I'll just mention two other things real briefly, because they don't bear on you quite so much. One is, I think the most important thing we can do is keep working to build one America, to keep working to reach across the lines that divide us. The more complicated, the more diverse we get, the more we ought to be lifting up and celebrating our differences and making a little fun of them, like I did tonight—[laughter]—and enjoying it but also reaffirming our common humanity.

When you see all these hate crimes we have—Matthew Shepard killed in Wyoming because he was gay; James Byrd dragged apart in Texas because he was black; a Filipino postalworker shot in California by a man who just got through shooting at Jewish children at a Jewish community school; an African-American basketball coach and a young Korean Christian killed walking out of his church in the Middle West by a man who belonged to a church that said he didn't believe in God, he believed—the church believed in white supremacy.

When you see all this stuff it is just sort of the most egregious example in America of the problems that all of us have in looking at people who are different from us and feeling fear or misunderstanding. And when those things are not dealt with, they can lead quite easily to hatred, which can lead to dehumanization, which in the most egregious examples, can lead to killing. And it's not just America. It's all over the world. What am I working on in the Middle East or Ireland or to try to stop tribal wars in Africa or in Bosnia and Kosovo? All over the world, we are still, on the verge

of this most modern of ages, we're bedeviled by fear of the other.

We had a fascinating—Hillary has organized eight different Millennium Evenings at the White House, where we bring in brilliant people to come talk about various things and then put it out over the Internet, all over the country and all over the world. Last week we had two guys come in and talk. It was the most fascinating thing you ever saw. One of them helped to develop the architecture of the Internet. The other one was an expert in the human genome project. And they talked about how computers made it possible to unlock the mystery of the human genes and together would make it possible to do things like put little computer chips in any part of our body that's broken someday and have the chip emit electronic impulses which would, for example, take the place of damaged nerves. It was fascinating.

But what the geneticist said is interesting. He said that all human beings, from a genetic point of view, are 99.9 percent the same, and that the genetic differences among groups of people—that is, within them are greater than the genetic differences of the group as a whole with any other group. So that among Poles, Italians, Latinos, and African-Americans, within each of those groups, the genetic differences are different than on average the genetic differences of one group are from another. We have got to get over this notion that we define our lives in terms of being better than somebody who is in some other group. And it's a huge issue.

The last thing I want to say—you mentioned the test ban treaty. I have done everything I could from the first day I got here to try to lead the world to a point where we could take advantage of the good things going on and beat back the threats of tomorrow. What are the threats? The spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons; the growth of terrorism, organized crime, and drug running and the groups working more and more together. What are the opportunities? Expanding trade, expanding communications.

One of my big struggles with the Congress is that they don't agree with a lot of this. But I just want you to know one thing about the test ban treaty. Everybody is for it when you hear about it. Then they can get a lot of people to say, "Well, I don't know if I'm for it because," they say, "why should America sign a

nuclear test ban treaty when other people can cheat?"

The answer is, the treaty makes it harder to cheat. Because if we get the treaty, we get over 300 supersophisticated sensors that we put out all over the world, in all the critical places, which catch people cheating. If we don't sign it, it's harder and harder to know whether people are testing or not; and even if they do, they're not violating any rules, because we walked away.

Now, that's what I think. Deal with the aging of America. Deal with the children of America. Deal with the families of America. Make us the safest big country in the world. Get us out of debt and give poor people a chance to be a part of this economy. Make us one America, and keep leading the world. That's what I think.

Now, look at the Republicans' position. On Social Security, they have an act to save Social Security or reform Medicare, and they say there won't be any prescription drug benefit this year. On education, they're against voluntary tests; they're against our no-social-promotion policy; they won't give us 100,000 teachers; and they sure won't give us any funds to help you to build or modernize your schools. On the family issues, they're against expanding family leave; they haven't supported equal pay; they're sure against the Patients' Bill of Rights, the leadership; and they haven't helped us expand child care. On the crime issue, they were against putting 100,000 police on the street, and they're against putting 50,000 more. And you know where they are on the gun issues. On the economy, the tax cut would have taken away the possibility of getting us out of debt. On one America, they're against the hate crimes bill, the employment nondiscrimination bill. And on world leadership, it's not just the comprehensive test ban; they won't pay our U.N. dues; they're against our doing our part to combat climate change; and they're against adequately funding our national security. I vetoed a bill today for foreign operations which doesn't have any money to meet our obligations to the Middle East peace process, any money to increase our efforts to diminish the nuclear threats that still exist in Russia, any money to help pay off the debts of the poor countries that the Pope and everybody else has begged the rich countries of the world to do in the year 2000.

Now, what has all this got to do with the New Jersey Assembly? Plenty. Because if you

look at these things—the children, the seniors, the families, whether the economy works, how the education system works, whether we've got safe streets, and whether we're coming together instead of drifting apart—a lot of that work is done at the State level. Joe has already talked about it but, you know, I'm proud to come here because you're trying to pass a meaningful patients' protection bill that not only has the right to sue but also has an ombudsman to look over how the managed care system works.

Now, I have a right to say this because I have never condemned managed care, *per se*. But do you know when I proposed the Patients' Bill of Rights, 43 managed care companies came to me and said, "Mr. President, we're interested in these principles. We think they ought to be the law. But you don't understand; you have got to pass a law, because if we try to do this on our own, we'll lose our shirt if our competitors undercut us. They'll take all the healthy people and not charge them anything and leave us with all the problems. There needs to be a law here."

I'm here because New Jersey's Democrats are trying to pass child-proof gun legislation, which is very important. I'm here because you believe in progressive, not regressive, taxation—and I know about your fight there—and because of what you've done in education. Keep in mind, this only works if there is a partnership.

Now, my Republican predecessors talked a lot about partnerships, but we have eliminated

more regulations on the State—two-thirds of all the Department of Education regulations. We have turned over more programs to the State than my two predecessors combined. But if it's going to work, you have to have the right people in the State government.

So I ask you, again, think about what you want the new century to look like for your kids and your grandkids. Think about the obligation we have with this chance of a lifetime. Do what you can to stick with us nationally but also at the State level. And if you do what you ought to do in these elections, you will send a loud message to America that we are moving in the right direction for tomorrow.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in an outdoor tent at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to State Senator Raymond J. Lesniak, dinner host; Mayor J. Christian Bollwage of Elizabeth; Mayor Sharpe James of Newark, NJ; Thomas Giblin, chairman, and Robert C. Janiszewski, Hudson County chairman, Democratic State Committee; State Senator Richard J. Codey; State Assembly members Loretta Weinberg and Joseph V. Doria, Jr., who introduced the President; Jon S. Corzine, former chief executive officer, Goldman Sachs; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Remarks to the Voices Against Violence Conference

October 19, 1999

Thank you. Good morning. I think Rebecca Hunter did a wonderful job with her pledge and with her introduction, don't you? Let's give her another hand. [*Applause*] I thought she was great.

I would like to begin by thanking our House Democratic leader, Dick Gephardt, and all others who were involved in this Voices Against Violence meeting. I want to thank Congressmen Frost, Bonior, DeLauro, Clement, and Menendez, who are over here to my left. And I see Representative Capps out there. There may be

more Members of Congress here. I thank all of them for being here.

I would like to thank our Secretary of Education, Dick Riley, who came with me; Jeff Bleich, who runs our national grassroots campaign against youth violence. And I'd like to thank Ananda Lewis of MTV and all the other organizations who are working to help make this a safer place for all of you. I thank the parents, the teachers, and the chaperons who came here with you today.

But most of all, I came here to say thank you to all of you for taking responsibility, taking a stand in raising your voices against violence.

I also have to say that this is a good day for me for you to be here because I know a lot of you have been trained in conflict resolution, and I'm meeting with the leaders of the Congress this afternoon, the Republicans and the Democrats, to try to resolve our conflict over the budget. *[Laughter]* And if I don't do so well, I may keep some of you in Washington for an extra day or 2 to help me. I think that would be a good idea.

Actually, we do agree on things from time to time. Later today I'm going to sign legislation that will make good our common commitment to veterans, housing, science and technology, and to a part of what I call my new markets initiative, to give economic opportunity to the poor parts of America where our recovery has not reached.

And now we have to finish the rest of the budget. The most important thing to me and to all of us is that we do a good job on education. It has got to be the number one priority for our country for the new century. We have the largest and most diverse student population we have ever had. It poses new challenges for us, but it gives America an unprecedented opportunity.

So I want you to see what we want to do about youth violence in the larger context of what I believe should be our commitment to give you the best possible education and the best possible future that any children have ever had in the history of our country.

We're trying to put 100,000 teachers in our classrooms for smaller classes. We're trying to build or modernize 6,000 schools, because so many kids are in house trailers and broken-down old schools today, because there are so many more schoolchildren than we've ever had before. We're trying to make sure that by the end of next year we have hooked up every classroom in America to the Internet. We're trying to provide funds for summer school and after-school programs, funds to turn around schools that aren't doing a good job, more efforts to mentor young people in middle school to get them ready to go on to college.

We're also fighting for funds for health care and the environment and for more community police officers. And we're doing it in a way that will enable us to do something else you

should care about, which is to save Social Security and Medicare when the so-called baby boom generation retires, and then there will only be about two people your age working for every one person retired. And it's very important that we use this moment, here, where we're prosperous, to protect your future.

Most of us who are in the baby boom generation are panicked by the thought that when we retire, we'll impose a big burden on your generation and your ability to raise your kids. So we're determined to avoid that, and we can.

And finally, let me say, from the time I was your age until today, our country has always been in debt, and over the last 10 or 12 years, increasingly so, before I became President. We've got a chance to get this country out of debt over the next 15 years, to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835, and I hope we will do that.

I've been asking all the American people, including our young people, to imagine the future and to recognize that our country has a certain, unique moment here, when we've got a lot of prosperity and when our problems have been laid bare for us for all to see by tragic instances, like the instance at Columbine. But it's not the only kind of violence young people are subjected to. They're also subjected to hate crimes: Matthew Shepard being killed in Wyoming; the children shot at, at the Jewish community center; and then the Filipino postalworker murdered; the young Korean killed in the Middle West by the guy on the hate crime spree who also killed the African-American former basketball coach at Northwestern.

So when you have all these opportunities out there and you have your problems laid bare and you have the strength of the country and the prosperity of the country giving us the confidence to deal with them, what I hope you will say to everybody here and when you go back home is, America will never have a better time to face its biggest problems; America will never have a better time to save all of its children. And that is what I think we ought to be thinking about.

You heard Congressman Gephardt say that our crime rate has been going down 7 years in a row. That's the first time that's happened for over 40 years. The overall crime rate is the lowest it has been in 26 years. The murder rate is the lowest it has been in more than 30 years. That sounds great, and I'm proud of

that. And I'm glad we've worked on that. But does anybody think America is as safe as it ought to be? No. Of course not, obviously.

Six months after Columbine—tomorrow, 6 months after Columbine, no serious person believes that America is as safe as it ought to be. And every day, every day we lose more than a dozen kids to violence. They die in ones and twos, so we don't see them on the evening news; we don't see their names blared in headlines.

So why don't you help us adopt a real goal? Why don't we, together, say that we're going to make America the safest big country in the world in the 21st century, starting with making our children safe? You can do that, and that's what I want to do.

We need an organized way in every community in America to capture the spirit that brought you to Washington this week. We need people working on specific things. I thought Rebecca Hunter's pledge was great. You just think about it. If every young person in every high school and junior high school in America took the pledge that she stated and acted on it, violence would go down. At least violence perpetrated by young people would go down.

I want you to help us while you're here. What else can we do? How do we make our schools sanctuaries of safety? How do we recognize the early warning signs of violence? How do we teach people to resolve their differences peacefully? How do we share good ideas from one community to another? How can people who are injured find it in their hearts to forgive people they've been angry at, instead of trying to get even? These are very important questions.

It seems to me there is no quick-fix solution, and what we have to do in Washington is to try to give you the tools and the framework and as safe as possible condition to do this work. But our young people have to be reached one by one. In many ways, all of you can have more influence on your peers than I can as President, or than any of us can. We can try, but you can make all the difference.

I also would like to say that I think that this conference has to recognize that there are things that you can do and things that we have to do and that we have some obligations here to understand the problem of youth violence in the environment as a greater violent level of our community. And let me just mention a few things. Mr. Gephardt mentioned a couple

of them before, but when I took office, almost 7 years ago now, I had spent a lot of time going from community to community, walking the streets with police officers and with community leaders, sitting and listening to young people talk about the violence in their streets. I'll never forget, I was in California one time—this was way—8 or 9 years ago—and this young person in a grade school told me what it was like when they had a drive-by shooting at random and all the kids had to get out of their desks and hit the floor. And I've listened to people talk to me about this stuff.

And I asked the Congress to do what the local people told me would help to lower crime. So we put more community policing programs out there; we passed the Brady bill; we banned assault weapons. We did a lot of things that were good, and we supported local community initiatives. We had a zero tolerance for guns in school policy.

And as I said, it is working, and that is good. But now I think we have to do some more things. I also should say that all these people here in our caucus who supported all those crime policies took a lot of heat for doing it, because we were told that—the NRA told everybody we were going to take their guns away and they couldn't go hunting anymore. Well, everybody's still hunting, but it's a safer country, and we're still having the same argument up here.

We held the first-ever school safety conference at the White House, and we gave over \$100 million in safe school grants to schools and communities to help them fight youth violence. We started mentoring programs to help kids know that if they stayed in school and stayed out of trouble, they could actually go on to college. And after the terrible wave of violence culminating in Columbine, I launched a new White House youth violence council to coordinate our work throughout all the Government agencies.

Now, today we are going to release at the Government level—this makes the very point I made to you in the beginning about why I'm glad you're here—today we're going to release our second annual report on school safety. The Secretary of Education has done wonderful work on this. It shows that, once again, the vast majority of our schools are safe. It also shows they're getting safer, which is a tribute to you

and to your teachers. Homicides in schools remain rare. Crimes are down both in and out of school, and there are now far fewer students carrying weapons to schools than there were 6 years ago. That's the good news.

The bad news is we've had Columbine, Jonesboro, Springfield, Pearl—I could go on and on—all the places where there have been these horrible examples of school violence. We know that more and more students feel unsafe. So I want to say to you that—again I say, I want you to help us with new ideas. But I want to tell you what we're doing now, up here. And then I want to close and ask you to think about something for the rest of the time you're here.

First of all, we want to do more to help you reach other people. Our Justice Department and the Education Department worked with MTV to provide a youth action guide and a CD that focused on concrete steps to reduce youth violence, such as mentoring, conflict resolution, and youth advocacy. I want to thank the Recording Industry Association of America for their help in putting this CD together. We've already distributed over a quarter of a million, over 250,000 of these CD's. Today the Justice Department is going to send out 200,000 more to organizations around the country: after-school programs, law enforcement agencies, foundations, and civic groups.

Now, this CD basically sounds a call for action. It's a commonsense tool that helps to make a difference if it's put in the right hands, the hands of people like you. And we're doing our part. But let me also say, to again echo what Mr. Gephardt said, we need Congress to help us. Especially, we need Congress to help us to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Now, I've heard all this talk with—people say it doesn't really matter whether we do anything about guns. All I know is, we passed the Brady bill. We've kept 400,000 people with criminal backgrounds from buying handguns since 1994, and we have the lowest crime rate in 26 years. I don't believe the things are unrelated.

And one of the real problems with the Brady bill is there is a loophole: If you buy a gun at a gun show or in urban flea markets, they don't have to do a background check on you. So we want to close that. We also want to ban the import of large ammunition clips. And we want to require child-safety locks.

Let me just give you this statistic to think about. You want to be against unintentional vio-

lence as well as intentional violence. The accidental death rate of children from guns in America—the accidental death rate—listen to this—is 9 times higher than the rates for the next 25 biggest industrial countries combined. You take the next 25 biggest economies and put them all together, our accidental death rate from guns is 9 times higher than all of them put together.

So we should do more to create an environment in which we will be more safe, that will help you when you're trying to get kids to sign the pledge, when you're trying to solve the conflicts in your schools. I also believe it's very important for Congress to pass this hate crimes legislation which makes it explicitly criminal to attack people because of their racial, their religious, or their sexual orientation. I think it is very, very important.

Now, last night the Republicans on the relevant committees removed important hate crimes protection from a bill that had already passed the Senate. And they tried to kill this bill when we weren't watching, but now we're watching this morning. I want to ask you also to speak up for that, and that's the last point I want to make.

This hate crimes legislation is important because—why? It embodies what I think is the biggest challenge facing not only our society but societies all over the world. The great thing about the modern world is we've got a lot of movement across national borders. A lot of you have probably been on the Internet talking to people in other countries. And when I look ahead to your future, I see a time when we'll have these unbelievable scientific discoveries. And your children, literally, may be born with a life expectancy of about 100 years. We're unlocking the secrets of the human gene. And you will be, literally, able to not only be American citizens but citizens of the world in ways that no one else has ever been, even if you don't travel beyond your home county, because of the way the Internet is working to bring us together. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the same demons that lead people to commit racial and religious and sexual orientation-related crimes and discrimination in America are sweeping the world in more violent ways. Basically, the conflict in Northern Ireland is a religious conflict. The conflict in the Middle East is an ethnic and religious conflict. The conflicts in Kosovo and Bosnia were

ethnic and religious conflicts. The brutal killings in Africa were tribal conflicts. All over the world, people are getting into modern technology, but they're behaving as if they lived 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 years ago, because they're afraid of people who are different from them still.

Don't you think that's interesting, that you live in the most modern of all worlds, and yet the biggest problem we've got is the oldest problem of human society, people being scared of people who are different from them? And you can help that.

I had, last week, at the White House—really my wife had this meeting, and I just went along for the ride. But she sponsored this lecture by a man who helped to create the infrastructure of the Internet and a man who knows more than nearly anybody in America about the human genome project, the breaking down of the component parts of the genes, and how it fits in the body. And they talked about how we were going to be able to solve all these health problems by merging computer technology and what we know about genetics.

But let me tell you what the genome specialist said. He said—now listen to this—look around this room, all the different kinds of people that are in this room. He said that 99 percent of us, 99.9 percent of each of our bodies is identical to the other. We are 99.9 percent the same genetically. Even more interesting, he said, if you take two ethnic groups, there are more differences in the gene structures within the ethnic groups than there are between the ethnic groups. That is, if you take, let's say, a group of Hispanic kids and a group of Asian kids, there will be more differences within the group than what you average out what the genetic makeup is between the Hispanics and the Asians.

We're getting a message here. Science is reaffirming what our values tell us. And I'm telling you, if you all can do something about violence and fear and the compulsive alienation of so many of our young people, which turns into their need to look down on people and eventually dehumanize them and eventually think it's okay to act violently against them, if you can deal with that—it's the oldest problem of human society—if you can deal with that, you're going to have the brightest future of any generation of Americans.

You will have a chance to solve diseases, to solve poverty problems, to give people potential that they never would have had before. But the whole thing can be held down by the failure to deal with our violent impulses, which are the product of our most deep-seated fears. So think about that.

If you want to live in the new world of the 21st century, you've got to help people get rid of their old hatreds and old fears. We'll do our part, and we're very proud of your leadership in doing yours.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the Cannon Caucus Room at the Cannon House Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Rebecca Hunter, a student from Nashville, TN, who introduced the President; Jeffrey Bleich, Executive Director, National Campaign Against Youth Violence; Ananda Lewis, host of MTV's "HotZONE;" Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research. The conference, entitled Voices Against Violence: A Congressional Teen Conference, was sponsored by House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt and the House Democratic caucus.

Statement on the Social Security Administration Cost-of-Living Adjustment October 19, 1999

Today the Social Security Administration announced the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for next year's benefits. This announcement is a reminder that, for over 60 years, Social Security has been a cornerstone of American national

policy that has enabled generations of Americans to retire with dignity. Each year millions of disabled and elderly Americans are lifted out of poverty by Social Security. As a result, poverty rates among the elderly are at the lowest level

ever recorded. The cost-of-living adjustment announced today ensure that Social Security benefits will continue to be an essential part of retirement and family security for all Americans.

This year we have an historic opportunity to protect and strengthen Social Security, securing it for future generations of retirees. At a min-

imum, we should agree on a downpayment on reform by passing a Social Security lockbox that extends the life of Social Security to about 2050 and pays down the debt by 2015. I remain committed to working with Congress to move forward in this area.

Statement on Senate Action on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

October 19, 1999

Once again a minority in the Senate has blocked bipartisan campaign finance reform. The failure of the Senate to adopt real reform is a victory for the politics of cynicism, and it leaves unchecked the influence of moneyed special interests. I will not let the Senate's inaction deter us from our goal, which is to restore

the public's faith in our political system. That is why I will continue to fight for passage of real, comprehensive campaign finance reform like that passed recently by the House. The people of this country want reform, and the Senate cannot stand in their way forever.

Statement on the Vote in Indonesia on the East Timor Referendum

October 19, 1999

I welcome the historic decision by the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia to accept the results of the August 30 referendum in East Timor. The Assembly's unequivocal action shows respect for the will of the people of East Timor. It is also an important step forward in Indonesia's own democratic transformation, which the United States strongly supports.

Of course, much work remains to make sure that East Timor's transition succeeds. In the wake of the Assembly's decision, the United Nations must establish a transition administration leading to East Timor's full independence. And

Indonesia must take the necessary steps to ensure the safe return of all displaced East Timorese, including allowing the international community full access to displaced persons in West Timor.

The United States is committed to helping the people of East Timor not only obtain the legal recognition of independence but also develop the institutions they need to thrive as an independent state. We are equally determined to help Indonesia achieve its goal of lasting democracy and prosperity. Today's action will bring both goals closer to fruition.

Statement on House Action on Work Incentives Improvement Legislation

October 19, 1999

I am extremely pleased that the House, by an overwhelming bipartisan vote today, passed legislation that will remove barriers to work for Americans with disabilities. Today's impressive

vote for the work incentives improvement act sends a strong signal that all Americans, including people with disabilities, should have the opportunity to work. Now I call on Congress to

finish the job so more Americans can start to work.

My administration has helped create more than 19 million new jobs in the last 6½ years, and unemployment is at a 29-year low. Yet almost three out of four Americans with severe disabilities who want to work are not working. Since taking office, I have made empowering and promoting the independence of people with disabilities a priority. Central to this effort is taking down barriers to work for people with disabilities. One of the biggest barriers these Americans face is the fear of losing their health insurance when they get a job. Under current law, many people with disabilities cannot work and keep their Medicaid or Medicare coverage, creating a tremendous disincentive to work.

The work incentives improvement act would help ensure that people with disabilities do not lose their health care when they gain a job. It would give workers with disabilities the option to buy into Medicaid and would extend Medicare coverage for people with disabilities who

return to work. The work incentives improvement act also modernizes the vocational rehabilitation system by creating a "ticket" that enables an SSI or SSDI beneficiary to go to either a public or private provider of vocational rehabilitation.

In my State of the Union Address 9 months ago, I urged the Congress to make this historic legislation a top priority, and I fully funded it in the budget I sent to Congress. Like the House, the Senate has overwhelmingly passed the work incentives improvement act, thanks to the leadership of Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan. The bill that passed today has flaws. These include limitations on the health options and inadequate and problematic financing provisions, particularly one affecting student loans. I urge the Congress to address these issues this year and send me this legislation. Americans with disabilities who want to work should not have to wait any longer for that opportunity.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 19, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the emergency declared with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia is to continue in effect for 1 year beyond October 21, 1999.

The circumstances that led to the declaration on October 21, 1995, of a national emergency have not been resolved. The actions of significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary

threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States and to cause unparalleled violence, corruption, and harm in the United States and abroad. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to maintain economic pressure on significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia by blocking their property subject to the jurisdiction of the United States and by depriving them of access to the United States market and financial system.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 19, 1999.

NOTE: The notice of October 19 is listed in Appendix D at the end of the volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Medicare Reform October 19, 1999

Dear Mr. Chairman: (Dear Senator Moynihan:)

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Senator Moynihan earlier this month to discuss our mutual commitment to strengthening and modernizing Medicare. It continues to be my hope that the Congress will take action this year to, at minimum, make a downpayment on needed reforms of the program. I look forward to working with you toward that end.

In 1997, the Medicare trustees projected that Medicare would become insolvent in 2001. Working together across party lines, the Congress passed and I enacted important reforms that contributed towards extending the life of the Medicare trust fund to 2015. As with any major legislation, the Balanced Budget Act (BBA) included some policies that are flawed or have had unintended consequences that are posing immediate problems to some providers and beneficiaries. In addition, the program faces the long-term demographic and health care challenges that will inevitably result as the baby-boom generation ages into Medicare. As we worked together in 1997 to address the immediate threat to Medicare, we must work together now to address its short-term and long-term challenges.

Preparing and strengthening Medicare for the next century is and will continue to be a top priority for my Administration. For this reason, I proposed a plan that makes the program more competitive and efficient, modernizes its benefits to include the provision of a long-overdue prescription drug benefit, and dedicates a portion of the surplus to help secure program solvency for at least another 10 years. However, I also share your belief that we need to take prompt action—whether in the context of broader or more limited reforms—to moderate the excessive provider payment reductions in the BBA of 1997. I believe that legislative modifications in this regard should be paid for and should not undermine the solvency of the Medicare trust fund.

You have requested a summary of the administrative actions that I plan to take to moderate the impact of the BBA. In the letter that you sent to me last Thursday, you also asked about

four specific issues related to payment for hospital outpatient departments, managed care, skilled nursing facilities, and disproportionate share hospitals.

Attached is a summary of the over 25 administrative actions that my Administration is currently implementing or will take to address Medicare provider payment issues. The Department of Health and Human Services is taking virtually all the administrative actions possible under the law that have a policy justification, which will accrue to the benefit of hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and other providers.

We are finishing our review of our administrative authority to address the 5.7 percent reduction in hospital outpatient department payments. We believe that the Congressional intent was to not impose an additional reduction in aggregate payments for hospitals and I favor a policy that achieves this goal. The enactment of clarifying language on this subject would be useful in making clear Congressional intent with regard to this issue. I have attached a letter from Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew, which was sent at the request of Congressman Bill Thomas, detailing how such language would be scored by OMB.

With regards to managed care, we share your commitment to expanding choice and achieving stability in the Medicare+Choice marketplace. The BBA required that payments to managed care plans be risk adjusted. To ease the transition to this system, we proposed a 5-year, gradual phase-in of the risk adjustment system. This phase-in forgoes approximately \$4.5 billion in payment reductions that would have occurred if risk adjustment were fully implemented immediately. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and other experts support my Administration's risk adjustment plan. Consistent with this position, most policy experts believe that a further slowdown of its implementation is unwarranted. However, we remain committed to making any and all changes that improve its methodology. Moreover, as you know, any administrative and legislative changes that increase payment rates to providers in the fee-for-service

program will also increase payments to managed care plans.

On the issue of skilled nursing facilities, we agree that nursing home payments for the sickest Medicare beneficiaries are not adequate. I intend to take all actions possible to address this. Administratively, we can and will use the results of a study that is about to be completed to adjust payments as soon as possible. While we believe that these adjustments must be budget neutral, we are continuing to review whether we have additional administrative authority in this area.

Finally, it appears that there has been confusion about the current policy for disproportionate share hospital (DSH) payments. Hospitals across a considerable number of states have misconstrued how to calculate DSH payments. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has since concluded that this resulted from unclear guidance. Thus, as reported last Friday, HHS will not recoup pass

overpayments and will issue new, clearer guidance as soon as possible.

We believe that our administrative actions can complement legislative modifications to refine BBA payment policies. These legislative modifications should be targeted to address unintended consequences of the BBA that can expect to adversely affect beneficiary access to quality care. I hope and expect that our work together will lay the foundation for much broader and needed reforms to address the demographic and health care challenges confronting the program. We look forward to working with you, as well as the House Ways and Means and Commerce Committees, as we jointly strive to moderate the impact of BBA on the nation's health care provider community.

Sincerely,

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to William V. Roth, Jr., chairman, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, ranking member, Senate Committee on Finance.

Remarks on Signing the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000, and an Exchange With Reporters October 20, 1999

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, let me, first of all, welcome you all here for the signing of the VA/HUD bill, and say what I would like to do. I want to make a statement, sign the bill, pass out the pens, and then if you have questions, I'll answer the questions then. Okay?

Q. It's a deal.

The President. We've got a deal? [Laughter] That way we won't all have to claw each other to death before we finish this.

I would like to welcome Senator Edwards and Congressman Walsh and Congressman Mollohan, Secretary Cuomo, Secretary West, NSF Director Colwell, NASA Director Dan Goldin, and FEMA Director James Lee Witt, as well as the representatives of all these groups who are here who worked so hard with us to fashion what I think is a truly remarkable and positive piece of legislation.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to our OMB Director, Jack Lew, to Sylvia Mathews, and his whole staff, for the wonderful work that they did on this in working with the Congress, and all the people here represented.

For over 200 years, Presidents have been called upon to approve or not approve spending bills passed by the Congress. Because these bills can profoundly affect the future of our Nation, Presidents must carefully weigh their decisions about signing them. In the 6½ years I have been President, I have put my signature on spending bills only when convinced they reflect the values of our people, respected the need for Government to live within its means, and looked toward the future. The VA/HUD bill I'm about to sign clearly meets these standards. It not only maintains the fiscal discipline that has led us to this moment of prosperity; it also honors our highest values.

We value fairness and work. This bill reflects that by strengthening fair housing enforcement and by providing housing vouchers to help 60,000 more hard-working, low income families move closer to where their jobs are. I want to thank Secretary Cuomo, especially, for his initiative on this. The bill also provides significant increases in housing for elderly Americans and puts in place a plan to ensure that they will continue to have safe and affordable places to live.

We value opportunity. This bill expands opportunity to those who have not felt the full benefits of our prosperity yet. It maintains our commitments to empowerment zones and enterprise communities, while adding part of my new markets initiative, to give investors the same incentives to invest in our inner cities and poor rural areas they currently get to invest in new markets overseas. And the Vice President and I have worked very hard on this for many years, and I thank the Congress. I think the idea of bringing free enterprise and empowering poor communities is something that is becoming a bipartisan consensus in our country. I hope it is. We know that the Government can never provide enough economic opportunity in these areas. And we know if we can't bring private sector enterprise to these areas now, when our economy is so strong, we'll never get around to doing it. So I thank the Congress for putting these provisions in.

We value clean air and clean water. This bill provides the Environmental Protection Agency with the resources it needs to protect our air and water.

We value our fighting men and women, and thanks to the leadership of the Vice President and the commitment of this Congress, this bill adds the extra resources necessary to improve our veterans' health care.

We value strong communities. This bill will help young people continue to serve their communities through AmeriCorps. And later today, we'll celebrate our fifth anniversary, and I'll have more to say about that.

The bill also provides critical funding for FEMA, to help communities cope with hurricanes and other unforeseen natural disasters, especially now, the disasters caused by Hurricane Floyd. Senator Edwards is here, and I want to thank him for his work on that.

Last night I asked the congressional leaders when we met to look at doing more to pay

for the agricultural disasters caused, particularly in this part of our country, by the hurricanes coming on top of the drought.

This bill also looks to the future. It gives NASA the resources it needs to probe the mysteries of space and provides the National Science Foundation with the extra resources it needs to fund research on the frontiers of information technology. This is a little noticed, I think, but profoundly important part of this bill, which I predict will have a big impact on our future for years and years to come.

The legislation is important not just for what it will achieve but for how it was achieved. I'm pleased that our administration and the Congress were able to work together successfully on this bill in a genuine spirit of bipartisan cooperation to resolve our respective differences. Together, we produced legislation that is fully paid for and effectively addresses the critical needs of the American people.

We're especially pleased we were able to achieve acceptable funding levels in a number of areas by providing offsets that were agreed to by both sides. There is no debate on this bill that there is any Social Security surplus money involved at all.

Now, as all of you know, I met last night with congressional leaders of both parties. We agreed to work together in that same spirit to resolve our remaining differences and make the tough choices necessary to reach an overall agreement on our other outstanding values and budget priorities.

First and foremost, we must protect Social Security and strengthen Medicare. I regret that the leaders of the Republican Party have said they won't take up the Medicare reform and the prescription drug benefit this year. I did ask them to consider my proposal, which would lengthen the life of the Social Security Trust Fund to 2050 and take it out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boomers, without a tax increase or without any benefit cuts. And I hope they will do that.

I believe the priorities that we have must also include making the largest and most diverse group of students in our schools ever, the smartest and best educated students ever, by giving them a world-class, 21st century education. That includes reducing class size by hiring 100,000 more teachers, building or modernizing 6,000 schools, connecting every classroom to the Internet, investing in after-school programs to keep

our children safe, and demanding accountability, so that we can turn around failing schools.

We must also work together to keep the crime rate going down. I say again, I'm glad we've got the lowest crime rate in 26 years and the lowest murder rate in 32 years. No American believes our country is safe enough. We should set a goal of making this the safest big country in the world. That means doing more of what we know works, including putting 50,000 more community police into our toughest neighborhoods.

It also means, achieving this agreement, that we will have to put aside our differences and honor our commitment to our environment and our national security.

Again I say, in spite of all the conflicts of the last few weeks, we still have a great opportunity to make this a season of progress and work together to pass a budget that lives within its means and lives up to our values. We've done it before, and we can do it again. We will be stronger in the new century because of what we have achieved here today, and I hope it is just the beginning.

Again, let me thank all of you for your role in this and especially the Members of the Congress who are here.

[At this point, the President began to sign the bill.]

The President. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], how many pens did President Johnson use when he signed the Voting Rights Act?

Ms. Thomas. Fifty. [Laughter] He gave one to the press, too. [Laughter]

The President. When all else fails, I can always spell my middle name. [Laughter]

[The President finished signing the bill.]

The President. I'll answer the questions and then pass out the pens. How's that?

Meeting With Congressional Leaders

Q. Mr. President, after the meeting last night, why did both sides come out with such conflicting views on taxes, Social Security, tobacco?

The President. I'll tell you exactly what I said about the tobacco issue and what we said about spending. Now, first of all, there's a big controversy, as you know, about whether the Congress has already spent into the Social Security surplus. I don't think we can fully evaluate all

that until we see all these bills and we have a comprehensive resolution. This bill had its own pay-fors. There's no question that this bill does not get into the Social Security surplus.

So what I said to them is—I said the following things: Number one, let's try to have a comprehensive solution. Let's look at all these bills together, see where we are and where we need to go. Number two, there were some things that I felt very strongly that we ought to fund that weren't presently in the bills. I wanted to make sure that we continued to work on the 100,000 teachers, that we continued to work on the police, that we paid our commitments to the Middle East peace process, to reducing the nuclear arsenal in Russia, to our part of our efforts to alleviate the debt of the poorest countries—that's a big part of the world's millennium project—to the U.N. dues—I'm trying to work that out—but that if I ask for extra money, over and above what they had appropriated, I would make a commitment that we would pay for it, we would find a way to cover that, so there would be no question that any extra funds we asked for—which, in the context of the overall budget, would be quite modest now; there's not that much difference in the dollars—that that would be paid for and that we ought to get all this together and look.

Now, with regard to the tobacco tax, what I said was, I was well aware that they were not going to raise the tobacco tax 55 cents, as I had originally proposed. I still believe that it would be good health policy to have a more modest increase or at least a look-back provision to protect kids from smoking. We're seeing all over the country an absence of those kinds of efforts. Even in the States that have gotten a lot of money, some States are doing it; some States aren't. So I think it would be good policy.

So all I said was that I realized they weren't going to accept my proposal but that we were now talking about much more modest money that I thought we could find a way to pay for that they could live with.

2000 Election/Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Mr. President, Elizabeth Dole pulled out of the Presidential race today. And also, as you know, for I guess the fourth year in a row, Senate Republicans have defeated the campaign finance efforts. So I wondered whether—first, what you think of that, the fact that they've put that aside again, and also, whether Mrs.

Dole's pulling out is another example, in your opinion, of why these efforts are necessary?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say about Mrs. Dole, I think she's a very, very, impressive person. She's had a lot of important public service in her career, and she was clearly qualified to seek the Presidency. And I regret the fact that finances alone kept her from going through the first few primaries and getting to the stage when all those candidates have debates and the voters can actually see them all in ways other than they see them in their ads. And I think that's too bad, because I think she has a kind of experience that's different from that of any other person running, her work in the Cabinet and in the Red Cross. And I think it's a loss to the Republican Party and a loss to the country that she couldn't go forward.

Secondly, I think that part of what you see is that fact that Governor Bush is the first candidate in the history of the modern era when we've had Federal financing who has given it up so that an unlimited amount of money could be raised; so that puts all the others at, I think, a relative disadvantage. It's something that some people urged on me 4 years ago, because I could have done that, and I decided it wasn't fair, and I didn't do it. I didn't think it was the right thing to do.

And finally, obviously it does make the point, as Senator McCain pointed out earlier, that we do need campaign finance reform, that it's not just the Presidential campaigns. It's also the Senate races. It's also the Congress races. And I can only say, I'm very proud of the members of my party. There were some, I think when I got here in '93, some of our folks felt ambivalent about it, and we worked and worked and worked until we've now got, I think, 100 percent of our party in both Houses voted for both those bills.

You know, the truth is, this is now a matter that's in the hands of the American people. If they decide it's important enough that it will become a voting issue for them, we can change the direction of the country. If they continue to say they care about it but it doesn't influence their votes, then we won't, because it's a democracy, and they're in the driver's seat.

But obviously, I think we ought to pass something like the McCain-Feingold bill. I would even go further. I think—my whole view of this is that the biggest problem is the cost of communications. So if you want—and that's not a

criticism of the people who charge us money to run our ads, either, because they can get even more money, as you know. In the election season, they can get even more money for commercial clients. But it costs a lot of money. So you're either going to have to have free or reduced television time, radio time, access to the newspapers, or some guaranteed source of funding, because no matter how you change the rules, until people can have more or less comparable access to have their views heard, it's going to be a difficult thing.

But I think we should keep working on it. I hope that Senator McCain and Senator Feingold aren't too discouraged. I hope they'll be willing to come back next year. And we'll keep working.

But the plain fact is that the American people need to say not only that they care about it but that they care enough about it for it to influence how they vote. And if they do, we'll make some progress.

Defense Appropriations Legislation

Q. Mr. President, are you going to sign or veto the defense bill?

The President. Well, let me tell you what I said yesterday to the leaders. That's not a decision that I have to make until early next week. And what I said to them I will say again to you. All these other bills raise questions already about how they're financed and whether they're properly financed. And then there are these outstanding questions I mentioned. I think the teachers—keeping the commitment that a bipartisan majority of Congress made just a year ago, in 1998, to the smaller classes and the 100,000 teachers, continuing to do the things we know will bring the crime rate down with the police, doing right by the environment, these things are important.

So what I said we needed to do is to look at all the bills that are outstanding so that we can evaluate exactly where we are and try our best to reach agreement by next Tuesday. And I promised that our people would work hard with the congressional leadership, the appropriators, and all the relevant committees and subcommittees, and that if we had to, we'd be prepared to work around the clock between now and next Tuesday to get the job done.

So I think that's how I would like to leave it now. I think it's important not to give the impression that this whole issue is just about

one bill, because it's not. You can't just take one bill out of the reality of the aggregate budget. We got the deficit down and eliminated it and then got to a surplus by looking at the big picture, and that's how we ought to deal with this.

Indonesian Elections

Q. Can you comment on the Indonesian elections and the outcome of that election's impact on the situation in East Timor?

The President. Well, first of all, they accepted the results of the referendum, which is good, because the Government offered the East Timorese the chance to vote, and they took it, and they voted—over 78 percent, I think—for independence. So the first thing that has happened is they accepted the results of the referendum.

The second thing that has happened is they have selected a new leader consistent with the constitution of Indonesia. And I think that has to be a very hopeful development for the world.

So I feel pretty good about where we are today. Now, there are still a lot of problems in East Timor. There are still a lot of hurdles for Indonesia out there. They've been through an incredibly traumatic time, not just politically but economically, and a lot of people have been hurt very badly economically. But I think the events of the last 2 days should give us all hope that a very great country that the world needs very much is on the way back, and that's what I'm hoping is happening.

Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, you said on the budget that the amounts were quite modest now. How much? How much money are we talking about?

The President. I don't know. I've asked our people to go back and look at it. But we're not talking about a great deal of money, so

that if we're just talking about that amount of money, I think we could reach agreement with the Republican and the Democratic leaders about ways to pay for it.

We're also talking about the substance, though, of some of the bills. I feel very strongly about not just the amount of money in education but how is the money going to be spent. We shouldn't back off of the commitment we made to the American people and to the children of this country just a year ago, that both Republicans and Democrats were bragging on in the election a year ago—we shouldn't just turn around and drop it. I think that's a big mistake, and I'll fight for that.

I think that we need to continue to push raising standards, testing kids, ending social promotion, but not blaming them for the failure of the system, which means you've got to have more after-school programs; you've got to have more summer school programs; and there ought to be a system which provides help to turn around failing schools, because we know that's working. In the States where that's going on, that's really working. Where these schools are being targeted and being told you're going to have to shut down if you don't turn around, it's working. But those aren't money problems. And then I have several environmental concerns that I hope we can work out, that I personally believe are quite important to our country's future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:47 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas. H.R. 2684, approved October 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106-74. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on Signing the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

October 20, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2684, the "Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing

and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

This Act will fund vital housing, community development, environmental, disaster assistance, veterans, space, and science programs. Specifically, it provides funding for the Departments of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and several other agencies.

The Act funds a number of my Administration's high priorities, including the Corporation for National and Community Service at this year's current funding level. National Service gives young people the opportunity to obtain funding for a college education while serving the country in areas of great need, such as the environment, public safety, and human services. National Service also allows young people to participate in service-learning programs that provide substantial academic and social benefits, including the opportunity to learn responsible citizenship.

I am pleased that the Act also provides full funding of HUD's highest priority: \$10.9 billion for the renewal of all Section 8 contracts, assuring continuation of HUD rental subsidies for low-income tenants in privately owned housing. I am also pleased that the Act provides 60,000 housing vouchers for low-income families. In addition, the Act adequately funds programs to help distressed communities, including my new initiative for America's Private Investment Companies (APIC), Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), assistance to the homeless, the Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund, Brownfields redevelopment, and rural and urban empowerment zones. The CDBG program promotes housing and economic activity in low- and moderate-income areas. It provides funding for housing rehabilitation, construction, and homebuyer assistance. The CDFI Fund helps to create a network of community development banks across the country, spurring the flow of capital to distressed neighborhoods and their currently underserved low-income residents.

The Act includes funding that could support part of my New Markets proposal, which will help ensure that all Americans share in our economic prosperity. APIC and the rural and urban empowerment zones will help revitalize communities so that they can take advantage of the

strength of the economy and help those left behind in our economic boom. Additionally, \$1.02 billion is provided for homeless assistance grants, enabling localities to continue to shape and implement comprehensive, flexible, coordinated "continuum of care" approaches to solving homelessness.

I am pleased that the Act adequately funds Fair Housing programs, which will enable HUD to expand significantly its activities aimed at reducing the level of housing discrimination nationwide.

The Act provides \$710 million, a significant increase, for elderly housing, recognizing the dramatic rise in our elderly population and the changing housing needs that accompany this unprecedented demographic shift. The Act replaces old models, which separated housing from services, with new models that bring services to elders where they live—allowing seniors to remain in their homes and communities longer.

I am also pleased that H.R. 2684 provides \$19.8 billion for the medical care of our Nation's veterans. Since January, long waiting times in VA medical centers have disrupted the level and quality of medical care that veterans have received. This level of service is unacceptable, and the funding levels in the Act will allow us to address this issue. The Act will also allow for the provision of a range of home- and community-based care for those high-priority veterans who do not have access to such services, and it provides resources for the aggressive testing and treatment of Hepatitis C.

The Act provides \$7.6 billion for the EPA, which will enable the agency to adequately implement our environmental laws. I am pleased that H.R. 2684 adequately funds EPA's portion of the Clean Water Action Plan and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. However, the Act should have provided full funding for the Climate Change Technology Initiative and the new Clean Air Partnership Fund at the requested levels. Furthermore, I continue to believe that the provision prohibiting implementation of the Kyoto Protocol is unnecessary, as my Administration has no intent of implementing the Protocol prior to ratification. This year's language is identical to last year's provision. Since this year's House and Senate report language is contradictory, we will implement the Kyoto provision consistent with the language in last year's conference report. I also am disturbed

that the conference report includes new language that is aimed at restricting efforts to reduce smog by delaying EPA action on several States' clean air petitions. My Administration has a strong commitment to clean air and will continue to use the full range of authorities under the law to make our Nation's air safe to breathe for all Americans.

The Act also adequately funds the Nation's investment in space and science programs. It provides \$13.65 billion for NASA and \$3.9 billion for the NSF, including \$126 million for my Administration's Information Technology in the 21st Century Initiative. If we want to maintain our current economic prosperity, it is essential that we sustain our investment in long-term research across all the scientific and engineering disciplines. This Act maintains the Nation's investments in science, technology, and learning, which have fueled unprecedented economic growth for the past decade.

Finally, I am pleased that H.R. 2684 adequately funds FEMA to help cope with unforeseen disasters. The \$2.5 billion in contingent emergency funds, along with the \$821 million appropriated, ensures that the country is well

prepared to deal with unforeseen natural disasters and that FEMA has adequate resources to respond to Hurricane Floyd and other disasters.

I am pleased that my Administration and the Congress were able to work together successfully on this bill—in a spirit of cooperation—to resolve our respective differences and produce a bill that is fully paid for and effectively addresses critical needs of the American people. I am especially pleased that we were able to achieve acceptable funding levels in a number of areas by providing offsets that were agreed on by both sides. I urge the Congress to work with my Administration in similar fashion in coming to mutually acceptable agreements on the remaining FY 2000 appropriations bills and to do so expeditiously. The American people deserve no less.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 20, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2684, approved October 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106-74.

Remarks on the Fifth Anniversary of AmeriCorps

October 20, 1999

The President. Well, Andre, thanks to you no one has to wonder about what AmeriCorps is all about. I thank you for your introduction. I thank you for your service to AmeriCorps and to your country. And I thank you for the power of your example. And I hope, maybe more than anyone else who speaks today, your voice and your story will be told out of this great anniversary meeting.

I want to thank all the other people here who helped to make this day possible. I want to thank Deb Jospin for her leadership; Senator Harris Wofford; Eli Segal, for what he did to help us get started; and all of them. Let's give them all a hand. *[Applause]*

I want to thank Hillary for always believing in this and for taking it on as a personal goal that we would do something about the fact that when we had 100,000 people in AmeriCorps and everybody who knew about it loved it but

most people didn't know about it, she decided she would change that. And Eli and Alan Solomont and our friend Dan Dutko and others agreed to help. And I thank her for her passionate support during these years when we believed in AmeriCorps when it was just sort of an idea. And she has done a wonderful job.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here, who were here, Senator Specter, Congressman Quinn, and Congressman Payne, three who represent the bipartisan support that we have enjoyed. I thank James Lee Witt, Jack Lew, Janice Lachance, and others in the administration who have helped us. I want to thank our presenters, whom I will introduce in just a moment, General Colin Powell, Mrs. Coretta Scott King, Sargent Shriver, and the Governor of Utah, Mike Leavitt, for being here, and I want to thank the Howard University Choir.

They're going to sing for us and with us in a few moments.

You know, it seems impossible to me that it was 5 years ago on the North Lawn of the White House that we led the first class of AmeriCorps members in the AmeriCorps pledge. It wasn't very long before that that I had the privilege of signing the legislation creating AmeriCorps with the same pen that President Kennedy had used to sign the legislation creating the Peace Corps.

I always believed that you would elevate the cause of citizen service in America, that you would make America a better place. But on that day 5 years ago, AmeriCorps was still just an idea with a good plan, built on the remarkable pathbreaking efforts of Sargent Shriver with the Peace Corps and VISTA; built on the remarkable service corps I had seen in Boston and Los Angeles and San Antonio and other cities; championed by some of the most thoughtful and passionate citizens of both parties; energized by, even then, 20,000 young people who were raring to give something to their country and wanted to be part of AmeriCorps.

But still, it was just an incandescent idea. Today we celebrate, thanks to you and your predecessors, a glowing success. AmeriCorps members are living up to the highest obligations of our citizenship. They are creating opportunity for others, taking responsibility for themselves, and fostering a community of all Americans. They are our best builders, building that bridge to the new century.

You can see it in the way their optimism inspires others to also lend a hand and volunteer in their communities. You can see it in the remarkable teamwork and camaraderie that I have personally witnessed and felt all over this country in so many different activities. You can see it in the way they work together across the lines that would normally divide AmeriCorps members and eliminate the alienation that too many of our young people experience today. You can see kids who went to Ivy League schools and kids who dropped out of high school working side by side, serving together, giving together, and treating each other as equals, proving that Dr. King's dream of a beloved community is alive and well in the hearts and lives of the AmeriCorps volunteers.

I could just give you one illustration among thousands. On his very first day as an AmeriCorps member in a small town in south-

ern West Virginia, Scott Finn heard that local residents had a dream of cleaning up a boarded-up old schoolhouse and turning it into a community center. The school had no electricity. It had no running water. It was a complete wreck, inside and out, an eyesore, and a place that invited drugs and crime and mischief.

So Scott, fresh out of Harvard, a long way from a little town in West Virginia, put together a team of volunteers and sparked a new determination to get things done. They hauled water out of a nearby creek to mop the floors. They negotiated a lease. They raised \$50,000 in grant money. And today that sorry old school is a beautiful new community center, with a lending library, a gym, and a safe playground. That's AmeriCorps at its best. That new community center is a meeting place for dances, for gospel concerts, for after-school programs, and a Boy Scout troop. It's a tremendous source of community pride. Scott is one of the 21 remarkable AmeriCorps members and alumni who will receive one of our All*AmeriCorps Awards. They'll all be introduced later. But I just wanted you to think about that.

When AmeriCorps members like Scott first took their pledge, they promised, and I quote, "to carry this commitment with me, this year and beyond." Today we will help them fulfill the second part of that pledge, for today I'm asking the Corporation for National Service to develop a new initiative to connect former AmeriCorps members with service opportunities wherever they live. Habitat for Humanity, the Red Cross, the Boys and Girls Clubs, America's Promise, the Points of Light Foundation, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the United Way, the National Mentoring Partnership: they've all signed on to help, all to use the incredible experience and commitment of our former AmeriCorps members.

Like returned Peace Corps volunteers and military veterans, those of you who are AmeriCorps members and alums represent an enormous national pool of know-how and can-do. You are already 150,000 strong and growing stronger. I hope soon we'll be adding 100,000 new members to your ranks every single year.

There is no question that you are now an indispensable force for change in America. After years of fights over funding and purpose in AmeriCorps, peace is breaking out all over in Washington. *[Laughter]* A major factor lifting AmeriCorps out of the realm of partisan politics

here is the support of people and leaders and especially Governors of both parties, like Governor Leavitt, out in the country who have seen firsthand how AmeriCorps members are setting off chain reactions of civic involvement, civic progress, and civic pride.

In State after State, in community after community, AmeriCorps volunteers prove daily they're one of the best and smartest investments our country ever made. They're showing us here in Washington what you can do when you stop talking past one another and start working with each other. Right now, in the middle of this battle over the budget, we need more reminders like this.

Today I had the honor of signing the budget for VA and HUD, for the EPA, for the National Science Foundation, programs to help the homeless, give housing vouchers to empower the poor; programs for our empowerment zones that the Vice President has led; and for the first step in my new markets initiative, to give investors in this country the same incentives to invest in poor communities in America, where many of you work, that we give them today to invest in poor communities in Latin America and Asia and Africa. This is important.

I hope this is just the beginning and that we will do the same when it comes to the education of our children. AmeriCorps volunteers have been in the forefront of a lot of our education efforts, and I hope that the spirit you bring will infect the spirit of our deliberations here. We know that our children can have a good future if we work together across party lines the way you do.

Let me just say, before I introduce the distinguished Americans who will present the All*AmeriCorps Awards, once again how profoundly grateful I am to every person here who has helped to lift AmeriCorps beyond the pale of a partisan political fight. I especially thank those who had genuine reservations 5 years ago and then have the followthrough and the courage and the openness to take an honest look at AmeriCorps in action and to help us to improve some of our actions, which we also did.

Most of all, I want to express my gratitude to the AmeriCorps members and their leaders throughout this country who have lived up to their pledge and so much more. By taking your responsibility personally, as the advertising campaign says, you are breathing new life into our old, old democracy, sparking a new patriotism

among a new generation of Americans, a patriotism of the homefront rooted in the knowledge that our Nation's strength and security and our individual possibilities are all determined in no small measure by whether all of us have a chance to live up to our God-given potential. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

I'm going to introduce our four presenters and they, in turn, will come to the microphone and do their jobs.

From the moment her husband was struck down on the balcony of the Lorraine Motel, Coretta Scott King determined that it was up to her to keep the dream alive. Despite her grief, she got on a plane from Memphis to address the same striking sanitation workers her husband had gone there to help. She told them, "We are going to continue this work to make all people truly free."

She has done that in every possible way: by leading marches and giving impassioned speeches for racial justice, human rights, an end to discrimination based on sexual orientation; by founding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change; by leading the efforts to create a national holiday in her husband's memory; and by helping to turn that holiday into a day of service, not a day of rest. There is no one in America who is better suited to present the All*AmeriCorps Common Ground Award, and we welcome her today.

Sargent Shriver often describes himself as a lucky man, having been graced with the remarkable and wonderful family he has. I might say, the rest of us think he's lucky because, among other things, he's the youngest and healthiest man his age on the face of the planet. [Laughter]

But our luck is just as profound, for America has never in its long history had a more compassionate and passionate man more devoted to public service. He was the founder of the Peace Corps and the VISTA. He served the Navy in World War II, created Head Start and the Job Corps and Legal Services. He led the Special Olympics, served as Ambassador to France, led the Chicago Board of Education, fostered civil rights early, when it wasn't so popular, and economic opportunity for the poor, all growing out of his profound religious faith and his deep patriotism. On top of all that, he is one of the most warm and genuinely unassuming people you will ever meet. We are honored to have him here today to present the All*AmeriCorps

Award for Strengthening Communities. One of the greatest public servants in the history of the United States, Sargent Shriver.

Whenever I speak about Mike Leavitt, the Governor of Utah and the new chairman of the National Governors' Association—one of the most popular leaders in Utah history—I am reluctant to say anything nice about him because his State is so Republican, I'm afraid I'll hurt him and knock him down a peg or two back home if it gets out that I'm bragging on him. [Laughter] But his complete commitment to service and his generous support of AmeriCorps is one of the reasons that we are where we are today, with the breadth and depth of support for this program.

Two years ago, in a rally with General Powell, Governor Leavitt helped to launch Utah's Promise, a statewide effort to mobilize all the citizens of that State to action. Already it is yielding remarkable results, increasing literacy, creating new service teams, recruiting and training more caring foster parents, a big issue for Hillary and for me. Governor Leavitt has been a great champion of Utah's schoolchildren, reducing class size, increasing teacher pay, equipping Utah's classrooms for the 21st century. It is only fitting that he present the All*AmeriCorps Award for Leadership, because he is truly an all-American leader. Thank you, Governor Leavitt.

And finally, General Colin Powell. In 1993 General Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the architect of America's victory in Desert Storm, retired from his extraordinary military career. I was one of many Presidents who benefited immensely by his service.

But that was just the first act in Colin Powell's remarkable life of service. He has gone on to serve our country as the leader of America's Promise, his national crusade to give every child the nurturing and support he or she needs and to give every young person the opportunity to serve. Already General Powell and his troops, including many AmeriCorps members, have touched the lives of millions of children. General Powell used to say in a characteristically modest way that he was, first and foremost, an infantryman. Ladies and gentlemen, I begin by introducing you to the infantryman who is leading the charge toward America's Promise, General Colin Powell.

[At this point, the All*AmeriCorps Awards were presented.]

The President. Now, I think our presenters did a wonderful job. Let's give them all a hand again. [Applause] They were great. We thank them for their time.

I want to leave you with this thought, and then ask the new class to stand and join me in the AmeriCorps promise. And then we will hear from and sing with the Howard University Choir in "America The Beautiful."

When you leave here today and you remember how you felt and you remember the stories of the people we honored, I want you to think of the future you would like to build for America in the 21st century. I want you to think about what you'd like this country and this world to be like when your children are your age, when your grandchildren are your age.

If I ask you to write down what you think the new century will hold, depending on your background, you might say, well, we're going to finally solve all the mysteries of the human gene, which is true, and then mothers will go home from the hospital with their newborn babies with a little map of their future, and it will tell you, individualized, what kind of food your children should eat, what kind of exercise regimes they should have, what they should avoid, how you can maximize the quality of their lives.

Or if you're into computers, you might talk about the next generation of the Internet and how, in no time at all, the number of Internet users will be as dense as the number of telephone users in America and how the Internet might allow children in the poorest villages of the world to skip a whole generation of educational and economic development. Or you might think about how these two things will join together, and we'll be able to put little digital, electronic impulses in various parts of people's bodies that will help them overcome paralysis and have medical miracles.

Or if you're interested in outer space, you might say you look forward to the discovering of billions of new galaxies and finding out what's really in those big black holes in outer space.

Isn't it interesting when you think about all this modern, exciting stuff, the most sweeping discoveries the world has ever known, don't you think it's interesting that the biggest problems we have in this country and throughout this

world relate not to some modern problem—although there are modern problems, like sophisticated weapons—but they're rooted in the oldest, most primitive problem of human societies? We're still afraid of people who are different from us, who look different from us, who act different from us, who have different views about how to worship God or live their lives.

That's why AmeriCorps is so important. For all the things I've been involved in all these years as President, all the things I've worked to do, I really believe, looking toward the future, if every young person has a chance to be a good citizen—and we don't give up on anybody; we always give them a chance to come back, here; we had a lot of comeback kids here today talking—and if America can remain committed to building one America across all the lines that divide us, recognizing that our differences make life more exciting but what's important is our common humanity, if those two things can prevail, more than any modern discovery, you'll be proud of the America your children and grandchildren have.

That's why AmeriCorps matters and why I am so grateful to you. Thank you very much.

Now, I want to ask the newest class of AmeriCorps volunteers to stand up and repeat the oath after me. Raise your right hand.

"I will get things done for America to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier. I will

bring Americans together to strengthen our communities. Faced with apathy, I will take action. Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground. Faced with adversity, I will persevere. I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond. I am an AmeriCorps member. And I will get things done."

[Audience members repeated the pledge line by line after the President.]

Congratulations.

Good for you. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to ask you, in advance, to give a warm round of applause to the Howard University Choir. They've waited through this whole thing to sing "America The Beautiful" with us. *[Applause]*

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. in a tent on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Andre Crisp, AmeriCorps volunteer, who introduced the President; Eli Segal, former Chief Executive Officer, Corporation for National Service; Alan D. Solomont, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; and the late Dan Dutko, Democratic Party fundraiser. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Election of Abdurrahman Wahid as President of Indonesia

October 20, 1999

I congratulate Abdurrahman Wahid on his election as President of Indonesia. He and the people of Indonesia deserve enormous credit for the democratic process that led to this peaceful change in government. This election, conducted fairly and transparently, has been a true triumph of democracy.

Indonesia still faces many challenges: achieving national reconciliation, consolidating economic recovery, and building institutions accountable to its people. With a democratically elected leadership, I am optimistic that real progress will be made toward all these goals.

I look forward to working closely with the new President and his government.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

October 20, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to sig-

nificant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 20, 1999.

Remarks to the National Association of Police Organizations

October 21, 1999

Thank you very much, Tom. Congressman Stupak, Representatives Larson and Udall, thank you for being here. And I want to thank in their absence Senator Biden and Senator Leahy. Senator Biden had to go cast a very important vote in the Congress. He was here earlier.

I also want to thank the executive director of NAPO, Bob Scully, who has been a great friend to this administration and a great fighter for our police initiatives. And I want to introduce formally our new director of the COPS program, Tom Frazier, the former Baltimore Police Commissioner. Thank you, Tom, for your willingness to serve. Please stand up so they can see you.

I also have a note which says we are joined today by Attorney General Nixon of Missouri and Mayor Lafuente of Poughkeepsie, New York, so I welcome them here.

I look forward to this day every year, to honor the people who are standing behind me. They honor us every day just by going to work. And they, I am sure, would be the first to tell you that even though they have done really magnificent things deserving of the honor of America's Top Cops, that they really stand in the shoes of thousands, indeed, tens of thousands of others who do the right thing day-in and day-out to make America a safer place.

In 1968, in his last campaign, Robert Kennedy said the fight against crime "is a fight to preserve that quality of community which is at the root of our greatness."

Those we honor today are at the forefront of that fight and, therefore, exemplify that greatness. They have performed astonishing acts of valor and humanity, crossing the line of fire to rescue downed officers; being shot and wounded, yet, managing to return fire and subdue an assailant; flying across the Alaska wilderness to singlehandedly capture five armed kidnappers; spotting a dangerous gas leak and evacuating 200 citizens moments before the apartment building exploded.

These and other amazing stories aren't from the TV shows; they actually happened. They represent in dramatic form the kind of professional police work that goes on every day. Just last week, three brave officers were ambushed and killed and two others were wounded by a gunman in Pleasanton, Texas. We mourn their passing and offer our prayers for their families and their fellow officers. Every day, every officer that puts on a badge knows that he or she, too, may be called upon to put life on the line.

As has already been said by the Deputy Attorney General and by Congressman Stupak and by Tom, America today is a safer place as a result. We had years, in times past, when the crime rate would go down a little, and then it would go up a little, but the trendline was always up, with a few welcome downs. But this year, as the Justice Department reported this week—excuse me, for last year—the crime rate fell again in all categories, in all parts of the

country. The overall crime rate is now at a 26-year low, the murder rate at a 31-year low.

Crime has been dropping, now, for 7 straight years. This is the longest continuous decline in the crime rate ever recorded in our country. In part, that is because all of us, from the grass-roots to Washington, DC, have intensified our support for commonsense strategies to fight crime and to prevent crime.

Seven years ago, many people thought the crime rate would go up forever. I had had the privilege of working for 12 years as Governor and, before that, as attorney general of my State, with law enforcement officers. I had the opportunity in 1991 to travel across America and talk to community policing and community prosecuting efforts that were working, to meet with community leaders that were walking the streets in citizens' patrols and had confidence in the local police because of the relationships they had. And I had seen what now we see sweeping the country: that there was community after community where the crime rate was going down if they were doing the right things and if they were doing the smart things.

And so I worked with the Members of Congress who were here then, and especially with Senator Biden and Senator Leahy, to take what we learned from community leaders and from law enforcement officers and turn it into a crime bill that would put 100,000 police on the street, as I had promised, that would ban assault weapons, something I strongly supported. And in addition to that, we passed the Brady bill, which has now resulted in over 400,000 people being denied the right to purchase a handgun because they've got a problem in their background.

In 1994, we passed the crime bill with the assault weapons ban; we began our COPS program; we toughened penalties; and we expanded programs for smart prevention. Now, there was a lot—believe it or not, there was a lot of controversy about all this back then. We were told that the Brady bill would prevent no criminals from getting guns. We were told these police would never appear on the street, and if they did, it wouldn't make any difference, never mind the fact that by 1993, violent crime had tripled in America over the previous 30 years, while the size of our police forces had increased by only 10 percent. And more and more police officers were being forced off the street into squad cars with their partners because the

neighborhoods in which they were working were so much more dangerous.

I want to reiterate to all of you all that the Congress, those that voted with me, and I did. The only thing we did was to take what people, like the people in uniform behind me, were telling us all over America and turn it into law. They said, "If you will give us the tools, the American people will make our streets safer, and we will do our part."

Well, 5 years later, as has already been said, we have already funded over 100,000 police officers, more than we promised, ahead of time and under budget. Five of the 32 officers we honor today, 5 of those behind me, were funded under the COPS program.

Now, in spite of all we come here to celebrate, I doubt if there is a person here or a person in our country who thinks the crime rate is low enough. I just got off the phone talking to a young woman who was being honored on Oprah Winfrey's TV show today because of her courage in that shooting that occurred in a church in Texas a few weeks ago. And she had a young friend with Down's syndrome. She pulled the child down, threw herself over the child. The child did not understand what was going on and just wanted to get up. This young girl sustained a wound in her shoulder. So she held the blood in her body with one arm and kept the rest of her body on her friend. This is still a great country with great young people like that.

But before we get too self-congratulatory about the crime rate being at a 26-year low, we need to ask ourselves—in view of the headlines we've had in this country for the last 2 years and in view of the daily experiences of the people we honor today—whether there's a single soul that believes this is a safe enough country.

Now, you know, I'm always trying to get people to aim big. When I said we were going to put 100,000 cops on the street, people rolled their eyes and said it would never happen. When I said we were going to cut the deficit in half in 4 years, people rolled their eyes and said it would never happen. We've now got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years.

Things do not happen unless you imagine them happening, and then put in place strategies to reach your dreams. I think the time has come for America to say, "Okay, we now know we can get the crime rate down, but we

have a new goal. We want the freest big country in the world to be the safest big country in the world, and we're not going to stop until America is the safest big country on the entire face of the Earth." [Applause]

Now, if we're serious about that, if we're serious about doing something to protect the children, like those who have been victimized in Littleton and all these other school shootings; the children who were shot at that Jewish community center; people like that fine young Filipino postman who was murdered in California; or the people who were shot in the middle of the country, the young Korean Christian coming out of his church, the African-American basketball coach who was murdered; all those people in that church in Texas, if we're serious about that—you all clapped—then you say, "Okay, how are we going to get that done?"

Well, first of all, we have to continue to plug the holes in our strategy of keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and kids. We have to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill. People shouldn't be able to buy guns at gun shows and flea markets and not have background checks. We ought to ban the importation of these large ammunition clips. We ought to do other things which make the things that are already on the books—the background checks, the assault weapons ban—work. And I'm deeply disappointed that the Congress hasn't acted on it yet.

The second thing we ought to do is to recognize that for all the good work these police have done, we actually need more in the high-crime neighborhoods of America. If you want community policing, there must be the man-and woman-power there to cover the waterfront. And that's why I asked the Congress, I said, "Look, this 100,000 police thing is working. It's inexpensive. We beat the budget. We put the people out there. The cities are using them. The counties are using them. Let's put 50,000 more out over the next 5 years in the highest crime areas, in the toughest areas. And I believe it will work, particularly if we also provide new community prosecutors, the best crime-fighting technology for the police from better communications systems to crime mapping systems. And I know there is bipartisan support for this."

Senator Biden has gotten enormous support for his bill to extend the life of the COPS program for another 5 years. If Congress passes it, I'll sign it. We almost won, as you heard,

yesterday in the House of Representatives a vote to fully fund our proposal in the first year. Instead, they funded only half the police officers, no community prosecutors, and far, far less new crime-fighting technology, which is a big issue.

Now, this doesn't make any sense to me. If you've got a problem that you're solving and you know it's still too big and you know what to do to make it better and you really believe this ought to be the safest big country in the world and we've got the money to do it, why would you choose to spend the money on something else instead of making America the safest big country in the world? If Congress sends me a crime-fighting bill that's a crime spending bill that doesn't have the right priorities, I will have to veto it. I want those police on the street. They are making America safer, and I am not satisfied, and you shouldn't be satisfied until it's the safest country in the world.

We think there ought to be more police and fewer guns on the street. I do not think a strategy of fewer police and more guns is what the American people want. And so I ask for their support. And again I say, this is not a partisan issue out in America. I am quite sure, standing behind me in uniform, there are police officers who vote for members of both parties. I would be astonished if they were all Democrats—gratified but astonished. [Laughter]

This is not a partisan issue. When they wheel you into the emergency room with a gunshot wound in your body, nobody asks you for your party registration before they try to dig the bullet out.

We know what works. We need to listen to the police. We need to listen to NAPO. We need to work together in a bipartisan, even a nonpartisan spirit. This is a national security issue, just as much as the bill I signed the other day at the Pentagon.

And every time I think about a child who is victimized, every time I have to relive the stories of all these school shootings that we've experienced since I've been President, I know that I can't wave a magic wand and make it all go away. I know that no matter what we do, there will still be people who do bad things and people who are seized by demons. But I know one thing: We can make this a lot safer country.

And when I hear people in the Congress say, "Well, we just have to punish people more. We don't really have to make it harder for them

to get guns, even if they're criminals," I would point out that we've got a higher percentage of people behind bars, serving longer average sentences, than anybody else. If that were the answer, why are the police telling us to take more sensible measures to restrict access to guns?

And if you have this argument, let me give you a statistic that will trump any argument. Forget about deliberate crimes. The death rate from accidental shooting of children in America is 9 times higher than that of the next 25 biggest industrial countries combined—combined.

So don't let anybody tell you that we don't need to do more to keep guns away from kids and crooks. We do. And don't let anybody tell you that we can't do it without interfering with the constitutional right to hunt, to engage in proper sports shooting and all those things. We're not talking about that. And don't let anybody tell you that 50,000 more police on our street, 50,000 more people like those we honor today, wouldn't make America a safer place, not only by catching criminals but by physically being there and working with community leaders by preventing crime in the first place.

We've got all these opportunities on the edge of this new millennium, with the strongest economy in our lifetimes. I don't think it's too much to say that we ought to use these opportunities to save Social Security and Medicare, to give our kids a world-class education with 100,000 teachers, and to keep working to make America the safest and the healthiest big country on Earth.

I am proud that all of you are working with us to achieve that goal. And if we keep working, I still think we will get it done.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Thomas J. Scotto, president, National Association of Police Organizations, who introduced the President; Attorney General Jeremiah W. Nixon of Missouri; Mayor Colette Lafuente of Poughkeepsie, NY; and Mary Beth Talley, who protected her friend Heather McDonald during the shooting at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin *October 21, 1999*

Four years ago today, according to the Hebrew calendar, Yitzhak Rabin was murdered by an assassin in Tel Aviv. He was a Prime Minister, a general, a diplomat, and a courageous soldier in the battle for peace. All of us who were his friends still mourn his death.

Twelve days from now, world leaders will gather in Oslo to honor Yitzhak Rabin's memory. I will attend on behalf of the American people. It was in Oslo, 6 years ago, that Israelis and Palestinians made the crucial decision to try to

work together to achieve peace. Now, Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, and I will come together in Oslo to build on that legacy and move closer to Rabin's goal: a permanent peace between Israel and the Palestinian people.

There is much hard work ahead, with difficult decisions for all sides. But as we look back in sorrow to mourn the passing of a great man, we must do everything in our power on behalf of the cause to which he gave his life.

Statement on House Action on Legislation on Education Opportunities *October 21, 1999*

Making our schools work for all America's children is the most important challenge we

face. By passing H.R. 2 today, the House took an important step toward improving educational

opportunities for the Nation's most disadvantaged students. Although I have a number of concerns with this bill, I am pleased that H.R. 2 reflects a bipartisan consensus on several principles of the education reform plan I sent Congress earlier this year. As I said in my State of the Union Address, the Federal Government has a responsibility not only to invest more in our poorest schools, but to demand more results in return.

In particular, the bill continues the work of standards-based reform, expands public school choice, and recognizes the importance of holding schools accountable for results. I am pleased that a solid bipartisan majority in the House

voted to reject the false promise of vouchers. I am also pleased that the House, by passing the Mink amendment, chose to incorporate gender equity provisions in this legislation.

As the reauthorization process continues, I will work with Congress to improve certain aspects of this bill, including provisions for students with limited English proficiency as well as provisions that target funds to our neediest students, increase the quality of Title I instructors, and ensure that accountability systems are workable. We have more work to do to enact a strong, comprehensive plan to hold schools accountable for results. I urge Congress to continue moving forward.

Statement on Signing the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

October 21, 1999

I am pleased today to sign into law S. 323, which creates the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Colorado as America's 55th national park.

The Black Canyon, carved over eons by the unyielding waters of the Gunnison River, is a true natural treasure. Its nearly vertical walls, rising half a mile high, harbor one of the most spectacular stretches of wild river in America. No other canyon in North America combines

the remarkable depth, narrowness, and sheer-ness of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.

This bipartisan bill demonstrates once again that preserving our environment for future generations is a cause that transcends party lines. In that spirit, I urge Congress to fully fund my lands legacy initiative this year and to work with me to secure permanent funding to continue these efforts well into the 21st century. Together, we can ensure that other treasures like the Black Canyon are preserved for all time.

Statement on Signing the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999

October 21, 1999

Today I have signed into law S. 323, the "Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area Act of 1999."

This Act represents more than a decade of hard work by the people of the Western Slope of Colorado to bring to the Black Canyon of the Gunnison the recognition it deserves. Bipartisan support from the Colorado delegation and both Houses of Congress led this effort to establish the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National

Park—our 55th National Park—and the adjacent Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area. I would like to commend Representatives Mark Udall, Scott McInnis, and Diana DeGette for their leadership on this legislation in the House of Representatives, and I would particularly like to commend and congratulate Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell, who has worked for over a decade on this effort.

In the 1930s, President Herbert Hoover established and President Franklin D. Roosevelt

expanded the Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Monument under the authority provided by the Antiquities Act. S. 323 redesignates the Monument as a National Park and expands its size. These actions add geographical and recreational diversity and protect the rural scenic backdrop of this spectacular gorge. The expansion will also enhance existing park resources and provide greater opportunities for visitor use and enjoyment.

Like other National Parks, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison belongs to all Americans, an heirloom to be passed on from generation to generation. As such, it deserves the highest level of protection to ensure that the outstanding characteristics and qualities that make it worthy for National Park status will never be degraded.

In the words of geologist Wallace Hansen, “[n]o other canyon in North America combines the depth, narrowness, sheerness, and somber countenance of the Black Canyon of the Gunnison.” Through this Act, we recognize for all future generations the unique combination of geologic and biologic features that make the canyon such an awe-inspiring place.

The Act represents a continuing commitment to the protection of our Nation’s wilderness resources, by expanding the existing Black Canyon of the Gunnison Wilderness by over 4,400 acres and by establishing the 17,700-acre Gunnison Gorge Wilderness that will be managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

The Act also creates the 57,725-acre Gunnison Gorge National Conservation Area, which includes the Gunnison Gorge Wilderness. This recognition is deserved for an area that offers a variety of natural and geologic features and unsurpassed recreational opportunities. The Bureau of Land Management will be responsible for managing these lands, and as directed by the Act, will develop a management plan to ensure the long-range protection of the conservation area.

Finally, S. 323 calls for a land study for Curecanti National Recreation Area. This study will seek solutions to protect Curecanti’s scenic, natural, and cultural resource values and determine the best management strategies for this popular recreation area.

This Act will protect unique natural resources that will continue to be enjoyed by all Americans for many years. We can be proud of the legacy of park, public land, and wilderness protection that we are leaving for the generations to come.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 21, 1999.

NOTE: S. 323, approved October 21, was assigned Public Law No. 106–76.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Edward M. Kennedy October 21, 1999

Thank you. Is this a rowdy crowd or what? [Laughter] You know, I’m not used to showing up and being the straight man. [Laughter] This is a very emotional moment for me. [Laughter] When I was in the 10th grade, Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. [Laughter] And when I retire from two terms as President, Ted Kennedy will be in the Senate. [Laughter] And I resent it. [Laughter]

I don’t know what Patrick’s doing here. He’s supposed to be raising money for House Members. [Laughter] You may have cost us four seats tonight, with all this money going here. [Laughter] Actually, he got an excused absence from

Master Gephardt to come here tonight, and I’m grateful.

Let me say a couple of words seriously. I am genuinely honored to be here. I love Edward Kennedy. And I am something of a student of the history of our country. I just—one of our guests tonight gave me a biography of Chester Arthur, because I don’t own one. I’ve got this great—I’ve read all about all of our Presidents; I’ve studied the history of the United States Congress.

I do believe that any fair reading of that history would say that Edward Kennedy was one

of the four or five most productive, ablest, greatest United States Senators that ever served this great Republic of ours.

And I am grateful for this family's commitment to public service. There is no question—I was a Governor for 12 years, and I care a lot about these issues that the States deal with. There's no question that Kathleen has done more with the job of Lieutenant Governor than any person in her position in the United States of America and that Maryland was the first State—thanks to her—to make community service a part of the requirement of being a student in the public schools. And that is very, very important.

And you know, I said I was in the 10th grade when Ted went to the Senate. Patrick looks like he's in the 10th grade—[laughter]—and yet, here he is. You know, he's been here 3½ months or something in the Congress, and he's already the head of the campaign committee. [Laughter] So I think that there is no limit to what he can and will do in the Congress. And you already heard him say he's trying to recruit one of his brothers—I mean one of Kathleen's brothers to run for the Congress in Illinois. So we are grateful for the service of this Senator and this family. And, you know, Vicki is my neighbor from Louisiana, so they've shown a certain affinity for Southerners. [Laughter]

I want you to know something else, too, that I'm grateful for. In January of 1992 Jackie came to a fundraiser for me when I was running fifth in New Hampshire, and reached out to my wife and to my daughter in ways that I will never forget. One month after, her son had also come to an event for me, when I think I was running sixth in New Hampshire. [Laughter] So we've had this marvelous friendship.

Sargent Shriver was, yesterday, with me when we celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps. We've had 150,000 young people in 5 years serve their country in citizen service, earned some money to go to college. We've done a lot of things together.

But the reason that you're here and the reason you ought to be here is that a lot of big decisions are going to be made in the next few years. And it'll make a big difference if Ted Kennedy is in the Senate. We also have a genuine, legitimate chance to be in the congressional majority again. And that's very important.

But I said in '92 if people would vote for me, I would try to reinstitute the basic values of opportunity, responsibility, and community. I said that we would try some new ideas that would transform our country. I said in '96, "If you'll reelect me, I'll try to build this country a bridge to the 21st century." I might have said, in starker terms, that this country was in tough shape in '92, and drifting and divided. A lot of people have forgotten that.

And I feel that we have sort of turned around, just like a big ship in the middle of the ocean, and we're steaming in the right direction. Any statistic I could quote—we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, the highest homeownership ever. And just listen—when people ask you why they ought to be for the Democrats—we have the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest crime rate in 26 years, the lowest murder rate in 31 years, the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, all with a Government that is the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was President in 1962, 37 years ago. And Ted Kennedy was at the center of every decision that was made that made that possible. And you should be proud of that.

Now, next time you meet somebody that says they're going to vote for a Republican for the Congress or the White House, you give them those statistics and ask them what their answer is.

But what I want to tell you is we can build that bridge. But the people of this country are going to make some profound decisions. And there are profound differences. Are we really going to do what the Republicans want and give all the non-Social Security surplus away in a tax cut? If they get the White House and Congress, we will.

Are we going to meet the challenge of the aging of America? The number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years. I hope to live to be one of them. [Laughter] We'll have two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. We have a chance and an obligation to save Social Security, to reform Medicare, to restore some of the cuts we put in that were excessive 2 years ago, to add a prescription drug benefit, and to take care of the elderly of this country, which all of the young people should favor, because it means they won't have to do it and they'll have the

money to raise our grandchildren. It's a big issue.

Are we going to take seriously our responsibility to the largest and most diverse group of students in our history, and modernize their schools and connect their classrooms to the Internet, and give them teachers so they'll have small classes with well-trained teachers in the early grades, and give them the after-school and the summer school programs they need? Or are we going to squander that opportunity?

Are we going to do something, finally, for the people and places that have been left behind in this recovery? Yes, we've got the lowest poverty rate in 20 years; that's the good news. The bad news is that there's still about 20 percent of our kids in poverty and a higher percentage of minority children. And we have a chance to bring the benefits of enterprise to people who want to work in places left behind. Are we going to do it or walk away from it?

And I hope to persuade Congress that, well, we can do all this and still over the next 15 years pay down our debt until we're debt-free for the first time since 1835. And I think another one of your nephews, Joe Kennedy, used to talk about this when he was in Congress: The liberal party ought to be for doing that, because it means lower interest rates; more jobs; more investment; higher incomes; lower costs for home loans, for student loans, for car loans, and for credit cards. It means average people will live better. And I think we ought to do it, since we can meet our other responsibilities as well.

These are just some of the big opportunities that are out there that we're for. And there are big differences on whether we ought to have a Patients' Bill of Rights; big differences on whether we ought to continue to have responsible measures to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and kids.

We are 6 months past that Columbine massacre, and we still haven't acted to close the gun show loophole. And the same crowd that's blocking it said, when we passed the Brady bill in 1993, that the crooks don't get their guns at gun shops; they get them at gun shows and flea markets; you won't stop anybody with the Brady bill. Well, 400,000 stops later, they have quit making that argument, but now they don't want us to do a background check where they said the crooks were buying the guns.

And let me tell you something else that you ought to say. I want people to use this. This is not just a matter of crime. The accidental death rate of children from guns in the United States is 9 times higher than the combined death rate of the next 25 biggest industrial countries in the world. Let me say that again: 9 times higher than the next 25 industrial countries combined—together.

So we've still got a lot of work to do. And I guess what I want to tell you is, I'm grateful that I had a chance to serve. I'm not running for anything. I'm here—I kind of wish I were, actually, but I'm not. [Laughter] And I'm here, I'm here because I care about my country. I care about my daughter's world. I care about the grandchildren I hope to have someday. And we've turned this country around.

In my lifetime, we have never had a chance like this. When President Kennedy and President Johnson served, we had a good economy, but they had to deal with the crisis of civil rights and the problems of the cold war.

We have an opportunity not just to eliminate legal discrimination—which we ought to continue to do with the employment nondiscrimination act and all of that—but we have an opportunity to create the world of our dreams.

That's why I was upset about the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and I'm mad that we're not paying our U.N. dues, and why I think we ought to pay off the debt of the world's poorest countries: because we can create the world of our dreams, at home and beyond our borders. And there is nobody better qualified to be the conscience and the heart and the tactical leader of that struggle than Senator Kennedy. Nobody. This is a big deal.

So I'm telling you, I want you to feel this. I am grateful for having had the chance to serve. I am grateful that all these numbers I can reel off, and they sound so good. But the truth is, nobody thinks we have given everyone opportunity. No one thinks we have really built one America. No one believes this country is a safe as it can be. No one believes we've met all our obligations to the environment. No one believes that we have met our obligations or seized our opportunities in the world toward which we're moving.

So beyond all the issues, you just have to keep this simple idea in mind: This country is in good shape, and it is moving in the right direction. And for the only time in my lifetime,

as a people, we have a chance to shape the future of our dreams. It will only happen if we elect the right dreamers.

Thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:52 p.m. in the a private residence. In his remarks, he referred

to Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Vicki Kennedy, wife of Senator Edward M. Kennedy; R. Sargent Shriver, first Director of the Peace Corps; and former Representative Joseph P. Kennedy II.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner October 21, 1999

Thank you. I will be brief, because I want to spend most of our time in a conversation. But I would like to say a few things.

First, I want to thank Senator Kerry for once again opening his home. I was here not very long ago with at least some of you who are here. I want to thank him for his genuine commitment to modernizing our party and to making it an instrument of progress and an instrument for bringing our country together. And I'm very grateful for the truly exceptional effort he's made.

On the way in, Joe Andrew, our DNC chair, said that John Kerry had done more personally than any other Member of the Congress to try to help modernize and strengthen our party, in the last few months, particularly. So I thank you for that. And I thank Teresa in her absence, and I think she did the right thing to fulfill her responsibility. *[Laughter]* We always say we're for opportunity and responsibility, and—*[laughter]*—she's had a fair share of one and discharged the lion's share of another. And we appreciate that.

I want to thank Governor Romer and Beth Dozoretz and all of the other people who are here from the Democratic Party and all of you.

Let me just say—I want to tell you a story. A lot of you know that Hillary and I—because of her, not me; it was her idea—have had a series of evenings at the White House called Millennium Evenings, this year, which we have primarily disseminated to the public at large through the Internet. It's been covered by C-SPAN and occasionally by CNN and obviously by print reporters who come in. But the primary means of connecting to these Millennium Evenings has been through the Internet. And at the end of whatever we do, we allow people

to—not only in the audience; there are always 200, 300 people in the audience—we allow people to send us questions from all over the world.

And it's been a fascinating thing. We started off with a history of the United States and where we are now compared to the roots of our Founders, in a lecture by Bernard Bailyn, the distinguished professor at Harvard. We've had a poetry night with the last three poet laureates of our country and a lot of inner-city kids in Washington and all kinds of people in-between, reading their poems and talking about poetry.

The great Wynton Marsalis came and played and lectured on the history of jazz as a unique American art form in the 20th century. Stephen Hawking came all the way from Cambridge and talked about black holes and undiscovered galaxies of the 21st century and what it will mean for the nature and our understanding of time. And we've had eight of these evenings. It's been amazing. Elie Wiesel talked about the price of indifference in the 20th century and how we couldn't have it in the 21st.

Last week we had a man named Lander from Harvard who's an expert in genomics, and a man named Cerf from MCI that had something to do with the establishment of the Internet, the architect, that all of you know. And what they were talking about was the intersection of genomics and the revolution in computer technology.

And the scientist, the genomics guy, said that it would really not have been possible, first to decode the human gene and then to figure out anything useful to do with the decoding, were it not for the computer and for digital technology, generally. And he said—he was talking about how one of the things we've been trying

to do in medical research, for example, is to deal with spinal cord injuries. And last year, for the very first time, we spent a lot of money, and Christopher Reeve, since he was injured, has been very instrumental in getting higher levels of research put into this issue. And last year, for the first time, we succeeded in getting nerves transferred from the body of a laboratory animal, a rat, to the animal's spine which had been severed, and the animal actually took the transplant and had movement in its lower limbs, the first time it had ever been done in any living organism that we know of with a spinal cord that had been severed.

So what this guy said, he said he believes that this whole effort will be overtaken by the capacity of us to use a digital device that can be inserted into spines, that will replicate all nerve movements, and take the right signals and give them. And he said—he offered as exhibit A, as sort of prelude to that, his wife, Mr. Cerf's wife, who had been profoundly deaf for 50 years, totally beyond the reach of hearing aids, and a small digital device was inserted deep in her ears, and she heard for the first time in 50 years. And she got up and talked about that.

Then the genomics guy—we started talking about what all this meant for the breakdown of the gene. Then we got into, what does genetics tell us about society? And he made the following point: that in spite of the fact that you're talking about 100,000 genes and, ultimately, billions of permutations, that all human beings are 99.9 percent the same genetically.

And then, against the background of all the racial and ethnic conflicts in the world today, he made what I thought was a rather stunning statement, that I didn't know, at least; maybe a lot of you do know this. He said, if you take any substantial group of people, like if you take—say we had a group of people from India, 100 Indians, and then let's say we had 100 Chinese, and let's say we had 100 people from Nigeria, and let's say we had 100 people from France—he said that the genetic differences of individuals within the group would be greater than the genetic differences as a whole of the French and the Indians and the Chinese and the Nigerians. And therefore, there was no rational basis, which we all knew anyway, but it was nice to have it confirmed scientifically, that there was no rational basis for this human emotion of fear of the other.

Well, what's all this got to do with technology? What I'm interested in—everything I can do while my time of service is here, before it's over, in maximizing the ability of our country to use technology for economic empowerment, for educational empowerment, for political empowerment, and to do it in a way that promotes unity, not division. And that's what I would like to talk about.

And I think the Democratic Party is the principal engine in our time of economic empowerment, political empowerment, educational empowerment and certainly, compared with all the alternatives, the major force for the cohesion and unity of our society as we move forward. So that's why I'm glad all of you are here. I think this is a huge issue.

Eric and I had some talks about how we could close the digital divide, and of course, we've worked very hard on it, with the Vice President's leadership, to make sure by the time we get through with our millennium celebration, we'll have all of our classrooms hooked up to the Internet.

But if you think about what it might mean economically for poor people in America, if Internet access were as dense as telephone access in America, I think it would have a very positive economic impact. I believe cell phones and computers, if properly distributed, can save 30 years of educational and economic development in a lot of the poorest countries in this world and can permit an economic development that is far less damaging to the environment.

And I believe that technology, properly used, can not only give people a more interactive and personal engagement in the political process but can, in the process, dramatically reduce the sense of cynicism and alienation, a sense that one person doesn't matter and that none of this really amounts to much.

So my mind is always thinking about this, but everyone knows that I'm quite technologically challenged. So I need people like you to help me and tell me what to do and how to do it. So that's why I'm here; that's why I'm glad you're here; and I'm very grateful for your presence and your commitment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:03 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Senator John Kerry, dinner host, and his wife, Teresa;

former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, former general chair, and Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Cen-

ter for Genome Research; and Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid.

Remarks to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards October 22, 1999

Thank you. Thank you so much. I was thinking how much help I need in trying to get what I say to certain people in the Congress not to go in one ear and out the other. [Laughter] And that maybe I should go through this training program. [Laughter] I believe everything Carole Moyer said, except the part about having been a teacher for 32 years. She looks like she was about 12 when she started. [Laughter]

I want to thank Carole and your chair, Barbara Kelley. Thank you, Jim Kelley and Bob Wehling and Betty Hastert and all the others that are involved with the board. I'm glad to see the president of the National Education Association, Bob Chase, here. Thank you for coming, sir, for your support.

And I have been honored to support this endeavor, since before I was President, as has been said. But the person who deserves all the credit, in my view, without whom none of us would be here today, is Governor Jim Hunt from North Carolina. Thank you. Thank you.

I've told this story before, but I probably wouldn't be here today, either, because in 1979, Jim Hunt, who was a far senior Governor to me then, decided that I should become the vice chair of the Democratic Governors' Association. And then I became the chair. Then I became the youngest former Governor in history, but that wasn't his fault. [Laughter] But it was sort of my board certification in national politics that Jim Hunt gave me. So I might not be here as President today if it weren't for him, either.

This has been a great week for me and for our administration. We celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps, our national service program. And we've now had 150,000 young people serve and earn credit for going to college. It took the Peace Corps about 23 years to have that many volunteers. So that's been really great. And we also, I might say, have been able to

get from the Congress the largest expansion in the Peace Corps in a generation, as well. That's been a very good thing.

Today Hillary and I are sponsoring a White House Conference on Philanthropy. And we're going to try to find ways not only to increase the aggregate level of private giving in the aftermath of the vast amounts of wealth that have been generated in our country in the last 7 years but to target it in the right way, in ways that I hope it will help your children and your concern.

I even had a pretty good meeting with the congressional leadership. [Laughter] We're actually working to try to work through our differences on the budget, and I'll have more to say about that in a few moments. A couple of them who weren't there persist in trying to accuse us of doing what they have done on the Social Security surplus. But I'm committed to turn the other cheek until we see if we can work it out together. I guess it's easier when you're not running for anything to do that. [Laughter]

You might find this interesting, as a sort of a prelude to what I want to say. Hillary had this great idea that we should do some special things for the millennium, that we shouldn't build a big building or anything like that; we should try to preserve as many of our big, national treasures as possible, like the Star Spangled Banner and the Bill of Rights and the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, all of which are in danger—and so we have been working to raise the funds to do that—that we should go around the country and help people in every community preserve their own piece of our national heritage; that we should have a big—then we should think about the future we want and make a big effort to increase research dollars, which we have done; and that we should sponsor at the White House

an unusual set of what she called Millennium Evenings, where we would talk about topics that were either important to the last century, the one we're leaving, or important to the next century.

It has been an amazing experience, an amazing educational experience. C-SPAN covers all of these. Sometimes CNN takes a big chunk. But the main way by which we communicate with the rest of the country and the rest of the world is through the Internet, and at the end of our little programs, we take Internet questions. They always come in from all over the world. It's just an amazing experience.

We started out with the great professor of American history and constitutional history Bernard Bailyn, from Harvard, who talked about our past and our institutions and how we got started and how that will be relevant to the 21st century. We've had all kinds of other fascinating topics. We had the three last poet laureates of America come with inner-city kids from Washington and just ordinary citizens, read poetry and talk about what it meant. We had the great Wynton Marsalis, the only living musician from New Orleans—he is the only living musician who is both the best classical and the best jazz musician in his instrument in the world, come and talk about the history of jazz as a uniquely American art form in the 20th century.

We had the great British scientist Stephen Hawking, who has lived longer with Lou Gehrig's disease than anyone else, come and talk about black holes and undiscovered galaxies in space and how our notion of time will alter and our understanding of it will alter in the 21st century. Elie Wiesel came and talked about the price of indifference, from the Holocaust forward, and all the racial and ethnic turmoil we've had. It's been amazing.

But last week we had a man named Vint Cerf there, who was sort of the creator of the architecture of the Internet, who sent the first E-mail, 18 years ago, to his profoundly deaf wife, who had been deaf from early childhood and so deaf that no hearing aids would help her. So the E-mail got started as a way of communicating. He was there, along with a professor from Harvard of genomics, named Lander, who was talking about our efforts to complete the human genome project, to break down all the secrets of the gene.

Now, what they did was, they talked about the interconnection of the computer revolution to the genomics revolution. And both said, "Look, we couldn't be unlocking the mysteries of the gene if it weren't for computer advances, because that's really what enables us to map out the gene, chart it, and see what's going on. And it will also enable us to actually find practical applications for the challenges we find when we look at the human gene structure."

And then Mr. Cerf, who was the Internet fellow who did the E-mail 18 years ago to his wife said, "Now, for example, my wife was profoundly deaf for 50 years. And a very small digital device has now been inserted deep within both her ears, and she can hear after 50 years of total deafness." And he introduced her, and she stood up, and she talked about what it was like. She said, "I went to a James Taylor concert the other night"—[laughter]—some of you are too young to appreciate this. [Laughter] And she said, "I'm quite sure I'm the only person who heard 'Fire and Rain' for the first time in the late nineties." It was an amazing thing. She talked about what it was like to hear the birds sing in the morning.

But the point is, digital technology combined with medical science made this possible. And they speculated that—we've been spending a lot of time in the medical research trying to help people with spinal cord injuries. And last year we had a nerve transplantation in a laboratory animal from the legs to the spine in a way that for the first time ever in the lab with an animal allowed an animal with a severed spine to recover movement in its lower limbs. Stunning! These people were saying, what we may be able to do now is to develop digital technology, key to the genetic breakdowns in the nerves, that we can insert—we can actually insert a device in the spine that will replicate the normal spine and give people movement without having to figure out whether the nerve transplants will take.

What does all that have to do with you? First of all, it means that it's important that all of our children learn and that we develop a level of comfort with basic technology and basic scientific concepts that most people didn't need in times past.

The second point I want to make to you, which will be important to you because you know we have the largest and most diverse student population in history, is the genomist

said—a fascinating thing—he said we've got these 100,000 genes and billions of possible permutations, but what you should know is that all human beings, genetically, are literally 99.9 percent the same.

He said the second thing you should know, which he said was to him even more amazing, is if you take any given racial group—let's say you had a bunch of Hispanics here and a bunch of Asians here, and you had people from the Mediterranean countries and Europe here, and people from an African country over here—he said, if you get 100 people in each of these separate racial groups, the genetic differences of the individuals within the group would be greater than the genetic differences from group to group—very interesting—providing scientific support for what you try to do every day, which is to convince your kids that all children can learn, that there is no reason for us to fight with one another because of our differences, that all these troubles that are gripping the world, all over the world, the racial, the ethnic, the tribal, the religious differences have to be somehow overcome by understanding and teaching people that our common humanity is more important than the differences and that once you accept that, then the differences become interesting and make life more fun. But it is a very important thing, and it shows, again, the importance of learning to our common progress on this Earth.

Now, that's why I think what all of you have done with the board certification is so important. I remember when you came to the White House with only 177 board-certified teachers. Some of you were there then. Now there's not enough room to keep you all in the White House, and the next time we might have to use RFK Stadium to have a meeting of all of you, and I would like that very much. *[Laughter]*

I am very grateful for the progress that our country has made economically, socially, and in education. I am grateful that we've got the longest peacetime expansion in history and 19½ million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare roles in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 26 years, lowest murder rate in 31 years, first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and the Government is the same size it was when John Kennedy was here in 1962, 37 years ago. We have worked at this.

But it's not enough. I am glad that we have virtually opened the doors of college to all people with the HOPE scholarships and the expanded Pell grants. I am glad we probably will succeed in connecting all of our classrooms to the Internet by 2000, except in the places where the school buildings are literally too decrepit to accept the wiring. I am glad that we have dramatically increased our investment in after-school programs. But there is more to do.

I am very proud that the idea of standards is now taking root around the country. In 1996—listen to this—in 1996 there were only 14 States in the country that had measurable standards for student performance. Today there are 50. But there are still only about a dozen that have genuine accountability measures when the standards aren't met and aggressive strategies to identify failing schools and to turn them around. North Carolina does. That's one of the reasons they've had the best increases in student performance in the country. But all over the country, you see test scores going up even in the poorest inner-city and rural schools.

Now, I say that and I gave you all this introductory information to try to set the proper context for the present budget debate. To most Americans, it's a lot of numbers and a lot of noise. To most Americans, it's the Republicans making the absurd claim that the Democrats want to spend the Social Security surplus, which has nothing to do with anything that's really going on up there.

But there are things going on in the budget debate which are, in some ways, different from the ones we've had in the past but still very important. When it comes to education, the debate is not so much about money anymore as it is about values, priorities, and direction, not just about how much we spend but how we spend it. And a big part of this debate is about honoring our obligation to our children and our future. I was glad that you said your classes were smaller but still not small enough. *[Laughter]* There are many, many tens of thousands of teachers who can make that statement because we had the biggest class, biggest student load in history.

So last year, right before the election, when everybody said—you know, there was so much acrimony in Washington; we can never get anything done. We passed this remarkable education budget that provided more funds for after-school programs and a big downpayment

on my commitment for 100,000 more teachers to lower class sizes, first in the early grades and then, when those class size numbers are met, the districts can have the money to use it elsewhere.

And it was wonderful. The money we appropriated was enough for about 30,000 of those 100,000 teachers, which is a lot in one year. It took us, for example, 5 years to get to our goal of 100,000 police officers. So I look forward to coming back this year and taking the second *tranche*. And imagine my surprise when the leadership of the Republican Congress, who had gone home and happily campaigned on this and how it might have been a Republican program because there was no bureaucracy—we just gave the school districts the money, and they hired the teachers—all of a sudden voted to do away with it, not only not to expand it above 30,000 but to take away the requirement that the money that was going to the teachers, go to them.

Now, I don't understand exactly what's going on, but I do intend to stop it if I can because I think that's a mistake. That's bad educational policy. We need to help the school districts hire more teachers. Last year we agreed, and we should do it again. So one of the things the budget debate is all about is whether we will continue our commitment to help our schools hire 100,000 well-qualified teachers. And we have to reject the idea that we can't raise both the numbers of teachers in the classroom and the standards we hold them to.

Our budget invests in improving teacher quality. We know one of the most important factors in a child's educational success is a trained, dedicated, talented teacher. And through your good work, we're adding more and more, and I intend to keep supporting you in every way I can. I wish and I hope that as time goes on we'll get more explicit support from the majority in Congress for this program, because it's so important.

For all the good work you're doing, the fact is, a quarter of all secondary school teachers don't have college majors or even minors in the subjects they teach. Students with the highest minority enrollment have less than a 50-50 chance of having a math or science teacher with a license or degree in the field. Now, we can do better than that. And we have to.

I think we should require States and school districts receiving Federal funds to stop the

practice of allowing children to be taught by uncertified teachers. School districts should do that. So when we reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, one of the things we ought to do is to say, if you want the Federal money, this is one of the things you have to do. I think it's important. That's one of the things that our debate is all about.

But we also have to invest. I've asked Congress to invest in recruiting, training, and supporting high-quality teachers in high-poverty areas. We have offered scholarships to a number of people that go to school and then, in effect, wipe off the cost of their education if they will go into areas where there is a high need. I have asked for an expansion of the troops for teachers initiative, which has already helped 3,000 active duty soldiers, who were planning to leave the military anyway, find rewarding second careers in teaching in our public schools.

The budget bill, even though it has quite a lot of money in it—for reasons I don't understand—underfunds the teacher quality initiatives and doesn't provide a single penny for the troops for teachers programs. We need more and better teachers. The skills that a lot of these career military people have are desperately needed in a lot of the places where there is a significant teacher shortage. So that's what I am fighting for. It's not about money. It is about things that we know will work that will help our kids. That's one of the things this budget debate is all about.

It's also about accountability. Where there is rising accountability to go with rising standards and a strategy to help people meet the standards, not just define them as failures, we have seen progress. Two years ago, North Carolina sent assistance teams to their 15 lowest performing schools. A year later, 14 of them had met their goals and were taken off the list—one year. We have seen the same kind of improvement in Chicago, Dade County, many other places. I was in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Chicago, in the large Robert Taylor Homes project, where they had an elementary school with terrible performance. In 2 years—2 years—they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores.

So we can, by the same sort of concentrated effort—remember, if we're 99.9 percent the same genetically, we owe it to these kids to give them their chance at the brass ring of their life.

Our budget has \$200 million to help States and school districts identify, turn around, or shut down the lowest performing schools. For example, districts could send board-certified teachers to help students and teachers get their schools back on track. Unfortunately, this Republican budget bill doesn't put a dime into the strategy of turning around low-performing schools. This is not just about saying, "Well, I put that money up there, and they'll figure out how to spend it." If you know what works, based not on what somebody in Washington thinks works but based on what you proved works at the grassroots level, we have an obligation, in a world of limited resources, to spend the money on what you have told us and what you have demonstrated to us, works. That's what this budget debate is all about.

That's why we've invested in after-school and summer school programs, providing extended learning time so that school districts can say, "Okay, we're ending the practice of social promotion, but we're not branding the kids failures. We're giving them a chance to succeed."

And let me say another thing that I think will be increasingly important as we try to come to grips with the dropout rate and the consequences of it, is to reach young people at an early age to get them excited about academic achievement and to give them the sense that they have a personal possibility in the future.

That's why we have worked hard to establish last year this GEAR UP mentoring initiative which allows college students and others to go into middle schools and show young people that if they do their work and they learn their subjects that they can all go on to college. Explain to them the HOPE scholarship. Explain to them the Pell grant. Show them, let them take home to their families exactly what kind of assistance they'll be able to get, so that they will know it is actual reality. It isn't enough to open the doors of college to all Americans. People have to know they've been opened. They have to be aware of these things.

We do things in Washington; I sign a bill; we just assume everybody knows about it. That is the beginning, not the end. If nobody knows about these things, they might as well have not have been done. So that's a big part of what this budget is all about.

We also have to ensure greater access of all kinds of students to a successful and complete high school education. That's what our Hispanic

education action plan is all about. That's our fastest growing student group. And the Hispanic dropout rate exceeds 30 percent. It's a big problem. Last year, for all practical purposes, the African-American and white majority high school graduation rates were identical. There was a smidgen of a difference for the first time ever in our history. That's very good.

I might say that I don't think either one of them were quite high enough, but they're good. They're up in the high eighties percent. Our national goal that we set 10 years ago was 90 percent on-time graduation. But that's good. But the Hispanic dropout rate—I think largely rooted in the fact that you've got a lot of first generation immigrant families whose first language is not English, compounding the fact that a lot of those kids may think they can get out and work for their families because they all just got here. And all first generation immigrant families, going back 100 years or more, have had a heritage of people of all ages in the family working.

But the point is that long-term economic consequences to these children, and therefore to their families, are far more adverse and far more severe now than they would have been 30 years ago to dropping out. And a 30-percent dropout rate is simply too high.

So one of my problems with this budget bill is that it underfunds the after-school programs, the summer programs. The House bill actually would have shut down the GEAR UP program that they created last year and bragged about in the election, and it's way short on the Hispanic education action priority. So we've got to give people the tools they need to succeed.

Finally, this was mentioned earlier, but I am still fighting for our bill to build or modernize 6,000 schools. There are too many kids in old school buildings that can't be wired, too many kids in house trailers, and too many school districts that can't undertake the costs of the building program all by themselves. So here is where we are. The good news is that we have, I think, an appropriate amount of money that has been set aside for education. The good news is yesterday we had our voucher debate, and the public school side won.

That's the good news. But we do not have anything like having—because at this moment we have this surplus and we're at a moment of prosperity, we were able to agree generally

on what I think is an adequate increase in funding. But there is no commitment yet for more and better teachers, for smaller classes, for increased accountability, for higher standards, for giving the tools out there that we know that you know work.

So the good news is that the debate is not about dollars. But the more important news is it is very much about direction. It is very much about direction. And just as I fought to get a modest amount of Federal money to support your program, because I do believe that when you are certified and you go through this process, it is not only good for you and good for your students; it's good for everybody that you come in contact with in your school.

We were talking about, now you can see on the near horizon 25,000 of them. The reason that I said 100,000—that I want at least 100,000 board-certified teachers is I do believe when you are dense enough, when there is one of you in every school building in America, there will be an exponential increase in your impact, that it will change the whole culture of virtually every school. And your skills and what you learn and how you will impart it to your colleagues will then be exploding, echoing across the country in a way that will embrace all the children in all our schools.

But if you believe in what you've done, then I ask you to also believe in this, and help us say, "Okay"—to the Congress—"thank you very much for not trying to cut out the money anymore. That's a big first step. But it does matter how you spend it."

And we're not trying to micromanage the schools. Dick Riley has gotten rid of two-thirds of the paperwork requirement on States and local school districts. We have scrapped more rules and regulations than all the previous administrations who railed about the Federal Government put together. But what we have not done is to abandon our responsibility to take the research and the reports from the grassroots level and say, if we're going to spend this money, since it's limited, we have to spend it in ways that it will have the highest impact: more teachers, higher standards, the tools that you need to do what you're out there trying to do.

So I ask you to support it and help us, and I think we will prevail.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Yorktown Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Washington. In his remarks, he referred to Carole D. Moyer, National Board Certified Teacher, Salem Elementary School, Columbus, OH; Barbara B. Kelley, chair, James A. Kelley, founding president, and Robert L. Wehling, vice chair, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; Betty Hastert, wife of House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Radio Remarks on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

October 22, 1999

Today I am signing into law the agriculture appropriations bill. This legislation provides critical funding for the Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration programs, including basic farm support programs, WIC, food safety efforts, and other measures to protect and support our rural communities.

It also provides emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering the second year in a row of plummeting crop

prices and, for many, record livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

Let me say that I am disappointed that Congress didn't come through with more assistance for farmers and ranchers who suffered this year. This summer's drought and Hurricane Floyd and other natural disasters have inflicted literally billions of dollars in agricultural damage, and we need to do more to help those farmers who

have incurred these losses through no fault of their own.

Congress also has not responded effectively to the crisis facing many farms because of the sustained low prices of most commodities. This is the second year in a row that substantial Federal assistance has been needed above and beyond our regular farm programs.

Now, while these additional funds have been absolutely critical, the very fact that we've needed them points out the underlying flaws in the 1996 farm bill. For all its positive features, that bill simply did not do enough to help our farmers and ranchers cope in crisis. It doesn't give the USDA the tools it needs to help farmers and ranchers thrive in the short and long term. It doesn't direct payments to where they're most needed. And it's providing payments to those who aren't even farming anymore.

The bottom line is this: We need to revise, revamp, and improve the 1996 farm bill. It is not providing adequate support that our farmers need to prosper. So once again, I urge Congress to work to fix the farm bill permanently so American farmers can have an adequate safety net, just as the Vice President and I have worked hard to reinvent Government and give Government more impact and more effective-

ness, even though we have the smallest Federal Government since 1962. We must take those kinds of steps, the necessary steps to rewrite this flawed farm legislation. The men and women who work every day to give us the world's most affordable and abundant food supply deserve nothing less.

So this is not a perfect piece of legislation, but I am signing it because our farmers are facing a true emergency and they can't wait. Their livelihoods, in some cases their very survival depend upon getting this bill signed and assistance delivered now.

Franklin Roosevelt once said that our farmers are the source from which the reservoirs of our Nation's strength are constantly renewed. We must strengthen and support our farms and farm families, just as they have sustained us throughout our history and will into the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast. H.R. 1906, approved October 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106-78. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on Signing the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

October 22, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1906, the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

The Act provides \$14.1 billion in discretionary budget authority for programs of the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration, including the Special Supplemental Feeding Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); food safety programs; and various programs to protect and support rural communities.

The Act also provides \$8.6 billion in emergency funds to assist our Nation's farmers and ranchers who are suffering through the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop and livestock losses from severe

drought and flooding. My Administration will work hard to ensure that these funds are distributed to farm families as soon as possible; however, because the Congress wrote some of the programs in a complex manner, farmers and ranchers need to understand that, for my Administration to implement them fairly, some of the assistance will take some time to provide. This is the second year in a row that substantial additional Federal assistance has been needed, on top of our regular farm programs, due to deficiencies in the 1996 Farm Bill—further evidence that the 1996 Act simply does not provide an adequate farm safety net.

I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act I have signed today is

provided through supplemental Farm Bill income support payments, and therefore is not targeted to producers most in need. These payments are made based on past production, which may have no relation to the crops grown or the market situation facing producers this year, and in some cases payments are made to individuals who are no longer farming. There is now, however, an urgent need for farm assistance, and so I have approved H.R. 1906. But I once again call on the Congress to work with my Administration to fix the 1996 Farm Bill permanently so American producers have the assurance of an adequate farm income safety net, while they continue their work to feed us all.

While the Act's funding for crop and livestock losses from natural disasters has been increased over the amount in the Senate bill, it still will not adequately meet the devastating farm losses in many parts of the country. In addition, H.R. 1906 cuts farm loans by 25 percent from last year, which is simply untenable as we head into a crop year when farmers and lenders alike are saying that they will need even more Federal financing help than last year. The Act also does not include emergency conservation funds to help farmers and rural communities affected by Hurricane Floyd to clear their fields and streams of debris and restore their small waterways. My Administration will work in the remaining days of this session of Congress to secure funding for these and other urgent, unmet needs. In addition, I have asked the Vice President to work with the Department of Agriculture to implement, within existing authorities, measures to improve the operation of various conservation programs.

The additional crop insurance subsidies provided in the Act will help producers afford higher coverage next year, but I call on the Congress to pass long-term crop insurance reform before adjourning this year, to improve this important component of the farm safety net.

The Congress has not provided the full amount of my requested increase for the WIC program, thereby failing to ensure that we can achieve the goal of full participation of 7.5 million women, infants, and children in this vital program. I also remain opposed to the provision that modifies the nonimmigrant farm worker program, known as the H-2A program, because it virtually eliminates the credibility of the recruitment process that protects legal U.S. farm

workers. The Act also makes significant cuts in a number of high-priority conservation programs, including the Wetlands Reserve and Environmental Quality Incentives Programs, and fails to fully fund implementation of the Clean Water Action Plan and important bioenergy and bioproducts research and development. In addition, the Act fails to fund the Farmland Protection Program, a valuable conservation program that has received bipartisan support in the past and would have prevented the conversion of farmland and the loss of a way of life in rural communities.

I am concerned that the Act frustrates initiatives to improve customer service in USDA county offices, for example by blocking the Secretary of Agriculture's new Support Services Bureau designed to modernize administrative functions, at a time when farmers and rural residents truly need upgraded assistance. Since the first days of my Administration, the Vice President and I have made improved customer service and greater administrative efficiency a top priority, which we will continue to pursue at the USDA.

I am concerned that, with the exception of the school breakfast pilot projects, H.R. 1906 prohibits the use of Food and Nutrition Service funds for research and evaluation of nutrition programs. The research needs of these important programs should continue to be addressed in the context of the programs' administration. I am asking the Secretary of Agriculture to look into this matter and to work with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget on the most effective approach to address my concerns.

I am pleased that the Act provides significant rural development loans and grants to help our rural communities diversify economically and improve their quality of life. The Act also includes a significant portion of the increase I requested for my Food Safety Initiative to reduce food-borne illnesses. In addition, the Act establishes mandatory livestock price reporting for certain meat processors, which will expand information to livestock producers and particularly will help smaller producers improve their ability to get a fair price in the marketplace. However, I am concerned with the Act's preemption of State price reporting requirements, which is compounded by the lack of funding

in the Act to implement the new Federal requirements. My Administration will seek additional funding for these purposes.

There are a number of provisions in the Act that may raise Constitutional issues. These provisions will be treated in a manner that is consistent with the Constitution.

- Section 722 of the Act specifies that funds may not be used to provide to any non-Department of Agriculture employee questions or responses to questions resulting from the appropriations hearing process. To the extent that this provision would interfere with my duty to "take Care that the Laws be faithfully executed," or impede my ability to act as the chief executive, it would violate the constitution, and I will treat it as advisory.
- Section 735 of the Act purports to constrain my ability to make a particular type of budget recommendation to the Con-

gress. This provision would interfere with my constitutional duty under the Recommendation Clause, and I will treat it as advisory.

- Finally, there are provisions in the Act that purport to condition my authority or that of certain officers to use funds appropriated by the Act on the approval of congressional committees. My Administration will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in *INS v. Chadha*.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 22, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1906, approved October 22, was assigned Public Law No. 106-78.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Philanthropy October 22, 1999

Thank you, and good afternoon. I am delighted to welcome all of you here. I thank all those who are here from our Government and all of you who have come from all over our country and all walks of life to this very, very important meeting.

I also want to say a special word of thanks to Hillary for yet another wonderful idea—this was a good idea to have this conference—and all of you who have helped on any of these Millennium Projects. I think it's done us a lot of good to take time out and think about the really big issues in our society and how we want them to play out in the years ahead. And particularly, I think this is an important issue at an important moment.

A long time ago, Alexis de Tocqueville said that charity in America was something more than simple compassion; it was a sign of good citizenship. He wrote, "Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare. They hardly ever fail to lend faithful support to one another."

Today, this is a strong tradition, and the face of this tradition is changing. Philanthropy is, like

our country, now more diverse as new groups seize and share opportunity in the new economy. It is more democratic, as Americans of all income levels, believe it or not, give at roughly equal levels. It is younger, as the high-tech economy creates a new generation of philanthropists.

I've got to take a little time out. Last night, I had dinner with a lot of these high-tech gurus who made allowances for the fact that I am obviously technologically challenged. [Laughter] And we were talking about how we were all going to relate to each other and maximize the potential of the information age. And I started talking about this conference today, and I said, "We've got to get more people to give." I said, "I would like it if Internet usage were as dense in America as telephone usage is, if we had 98 percent penetration, everybody had an E-mail address. I think we could have a dramatic impact on education and on poverty. I think we could skip a whole generation of development. And how are we going to get this done?"

So there is this guy standing there. He's 27 years old, you know. He says, "Well, you know,

when I got out of college, I started this company, and 3 years later, I sold it for \$150 million, and I started three others." And he said, "What you need is founder stock." [Laughter] He said, "We need to go all over America and gather up founder stock and put it in a big trust to make universal the access to the Internet." He said, "Because you've got all these guys like me that don't know we're rich yet. We're still living on \$30,000, and we've got all this stock." [Laughter] So he said, "That's what you need."

So I've now given you my contribution to this conference—[laughter]—which I learned at the foot of a 28-year-old last night. [Laughter] So, I mean, that's encouraging to people like me who aren't young, you know? [Laughter] We don't have to depend on the Rockefellers and the Mellons and the Carnegies or even the Paul Newmans. We can go get founder stock. [Laughter]

I also think it's important to point out that not only the ways of giving are changing but the people. When I saw that film, I was so proud that there was a Federal employee that had given every single month for 25 years, someone obviously of modest means, doubtless a lot of other claims on her income. So I want to thank people like Mary Grayson and others who are giving. And I think we ought to think about new opportunities, or I think the buzz word is "portals," that are opening in the world of on-line philanthropy and how we can make sure that we can continue not only to increase the volume of money but to broaden the base of giving.

We'll hear today about venture philanthropists and startup charities and other ways in which the entrepreneurial spirit is invading and energizing this field.

I would like to also point out that volunteering is another important way of giving. This week Hillary and I celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps. And we've already had 150,000 young people serve, and I'm very, very proud of that. I think that is an important thing to say. In a lot of ways, the measure of our life and our happiness is—to paraphrase one of the many wonderful things Martin Luther King said, can be answered by the question: What are you doing for others?

So I'm encouraged by this conference, by the energy here. Some of my favorite people in all our country are out here in this audience today,

people I have admired, some of you for 20 or 30 years, for all the things that I have watched you do for others. And I thank you for coming.

I am glad that the sheer volume of charitable giving is going off the charts, but I think, as we've had this phenomenal increase in wealth in our country, I would feel even better if the percentage of our national income devoted to charitable giving had gone up just a little bit. You heard Hillary say what we could do if we could just increase it by one percent. But going from 2 to 3 percent is a huge increase. We've been sort of stuck at 2 percent. Now, when the stock market triples, 2 percent is a lot more than it used to be. That's not real pocket change; it's real money.

But if you think about what we could do with just a little more, I think it is really worth pondering. We're having the same debate in Congress now, and I don't want to get into any kind of a political dispute about that, but just let me give you an example. I very much want the United States to take the lead with the rest of the wealthy countries in alleviating the debt of the poorest countries in the world, and the Pope has asked us to do it for the millennium. Now, this is a campaign with a broad base: It's being spearheaded by the Pope and Bono, the lead singer for U2. [Laughter] And even though I am not a candidate for anything anymore, I can spot a big tent when I see it. [Laughter]

So you know, we ought to do this. And this is just a little bit of all the money we've got. And it's just like de Tocqueville said a long time ago: This is not just charity; this is good citizenship. We take this burden off these people. If they are well governed and they are working hard, we give them a chance to be our partners and friends in a more equal and balanced way for the future.

So there are things for all of us to do. I would like to—I would hope today that I will learn something and that we will learn something about how we can, at least incrementally, increase the percentage of our income we are devoting to philanthropy. I hope we will learn something, as I already said, about the ways we can do it. And I hope we will learn a little bit about whether we can all give smarter and whether we can make sure that the money we are giving is spent in the most effective possible way.

I take it we all begin by accepting that we no longer believe that there is a choice out there, which was never a real choice, between Government meeting all of our society's needs and Government walking away from them all and letting philanthropy do it. We have to have a better partnership, and it will work better if we do.

We need to think about, in Government, whether we can do more things to generate more constructive philanthropy. The Treasury Department will meet with representatives of the nonprofit sector next month to discuss this. And I, in the meanwhile, am going to establish an interagency task force to strengthen our philanthropic partnership between Government, nonprofit groups, and citizens, and to ask the Council of Economic Advisers to do me a study on the role of philanthropy in the American economy and how they believe I can increase it.

By analyzing trends in charitable giving, by assessing the impact of the baby boomers' retirement, which—it's going to be interesting to see whether it makes us more or less generous when we retire, this largest of all generations of Americans. It should make us more generous, because the kids in school are finally the first generation bigger than the baby boomers, and they need our help.

But we need to think about that. What's our message going to be to the baby boomers as they move toward retirement? What's our message going to be to people thinking about the

shape of our social tensions as we double the number of people over 65 in the next 30 years? What's our message going to be to ourselves, those of us in the baby boom generation, about how our citizenship responsibilities should grow when we lay down the burdens of retirement, particularly if we've been lucky enough to have a secure way to maintain our standard of living?

This is deserving of an awful lot of thought because there is a whole bunch of us. And on the whole, those who manage to escape a career in politics are going to be better off than any generation in American history. [Laughter] So some serious thought needs to be given to this.

Well, I've had a little fun with this today. But I am really grateful to you all for being here. This is a big deal. We all know—the truth is we're all fairly pleased with ourselves for being here because you feel better about your life when you've spent a portion of it doing something for somebody else. And you feel better about the good fortune you have financially if you spend at least a little of it giving something to someone else.

So what we want to do is to start the new millennium poised to do more and to do it better and to give more chances to more people to participate.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Postal Service employee Mary Grayson; and Pope John Paul II.

Statement on Legislation To Reform the Nation's Financial System October 22, 1999

Early this morning, my administration reached a tentative agreement with Congress that will modernize the Depression-era laws that govern our financial system. While we are still reviewing the language, this tentative agreement will bring lower costs, more choices, and better protections for consumers. At the same time, it will promote continued investment in America's communities and new opportunities for our financial institutions to compete in the global marketplace. When this potentially historic agreement is finalized, it will strengthen the economy and help

consumers, communities, and businesses across America.

As important as it is to modernize our Nation's banking laws, I cannot accept any bill that would weaken the Community Reinvestment Act and undermine our commitment to promoting more investments in underserved communities. That is why I insisted that no bank that fails to meet the needs of our communities should be able to profit from the new insurance

and securities powers that this legislation provides. This tentative agreement includes provi-

sions that meet this test and provide for a strong and relevant Community Reinvestment Act.

Memorandum on an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government

October 22, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Supporting the Role of Nonprofit Organizations: Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government

The United States is the most generous Nation on Earth. In 1998, an estimated \$175 billion was given by American individuals, communities, foundations, corporations, and other private philanthropies to a wide variety of causes and organizations. Individuals accounted for 85 percent of all contributions in 1998 and their giving has increased by almost one-third since 1995. And over the next 20 years, approximately \$12 trillion in wealth is expected to be transferred from one generation to the next—more than \$1 trillion of which will flow to nonprofit organizations through charitable giving.

In many cases it is nonprofit organizations that convert philanthropy into results—helping people in need, providing health care and educating our Nation's youth. The nonprofit sector is an integral component of our national life, encompassing more than one and a half million organizations with operating expenditures in excess of \$600 billion. But more telling than the dollar figures is the new spirit of service and civic activism that nonprofits of every kind are now exhibiting. We are today in the midst of a nonprofit boom, a time when the activities of this sector are becoming ever more creative and entrepreneurial.

Nonprofits are uniquely able to identify problems, mobilize fresh thinking and energy, care for those in need on a human scale, and promote social change at the community level. As this sector grows in size and importance, there is an ever greater opportunity to forge partnerships that include Government, nonprofit groups, businesses, and citizens to address pressing public problems. There are already many ways that nonprofits work closely with the Fed-

eral Government. For example, Federal grant programs from the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health assist nonprofit research institutions that search for cures to cancer. And the Corporation for National Service works with nonprofits throughout the Nation to provide after-school and tutoring programs. Our challenge in this time of burgeoning social entrepreneurship is to encourage Government, nonprofits, and others to work together more meaningfully.

Therefore, today I direct the Assistants to the President for Domestic Policy and Economic Policy and the Chief of Staff to the First Lady to convene an Interagency Task Force on Nonprofits and Government ("Task Force"). The purpose of this Task Force will be twofold: first, to identify current forms of collaboration between the Federal Government and nonprofits; and second, to evaluate ways this collaboration can be improved.

Structure of the Task Force

The Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, the Assistant to the President for Economic Policy, and the Assistant to the President and Chief of Staff to the First Lady will jointly Chair the Task Force. The Office of the Vice President, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Council of Economic Advisers will be regular participants.

The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) Secretary of the Treasury
- (2) Attorney General
- (3) Secretary of the Interior
- (4) Secretary of Agriculture
- (5) Secretary of Commerce
- (6) Secretary of Labor
- (7) Secretary of Health and Human Services
- (8) Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
- (9) Secretary of Transportation

- (10) Secretary of Education
- (11) Administrator of the Small Business Administration
- (12) Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service

The Chairs of the Task Force may add such other officials and independent agencies as they deem appropriate to further the purposes of this effort or to participate in specific aspects of it. The Chairs, after consultation with Task Force members, will appoint staff members to coordinate the Task Force's efforts. The Chairs may call upon the participating agencies for logistical support to the Task Force, as necessary. Members of the Task Force may delegate their responsibilities under this memorandum to subordinates. During its work, the Task Force will consult regularly with the nonprofit sector.

Objectives of the Task Force

The Task Force will:

1. Develop a public inventory of "best practices" in existing collaborations between Federal agency programs and nonprofit organizations. In cooperation with the nonprofit sector, the Task Force will work to apply these leading models to other government efforts. For example, cross-agency initiatives that reflect the community-wide focus on many nonprofits could be highlighted and replicated. The Task Force will also examine ways that Federal agencies can better draw upon the experience and innovations of nonprofits in the development of public policy.
2. Evaluate data and research trends on nonprofits and philanthropy. Understanding the significance of the relationship between the nonprofit and Government sectors requires an understanding of the impact that the nonprofit sector has on the economy and on public policy. For exam-

ple, the Council of Economic Advisers should undertake an analysis of existing data from the private and nonprofit sectors concerning the role of philanthropy in our economy, including an examination of the factors that affect giving and an investigation of trends that are likely to affect future giving. The Task Force will also coordinate agency efforts to identify the contributions made by the nonprofit sector and information regarding philanthropic activity.

3. Develop further policy responses. The Task Force will meet to discuss new findings and to consider new or modified Administration policy responses. For example, the Task Force will work with the nonprofit sector and others to explore ways to encourage philanthropy and service, efforts to help nonprofits develop and grow (including "venture philanthropy"), opportunities for closer collaboration on research and in meeting local needs, and ways to reduce governmental barriers to innovative nonprofit enterprises.

From time to time, the Task Force will report to me on the results of its efforts.

General Provisions

This memorandum is intended only for internal management of the executive branch. This memorandum is not intended, and should not be construed, to create any right, benefit, or trust responsibility, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, its officers, or its employees. This memorandum shall not be construed to create any right to judicial review involving the compliance or noncompliance with this memorandum by the United States, its agencies, its officers, or any other person.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Kennedy/King Dinner in Alexandria, Virginia October 22, 1999

Thank you very much. I guess I ought to begin by saying that all the things that Congressman Moran said so generously about me, we

might all well say about him. He has represented you so well. I am delighted to see all of you here, from the leader of your Senate

to the chairman of the State Democratic Party to all the local officials to all the candidates. It actually might not have been a bad idea to let all 52 of you talk tonight. [Laughter]

I've been thinking about what I could say tonight that would give you something to carry out of here into these legislative races and into the great election season next year. We come here in honor of the two men whose pictures are behind me. Thirty-one years ago, I was a senior at Georgetown University when Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were killed. One of my roommates was working in Senator Kennedy's office.

This week I had a wonderful experience. Hillary and I hosted a large number of Americans as we celebrated the fifth anniversary of our national service program, AmeriCorps, in which, in only 5 years, 150,000 Americans have already served, working in their communities, earning credit for college, making America a better place. And we asked Coretta Scott King to be one of the people who presented awards to the most outstanding of our young AmeriCorps volunteers.

Last night I went to the home of Senator Edward Kennedy for an event to raise funds for his campaign for reelection next year. And the wife of Robert Kennedy, Ethel Kennedy, was there; his daughter, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, probably the finest Lieutenant Governor anywhere in America, the only person to successfully get a State to include in its school curriculum, as a required course for graduation, community service—in the spirit of her father.

As all of you know, Edward Kennedy's son, Robert Kennedy's nephew, Patrick, is now the chairman of Congressman Moran's Democratic Senate Campaign Committee, for all the House Members. One of his sons, Joe Kennedy, represented Massachusetts in Congress. Another of his sons, Chris, is being urged to run for Congress in northern Illinois this year. The Kennedys and the Kings continue to serve, continue to inspire.

And Senator Edward Kennedy has been faithful to his brother's legacy, based on the sheer body of his accomplishments, I think by any measure one of the 10 outstanding people ever to serve in the entire history of the United States Senate, in over 200 years, now.

But I said last night, when I was a sophomore in high school, Ted Kennedy was in the Senate. [Laughter] And when I leave after two terms

as President, he'll still be in the Senate. [Laughter]

I also want to say a word on behalf of a Senator who wanted to be here tonight, my friend of 20 years Chuck Robb. You should know—I hope you won't be offended when I tell you, as the father of a college student, that I am very glad he is not here tonight, because he's at parents' weekend at Jennifer's college. And just as he stood up for all of you for so many years, he's standing up for her this weekend. He gets to escort her onto the field for her last field hockey game. Now that's a big deal to a daddy, and I am glad he's not here.

But he's still standing up for you. He stood up for you in the Senate when he introduced legislation to help the States and school districts build or modernize 6,000 schools. No State in the country needs that more than Virginia. He embraced and introduced a bill with Congressman Moran to fight gridlock in northern Virginia. And I've been lobbied about it again tonight. He stood up for you and the environment when he offered an amendment last month to protect our beautiful national forests and supported me in setting aside 40 million acres for roadless areas in our national parks.

And in 1993, at enormous political peril to himself—when, if anybody in the entire Congress could have been justified in taking a dive on a tough vote because of all he had been through and because of the difficulties of any Democrat getting elected statewide in Virginia—Chuck Robb never blinked. He stood up, and he gave courage to other Senators when he said, "We have to support the President's economic plan." It passed by one vote, and that's why we've got the longest peacetime economic expansion in the history of the country. He is a brave and good man.

All the polls say he's behind now because he governed and made decisions as a Senator in tough and difficult times, and because we Democrats have a hard time in Virginia. But I'll make you a prediction. If you stand up for him the way he stood up for you all these years, he will be elected in November of 2000 for another 6-year term.

Now, how are we going to do that? What are we going to say? Let's begin with the people we honor tonight, and be honest about what our problems have been. When Robert Kennedy eulogized Martin Luther King, he said, "Martin Luther King dedicated his life to love and to

justice for his fellow human beings." King could have said that about Robert Kennedy.

The truth is that a lot of people who could vote either way in an election know that we're for love and justice. But they used to characterize us, our Republican friends did, in ways that were, to say the least, unhelpful at election time. [Laughter] They created these sort of cookie-cutter stereotypes of us, you know? We never met a tax we didn't like. Couldn't be trusted with the budget and the economy. Soft on welfare; soft on crime. Could never be put at the helm of the country's affairs. You've heard it all.

So Jim Moran, Chuck Robb, and a lot of other Democrats set out with me in 1993 to change all that, to transform our country, to transform our party, but to be absolutely faithful to the guiding principles which have kept us Democrats and made this the oldest political party in history. And we had some new ideas.

Basically, Jim sort of hit the essence of it when he said I never tried to divide people. You have to understand, for a dozen years before I came here, I was Governor, as President Bush used to say, of a small southern State. [Laughter] I did not—I was proud of it and loved every day of it. [Laughter] But I was not part of this Washington political scene, you know? I didn't wake up every day and read these columns in the Washington Post that turn you inside out. I didn't watch the talk shows on Sunday. I just sort of went about my life. When I came to Washington, I had people's business to do. I wasn't maneuvering on some greasy pole up or down.

But it seemed to me that the country was totally paralyzed by what was going on in Washington. There was this—everybody had to have a liberal position or a conservative position. And the most important thing is that people should be fighting, fighting always, and never be caught getter together.

And what I was looking for was a set of unifying policies to turn this country around. For example, it was hard to get the Democrats to support reducing the budget deficit because the Republicans always wanted to do it by cutting education. So I said I believe we can balance the budget and increase our investment in education. I believe we can follow policies which protect the legitimate interests of laboring people—both those in unions and those who aren't in unions—and still be pro-business. I believe

we can grow this economy and make the environment cleaner. I believe we can maintain our military strength but realize that it is the moral force of our ideas that is the true source of our influence in the world; and that we can go into this post-communist world and be a great force for peace and freedom. I believe we can celebrate our diversity and still find common cause in our shared humanity. Unifying ideas.

And we tried to turn those into specific policy initiatives. Some of them were quite controversial because it is always hard to change, and people took a chance on me in this country—on me and Al Gore and our whole crowd—because we were just making an argument. No one could know whether it was true or not. And as we were rocking along in '96, we did a little better in the reelection—Virginia we nearly carried, even. We did pretty well here. [Laughter]

But here's what you need to start with saying to people who say they're independents: "Look, this is not an argument anymore. The evidence is in, and the policies that the Democrats have followed have given us the longest peacetime expansion in history; 19½ million new jobs; the highest homeownership in history; the lowest unemployment in 29 years; the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; the lowest crime rate in 30 years; the first back-to-back balanced surpluses, budget surpluses in 42 years; all accomplished while reducing the size of the Federal Government to its lowest point in 37 years."

Now, it doesn't take long to say that. But what I want to say—just try to remember that. Because then our Republican friends have a little hill to climb. [Laughter] Now, they're pretty good at climbing it; they're never in doubt, I've got to give them that. [Laughter] I like that the evidence never deters them. I admire that. [Laughter] But we don't have to win many—two seats in the Senate, a few more seats in the House—to pad your margin.

There is no answer to that, because we had no support for our economic plan from the other party, and most of them opposed our crime policy. I had to veto two welfare bills before I got one that required able-bodied people to work but didn't hurt the kids and put more money into child care.

These are our policies, and they work. Not because of me. I am just grateful I had the

chance to serve at this time, to be the instrument of trying to move our country forward and pull our country together. The ideas are important. It doesn't matter how persuasive a person is. In fact, it can be dangerous if a person is persuasive and the ideas are wrong.

What we have stood for works for America. And you need to memorize—every Democrat needs to memorize that litany. If this expansion goes on until February, it'll be the longest economic expansion in history, including all the ones with wars. And you just remember that. Lowest unemployment rate in 29 years; lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; lowest poverty rates in 20 years; lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded, since we've been keeping statistics; highest homeownership in history; first back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years; and the lowest crime rate in 30 years. Just remember those things, because the things they—all those little things they used to say about us are demolished by that set of statistics.

Then we get to the main event, which is, okay, now we're in this shape, now what are we going to do? What are we going to do?

You know, what I wanted to do in 1992 was to turn the country around and pull the country together. And I should say that we also did a lot of other things. We passed the Brady bill, and it worked, and it didn't do any of the things they said it would do. We passed the family and medical leave bill. Fifteen million people took advantage of it. We raised the minimum wage, and every year there was a new record set for new small businesses started. It worked. It didn't do the bad things that they said it would do. And compared to 7 years ago, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer; and we set aside more land, protected more land, than any administration in the history of America except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. So you can grow the economy and improve the environment.

So we start with that. Now, what are we going to do?

You know, the election of 2000 ought to be about change. They do all these polls and they say 75 percent of the people want change, and they act like I should be upset. And I said, "If they'd polled me, I'd be in the 75 percent, too." [Laughter] If somebody ran for President, for example, and said, "Vote for me. I'll do everything Bill Clinton did," I'd vote against that person. Why? Because this is a country in a

constant state of renewal, and because, objectively, the world we're living in is changing so fast we have to keep moving and moving.

But what I want to say to you is this—and it's relevant to the State elections and to the national elections—8 years ago in 1991 and 1992, we had to worry about getting this country together again and moving this country forward again. Now, we're headed in the right direction. Sometimes the most dangerous time in life is when things are really rocking along well. [Laughter] Right? I used to have a rule in politics: You're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable. And it's a good rule in life.

How many times in our own lives have we squandered some great moment by relaxing, by getting diverted, by not thinking about the opportunity being presented to us? Every one of you secretly is nodding your head, at least inside your head. [Laughter] It is human nature.

So when the Republicans come along with this siren song, "Let us take all the non-Social Security surplus and give it back to you in this huge tax cut," it sounded pretty good. One of the most hopeful things for the future is the way the American people stood with me and our allies in Congress when I vetoed that tax cut bill. They knew better than to do that. It was very hopeful. It was very hopeful.

What I hope the next few days of budget negotiations, the next year of work with Congress, and the debate in 2000, will be about is the following thing: Okay, we've got this chance; it is the chance of a lifetime. Not in my lifetime have we had a chance like this. The economy was maybe close to this good by the terms of that time back in the sixties, but we had to deal with Vietnam and civil rights. We now have a chance to write the future of America and our children in a new millennium, and we better not blow it. And that's what this election ought to be about. And what are the big issues?

Very briefly, this is what I think the big issues are. Number one, the aging of America. Not only the baby boomers retiring but all of us living longer. If we get the results I expect from the human genome project, there are young people in this audience whose children will be born with a life expectancy of nearly 100 years.

Now, what do we know right now? Right now we know that in 30 years there will be twice as many people over 65, and we know that the

baby boom generation is bigger than our children. Therefore, since we have the money and the opportunity, we should now, move now to save Social Security, reform Medicare, and add a prescription drug benefit now, not later.

The second thing, what do we know about the children of America? We know that education will be more important to them than ever before. We know that they live in a world in which information technology will determine all kinds of options in life. We know that they are the first generation of children bigger than the baby boom and that they are far more diverse racially, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously.

So what do we know about that? Well, we know, at an absolute minimum we have to do more to give them a world-class education. And for me that means finishing the work of putting 100,000 teachers out there for smaller classes, giving those thousands of modern and new schools, having high standards, and giving schools help to turn around problems, giving kids more after-school programs and the other mentoring programs that they need, but putting the education of these children first and recognizing it will be different.

Third issue—that I think is a huge issue—what have we learned about the 21st century economy, with all this long run? Can we keep it going? And to me, very important to be faithful to them, can we be honest enough to say that in the most prosperous period of American history there are still millions of our country men and women who have been left behind? Because there are people and places that are untouched by this recovery. So is there more that we can do there?

I would argue for two things. Number one, in terms of poverty, we need to continue to do the work that the Vice President has done so well with these empowerment zones and these enterprise communities. I wish you could talk to the people who have been a part of them. He has mobilized thousands of people across America to take their destiny into their hands, to attract investment, to move forward. It is amazing. But we'll never have every poor community in an empowerment zone. We don't have enough money. That's why it's important for the Congress to adopt this new markets proposal I have made. All it does is this: It provides some money to help people start things going economically, but it gives investors the same incentives to invest on an Indian reservation,

in the Mississippi Delta, in Appalachia, in a poor inner-city community; the same incentive to invest in developing markets in America we give them to invest in developing markets in Latin America, in Asia, in Africa, and other parts of the world.

And if we can't bring free enterprise to the poorest parts of America now, when will we ever? It's very interesting. We passed this financial modernization bill last night, or at least we reached an agreement. And I was so moved that all the banks were saying, "We agree with the President. We don't want to get rid of the Community Reinvestment Act. We think it's an opportunity to invest in poor communities in America, because most of those people are working. They want to work harder. They're capable of having new businesses. They're capable of doing more."

The Democrats ought to be on the forefront. Now is the time to say we can bring opportunity to poor people, and the Government doesn't have to do it all. The private sector can do it, and we will make it good business. That ought to be our cause in this election. We've got to go out there and prove that everybody that wants to work, that wants to have a chance to start a business, ought to have the same chance that those of us who've been blessed to be able to come to this dinner tonight have had. I think it is very important.

Finally—this is something I know Chuck Robb believes, too—I hope that we will stay on the path that we're on and say we're not going to spend that Social Security surplus, and we're going to hang on to enough money so that over the next 15 years we can pay off \$3½ trillion of national debt. And in 15 years this country will be out of debt for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President of the United States.

Now, why should the Democrats be the party? We're supposed to be the more liberal party. You've heard it dripped from their lips, our adversaries—[laughter]—as if it were a dirty word. Why should the more progressive party be for paying off the debt?

Because it's the progressive thing to do. Because it will keep interest rates down. Because it means more businesses and more jobs and higher incomes. Because it means, though the economy will doubtless go up or down in the future, it'll always be better than it otherwise

would have been. Because it means that ordinary people will have lower home mortgages, lower car payment rates, lower credit card rates; and they can send their kids to college with lower college loan rates than would otherwise be the case. Because it means when our friends overseas get in trouble, like the Asian countries did in the last 2 years, and our economies hurt because they can't buy our things anymore, they will be able to get out of trouble at lower cost. Every wealthy country in this world ought to get itself out of debt in a global economy, set a good example, and give people everywhere a chance to live up to their dreams. And I want the Democrats to lead America away from the wilderness of the 12 years before I came here into a debt-free future.

There are other things that I could say, I don't want to spend a lot of time on. We've got to stay with this environmental issue. We've got to prove you can grow the economy and improve the environment. There is nothing so dangerous for a country to be in the grip of a big idea that is wrong. And most countries still believe—most dominant influence centers in most countries still believe that you can't get rich in the 21st century unless you get rich the same way America got rich in the first half of this century, which means that you have to use more energy than oil and coal and things that burn, more greenhouse gases and heat the climate of the world and cause all these problems. We've got malaria going to higher and higher places and showing up in odd places around the world. That's just one little example. The thinning of the ice caps. All kinds of other problems.

I am telling you, I have studied this for 22 years. I don't think anybody believes that I'm not pro-growth, pro-business, pro-economic strength. It is no longer true that you have to grow the economy by burning up the atmosphere. It is now possible, technologically, to reduce our emission of greenhouse gases and create more high wage jobs and a brighter, high-tech future by doing the environmentally responsible thing. It is affordable; it is sensible; and we just don't know it yet. So we need to be out there.

And let me just say one thing before I get to the main point I want to make. [*Laughter*] I want you to remember this: the aging, the children, the economy, the environment, America, and the world. For all the politics around

this Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty vote, you should know that there are a lot of people in the other party that really think it's a bad idea. And why do they think it's a bad idea? They say, "People can cheat; we don't trust the rest of the world, so why should we sign a test ban treaty?"

Well, my answer is, number one, we're not testing now. We're spending \$3½ billion of your money to keep our nuclear weapons safe and usable without testing. Even they don't think we ought to start testing. So it's easier to cheat now than it would be if the test ban treaty were passed. Why is that? Because if somebody tests an underground bomb a good ways away and it's not too big, you may think it's an earthquake. And if it's small but still usable, you may not detect it at all. But if this treaty passes, we'll have over 300 sensors out there, all over the world in all the right places, dramatically increasing the chances that people can't cheat.

So the truth is, it's a visceral, ideological thing. They really believe that what we need is more bombs, more missile defense, a higher wall, a bigger bomb; that we should go into that 21st century by ourselves because you can't trust anybody, never mind the fact that the cold war is over; never mind the fact that our allies in the cold war have all signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; that Britain and France, two nuclear powers without anything like the capacity we have to maintain their nuclear weapons, aren't worried at all.

But you need to understand there is a different view here. A lot of them feel sort of bad about not paying their U.N. dues, but they're not sick about it—I'm sick about it; it's wrong; a lot of them, it doesn't bother at all—or passing a foreign affairs budget that has no money to fulfill the obligations we solemnly made to the Middle East peace process when we've got a chance to actually get it done; that has no money to continue to get rid of the Russian nuclear weapons; that has no money for America to do its part to help the poorest countries in the world get rid of their debt, something the Pope has asked us to do and every sensible world leader knows would be good for the economy of America as well as for those poor countries.

So you've got to decide, what do you think our role is? Most Americans, I think, including most Republicans who live outside the beltway, believe that this is an interdependent world in

which we ought to work with our friend and neighbors and allies, in which we're safer and more secure and more prosperous when we have a sense of partnership.

I'll give you two practical examples. All those people in Kosovo were being slaughtered because they were Albanian Muslims. And we went in and stopped them because we had the military power to do it, with our Allies. But we're very much in the minority in Kosovo now because other people are carrying the load. That's what partners do.

We raised a lot of Cain about what was happening to those poor people in East Timor. But it's a long way from our backyard. And because we have partners—we're a tiny, tiny portion of the global effort to bring humanity and freedom and independence to the people of East Timor, because we work with other people. It's a good deal, folks. And if the Democrats need to stand up for responsible internationalism and not isolationism, that ought to be a part of it.

But if I were on my last day in office, if you asked me what the number one thing I would give to America, if I could give us one last gift of citizenship, it wouldn't be solving the aging crisis or the long-term economy or the environment or even the problems of the children or our role in the world, even though I care about them. I would find a way for us to really be one America.

If you look at all the problems that I've had to deal with, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans to the tribal wars in Africa—this whole world, on the verge of this modern age of explosion in scientific and technological advances, is beset by the most primitive failure of human society. We're still afraid of people that aren't like us, whether it's because of their race or their ethnicity or their sexual orientation. We're afraid.

So even America, which has had so much success, has a young man like Matthew Shepard stretched across a fence, or James Byrd dragged to pieces, or a Filipino postalworker murdered in Los Angeles, or a young Korean Christian shot as he came out of his church by a guy who said he belonged to a church that didn't believe in God but believed in white supremacy. And we're doing better than most places, and we have this.

In one of Hillary's Millennium Evenings—which we've been having at the White House, dealing with the big subjects of the future—

we had a man named Vint Cerf who was one of the founders of the architecture of the Internet—sent the first E-mail, 18 years ago, to his wife, because she was so profoundly deaf even hearing aids couldn't help her. So he wanted to find a way to talk to her when he was at work. That's how the E-mail came about.

And he was there with a professor named Lander, who is a professor of genomics, the study of the whole gene structure. And what they were talking about was the intersection of computers and learning about the genes, and how we couldn't really break down the human gene if it weren't for computers. And they said a lot of fascinating things, including the fact that it may be that we'll be able to come up with digital, computer-operated program devices, tiny ones, that we'll be able to insert in all defective parts of the human body. For example, if someone has a spine severed in an accident—we've been working on replacing nerves. They now believe they may be able to put digital equipment in the spine that will replicate the nervous system and allow people to stand up and walk again.

And Mr. Cerf's wife, who was profoundly deaf for 50 years, they found—a small digital device was developed, they stuck it way down in her ears, and she heard after 50 years and stood up and talked about the experience of hearing and what it was like to hear the birds for the first time after 50 years and what it was like to go to a James Taylor concert now. Those of you who are young, that won't be such a big thing—[laughter]—but for me it's a big thing.

But here's the thing I wanted to tell you. Lander said, "Look, there's 100,000 genes and billions of variations. But the truth is that all human beings genetically are 99.9 percent identical." And even more important—especially here in northern Virginia, where you have all this diversity—this is the most astonishing thing. He said if you took any genetic group—let me just look around the room. Let's say you took 100 Pakistanis and 100 Chinese and 100 Mediterranean Europeans and 100 people from west Africa. He said if you took those groups, there would be more genetic differences within the groups, among individuals, than there would be between one group and another. Amazing, huh? You remember that. It gives scientific support for what our values say.

We're a smart country. We nearly always get it right in the end. [*Laughter*] Otherwise we wouldn't be around.

But I'm telling you that it is—the thing that concerns me most is we're on the verge of all these scientific breakthroughs; we're going to find out what's in the black holes in the universe; we'll discover billions of other galaxies; we'll revise our notion of time itself unless we are dragged down by the oldest human failing: being afraid of people because they're different from us, which leads to misunderstanding, which leads to hatred, which leads to dehumanization, which leads to violence.

Now, the Democrats are now in a position to say, "Let's go back to love and justice and concern, expressed in Martin Luther King's and Robert Kennedy's life. And let us do it because you can trust us. You know we can run the economy. You know we can get the crime rate down. You know we can manage the welfare issue. You know we can manage the budget. You can trust us; let's deal with our core problems."

So when the Virginia legislature says, "We're for a Patients' Bill of Rights, or we need smaller classes, and we need to do things to educate our children," it is an expression of our common humanity and our mutual responsibilities.

I just want you to walk out of here armed with the information to say, "Look, this is not an experiment. Our way works. The most important thing is for us to go forward together. Give us a chance, from the bottom to the top."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. in the main ballroom at the Alexandria Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; Coretta Scott King, founder, Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change; State Senate Minority Leader Richard L. Saslaw; Kenneth R. Plum, chairman, State Democratic Party; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

The President's Radio Address

October 23, 1999

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we must do to meet one of the critical challenges of the next century: the aging of America.

This week I sat down with congressional leaders of both parties at the White House to ask them to work with me to construct an overall framework for completing our work on the spending bills that reflect the priorities and the values of our people. The cornerstone of that framework must be paying down our debt, investing in education and other critical priorities, strengthening and modernizing Medicare, and saving Social Security for the retirement of the baby boom generation.

If we value the financial well-being of our parents and grandparents, if we believe that all Americans deserve to retire with dignity, if we want to make sure we don't place an unfair burden on the backs of the next generation of young parents, then we must seize this moment

of unprecedented prosperity and budget surpluses to extend the life of Social Security.

Unfortunately, so far, instead of making the tough choices to save Social Security and extend its life to 2050, the Republican majority in Congress, especially some of the House Republican leaders, have been accusing the Democrats of spending the Social Security surplus. They've also been claiming that their budget doesn't spend the Social Security surplus.

As it happens, neither claim is true. Oh, they've used a lot of budget gimmicks—like claiming the census and ordinary Pentagon expenditures are actually emergencies—in an effort to claim they're not spending billions from the Social Security surplus. But unfortunately for their argument, their own Congressional Budget Office has said they've already spent more than \$18 billion of the Social Security surplus. But the main problem is, while spending this money, their plan doesn't extend the solvency of Social Security by a single day. I

think we can do better. The American people deserve more than confusion, doubletalk, and delay on this issue.

So it's time to have a clear, straightforward bill on the table, and next week I plan to present one, legislation that ensures that all Social Security payroll tax will go to savings and debt reduction for Social Security. Over 15 years, this will allow us to pay down more than \$3½ trillion of debt, to be debt-free as a nation for the first time since 1835 when Andrew Jackson was President.

But my plan goes further. After a decade of debt reduction from protecting Social Security funds, all the interest savings from this debt reduction will then be reinvested in Social Security, extending its solvency into the middle of the next century. This is the first big step toward truly saving Social Security. It will take the Trust Fund out beyond the lifespan of the baby boom generation—no gimmicks, no budgetary sleight of hand; just the right choices that really add up to protecting the Social Security surplus, extending the life of Social Security, and paying down the debt by 2015.

Let's remember what's at stake. Since 1935, Social Security has provided a solid foundation for retirement and lifted millions of our people out of poverty. But the number of older Ameri-

cans will double as the baby boomers retire and the number of workers supporting each beneficiary will decline. Today, there are 3.4 workers for each Social Security beneficiary. By 2030, the ratio will be down to two to one. That will put a big strain on the system. If nothing is done, the Social Security Trust Fund will be completely depleted by the year 2034. We can't let that happen, and we don't have to. We can easily go back to 2050.

Social Security was created in the depths of the Depression. Today, we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, with 7 consecutive years of fiscal improvement and back-to-back surpluses for the first time in 42 years. This gives us an historic opportunity and a responsibility to protect and guarantee Social Security for future generations. Again, I urge the congressional majority to put aside partisanship and achieve something of lasting value for all our people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:30 p.m. on October 22 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks at a Birthday Celebration for the First Lady October 23, 1999

Senator. [*Laughter*] Marisa, thank you for coming. We thought someone should be here today who does not have an accent. [*Laughter*] We have so many wonderful entertainers who are here for the VH1 millennial concert, which will be held later this afternoon, and one of them just came in, my neighbor and friend from Mississippi B.B. King. Please come in.

Since we're celebrating her birthday—and it's almost reached the point where Hillary and I don't want to celebrate anymore—[*laughter*]—I want to tell you, B.B. played at the White House the other night; we had a blues concert; and he's a year or two older than I am—[*laughter*]—and he's just as good as he ever was. So you never get too old to do what you do well and love, and I thank him.

I will be brief and then bring on the birthday girl. I have to say one other thing as a point of personal pride. Senator Daschle couldn't—because we both come from what my predecessor used to call a small State—could not bring himself to tell you the most relevant fact of that little history lesson he gave you about women in the Senate. Hattie Caraway was elected more than 60 years ago with the help of Huey Long, back when he was for Roosevelt as an ardent supporter of the New Deal. The first woman ever elected to the United States Senate was from my home State of Arkansas, and I'm very proud of that.

I think it's high time New York, which has been on the cutting edge of so many other

developments, join that great phalanx for the future.

But I want to say something serious, that has nothing to do with Hillary or me or almost nothing to do with our party, except that we happen to be the only people, in my view, doing the right thing. Back in '92, when we moved here after the election and we began to work, this country was in trouble. It was so long ago, and things had been good for so long, a lot of people had forgotten what it was like then, how high the unemployment rate was, how high interest rates were, how big the debt was and the deficit, how much the crime rate was going up, how swollen the welfare rolls were, and how divided the society was.

We have worked hard to turn this country around. And it is moving in the right direction. If this economy keeps going until February, it will be the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States, and it will be done without a war. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surplus in 42 years, the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. The environment is cleaner. There are more protections for family leave to help people balance family and work. We've got 150,000 young Americans serving in AmeriCorps. The country is moving in the right direction.

But the great question now is, what will we do with this moment of prosperity? And as all of you know, I'm not running for anything. [Laughter] My interest is in what happens to our children and grandchildren. We've worked real hard for 7 years to turn this country around. And now we are in the position that most countries get maybe—maybe—once in the lifetime of a citizen, where things are moving in the right direction and you can literally chart the course for the future. You can paint a picture of your children's future and give them a chance to live it.

And because it is the United States and because it's the end of the cold war and because of our fortunate position, we also can help make the world a more peaceful and prosperous and secure place, not only for our children but for children in every continent.

That is this incredible opportunity we're getting. But nations are like people. Sometimes—I used to have a rule in politics—I had eight

or nine rules, but one of my rules was, you're the most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable. And if you think about your own life, we commonly make mistakes when we think everything is going great, because we break our concentration; we become self-indulgent; we think all the things that happened to us as individuals. That can happen to the country. That's why I vetoed that tax bill, because it was self-indulgent, short-term.

I would be here for my wife if she were not my wife, because we have got to have people with a lifetime of commitment to the future and to children, to a balanced sense of the country coming together and moving together. We need somebody who understands that for all this economic prosperity there are people and places that have been left behind. And if we can't bring economic opportunity to poor people now, we will never get around to doing it. That ought to be one of our highest priorities.

We need somebody who can resist the lure of the moment of the election and say, "We're going to keep paying down this debt so we get out of debt for the first time since 1835. We can do it in 15 years if we stay at it." We need somebody that will think about the aging of America. You know, my generation is plagued with this—the idea that we'll retire and hurt our children and our grandchildren.

What I want you to know about Hillary is, from the first minute I met her, she was thinking about the things that are important today. And one of the reasons that she looks so much younger than she is—[laughter]—apart from the highly interesting and stimulating life—[laughter]—and how good the American people have been to us, is that all of her life—all of her life—she has cared about the things that America needs to focus on now, that we dare not pass up the opportunity, literally, of a lifetime. I hope.

Never in my life, not even once, has our country been in the position that we are now in to shape the future of our children and grandchildren and the future of the world. The only time in my life when the times were remotely this good was in the early 1960's, and we had to deal with the civil rights challenge and the war in Vietnam and the cold war. This has never happened in my life.

And you need people in the Senate who are genuine visionaries and practical doer. She is

a genuine visionary, a practical doer, and a wonderful human being.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately noon at the Capitol Hilton. In his remarks, he referred

to actress Marisa Tomei and musician B.B. King. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the VH1 Concert of the Century October 23, 1999

The President. Well, I don't know how much longer we have on the commercial break, and I don't own this network, so I could really get the hook. [Laughter]

But let me thank you and thank all the artists. And I've got all this stuff to say on the teleprompter at the end, but I just want to tell you why I did this. I still remember Miss Lucille Rutherford, who taught me to sing, and George Grey, who taught me to play the clarinet and the saxophone; my two junior high school band directors; and my wonderful high school band director, Virgil Spurlin. And I don't think I would have become President if it hadn't been for school music. And that's why I did this. And I thank you. Thank you.

[At this point, the program continued.]

The President. Thank you, Robert DeNiro, for the introduction, for your friendship, for your fabulous movies. [Laughter]

Let me thank all of the wonderful performers who have graced this stage today; they have blessed our lives and all of America who has heard them. Let's give them all a big hand one more time. [Applause] We respect and honor them for their talents and their knowledge of music. But we also respect what they have given us tonight. I respect them so much, I left my saxophone up in the White House. [Laughter]

But we have had another wonderful lesson this afternoon, thanks to the National Endowment for the Arts, which is supporting our country's living cultural heritage; and VH1, the Save The Music Foundation, preserving our musical traditions. The most important lesson we've had is that what we've seen in stunning brilliance tonight should at least be a possibility in the lives and the minds of all of our children.

Music education is very important to me. When I was a young boy, as a school musician, I started at 9 with Ms. Lillian Rutherford and

George Grey learning to sing and play. I learned that music was more than scales or keys or how to make sure I was always in tune. Music taught me how to mix practice and patience with creativity. Music taught me how to be both an individual performer and a good member of a team. It taught me how to work, always to bring mind and body and spirit together, and the beauty of music.

And so for all my teachers, for the ones I mentioned, for my junior high school band directors, Carol Powell and Joel Duskin, for my wonderful friend Virgil Spurlin, who taught me in high school, some are still with me, some have gone on to their reward, I want to say again, I don't think I would be President if it hadn't been for school music.

And I am very grateful to John Sykes, to VH1, to all the wonderful stars and performers who are here tonight, because they want to give all our young people that same opportunity to learn, to achieve, to express themselves, and to develop their math brain cells. [Laughter]

This century has been called the American Century. It gave rise to democracy around the world. For the first time in history, more than half the world's people are living under governments of their own choosing. So we gave that to the world. But at the same time, we mustn't forget that America brought the world the rhythm of jazz, the consolation of country, the hard truth of the blues, the excitement of rock and roll. And the diversity of our music and our musicians—which we have seen tonight—mirrors the diversity of our people and reminds us of the greatest lesson we have always to teach and always to learn, that we are stronger when we're playing in harmony, based on our common humanity.

A stunning example of that is the great American songwriter George Gershwin, a Jewish boy

from New York who wrote the magnificent black opera, "Porgy and Bess." He listened to others. And he once said, "True music must repeat the thought and inspirations of the people and the time. My people are Americans, and my time is today."

Let us promise that we Americans will keep American music and the spirit it represents, inspiring our children and their children as we enter the new millennium.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:30 p.m. in a tent on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John Sykes, president, VH1, who presented the President with a guitar signed by the artists who performed in the program entitled, "Concert of the Century for VH1 Save The Music." The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Message on the Observance of Make A Difference Day, 1999

October 23, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone throughout the nation participating in Make A Difference Day. I am delighted that so many Americans are joining together with their neighbors on this day of helping to create a better world for us all.

It is a very American idea that we meet our challenges not through big government or as isolated individuals, but as members of a true community, with all of us working together. Upholding this fine tradition, citizens young and old are working on this special day to raise awareness of the power of citizen service not only to give hope and help to individuals in need, but also to renew the strength, vitality, and character of communities across our nation.

As you clean up parks and neighborhoods, read stories to young people, collect clothing and other necessities for families recovering from Hurricane Floyd, and participate in numerous other community efforts, I thank each of

you for devoting your time, talents, and energy to fulfill America's bright promise for all our people.

Earlier this week, we celebrated the fifth anniversary of AmeriCorps, our national service initiative that engages thousands of citizens in projects that are changing lives and changing America. AmeriCorps members are living up to the highest obligations of American citizenship—creating opportunities for others, taking responsibility for themselves, and fostering a community of all Americans. I commend everyone participating in Make A Difference Day for adding your own contribution to the tradition of citizen service that has always been a hallmark of our democracy.

Hillary joins me in sending best wishes for a productive and meaningful day.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks on Medicare Prescription Drug Coverage

October 25, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Callus, Ms. Kayden, for your remarkable statements. Thank you, Secretary Shalala, for your steadfast leadership on this issue. I would like to welcome a very large number of Members of the United States Congress who are here: Senator Baucus and Senator Wyden; Representatives Abercrombie, Brown, Waters, Obey, Vento, and

Hoyer; and Congressman Berry. And I would like to acknowledge the important work of two that are not here, Representatives Waxman and Allen, who have been particularly interested in this issue.

Death of Senator John H. Chafee

Before I go into my remarks, I would like to make a statement about the passing last night of Senator John Chafee of Rhode Island. Rhode Island and America have lost a great leader and a fine human being who, in 23 years in the Senate and in his service as Secretary of the Navy, always put his concern for the American people above partisanship.

When you think of the term "bipartisan," you immediately think of John Chafee. Known throughout his beloved Rhode Island simply as "the man you can trust," Senator Chafee was a consummate statesman and patriot. He served with valor in war and peace. I am particularly grateful for his commitment to health care, his concern for the environment, and his devotion to our children, especially his work for foster care and child care.

John Chafee proved that politics can be an honorable profession. For him, civility was not simply a matter of personal manners. He believed it was essential to the preservation of our democratic system and the progress of our Nation. He embodied the decent center which has carried America from triumph to triumph for over 200 years. How we will miss him.

Today our thoughts and prayers are with his wonderful wife, Ginny, their five children, and their twelve grandchildren. And again, I want to say a special personal word of appreciation on behalf of Hillary and myself for the many kindnesses John Chafee extended to us and the many opportunities we had to work together.

Prescription Drug Benefits

Now, last January, in the State of the Union Address, I was able to give the American people a great report on our economy and the improving condition of our society, which now has the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

In the State of the Union Address, I said as we approached the new century, we could look back on 100 years of Americans meeting the great challenges of the century we're about to leave: the Depression, civil rights, two World Wars, the cold war. And now, because of the good fortune we presently enjoy, we have the opportunity and the obligations to meet the

great challenges that we know lie before us in the 21st century: to build one America out of our amazing diversity; to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835; to use this moment of prosperity to bring genuine economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind; to deal with the challenge of global warming; to meet the new security challenges of the 21st century, including the challenges of high-tech terrorism and weapons of mass destruction; to give the largest and most diverse group of children in American history a world-class education; and to meet the challenge of the aging of America.

We will double the number of people over 65 in just 30 years. There will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. This challenge would be truly daunting were it not for the fact that all of us, as a country, have worked so hard over the last 7 years to bring us to this moment of prosperity and to bring us to a point where we can predict long-term, consistent budget surpluses into the future which give us the means, if we have the will and vision, to deal with this challenge.

No one should have to make the kind of choices Mr. Callus and Ms. Kayden spoke of in their remarks in a country that has the strongest economy on Earth. No senior should have to forgo or cut back on lifesaving medication because of the cost. Neither should any senior be forced to get on a bus to Canada where the same medicines cost so much less. Just a couple of days ago, the Vice President held up an example of one of the most popular drugs for lowering cholesterol. In Canada, 60 tablets cost \$44; in New Hampshire, they cost \$102, if you're lucky. I think we can do better than that. It's wrong, and we have to deal with it.

We also have to deal with the fact that about three-quarters of our seniors simply don't have effective, affordable access to prescription drugs. We can afford to do something about it; we know what to do about it, and therefore, we have no excuse for inaction.

This debate over Medicare is more than about politics and budgets; it's about people, real people like Mr. Callus. You heard what he said. He said he was in pretty good shape, and I think that his speech verified that. *[Laughter]* But giving him and Americans like him all over the country the chance to live to the fullest of their God-given abilities, not only to live as

long but to live as well as they can, is an important value that we all stand for.

For 34 years, Medicare has helped to achieve that value. And it has eased the financial burden on families who care for their loved ones. Before Medicare, nearly half of our seniors had no health care coverage at all.

Today, Medicare is truly at a crossroads. As Secretary Shalala said, when we took office the Trust Fund was supposed to expire this year. And thanks to the good work of the Congress and the people who operate the program and the people who administer the health care of the country, we've worked together and we got the life expectancy of the Trust Fund back to 2015. We've done it by combating fraud and making Medicare more efficient and investing some more funds. But we know we have to go further because it is simply not going to be enough to stay with the status quo.

This past June I gave the Congress a comprehensive and fiscally responsible plan to extend the life of Medicare to 2027, while at the same time modernizing it to keep pace with changes in our medical system and our medical needs. I proposed new innovations used now in private sector health care to keep quality high and costs lower. I said we should remove barriers to preventive tests for cancer, for diabetes, for osteoporosis, and other diseases. I said we should invest more money, not only to deal with some of the hardships caused by the savings in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 but simply because there are going to be so many more people on Medicare over the next few years. And I want to say this again, no expert who has studied this has said we can deal with the challenge of Medicare without injecting more money into the system.

And finally, I called for adding a prescription drug benefit. Adding prescription drug coverage, as Secretary Shalala said, isn't just the right thing to do; it is the smart thing to do, medically, over the long run. Today, prescription drugs can accomplish what once could be done only through surgery, at far less pain and far less cost. We already pay for doctor and hospital benefits under Medicare, but we let many of our seniors go without prescription drugs and preventive screenings that could keep them healthy and keep them from having to undergo expensive treatment. It doesn't make sense.

Unfortunately, the Republican leadership in Congress has refused altogether to consider add-

ing a prescription drug benefit, effectively rendering meaningful Medicare reform impossible this year. The Congress is joining with me to work to alleviate undue strain on hospitals, nursing homes, home health agencies, and other providers—and that's a good thing—to alleviate some of the most severe burdens of the Balanced Budget Act.

But by ignoring the need for a prescription drug benefit, the Republican leaders are squandering a golden moment, leaving more than 13 million seniors without any prescription drug coverage and millions more with inadequate coverage, unreliable at best.

Now, in human terms, that means a lot. Think of the seniors on fixed incomes, like Mr. Callus, who are paying a couple of thousand dollars a year out of pocket. Think of men and women falling prey to illnesses because they can't afford proper doses of new miracle drugs that could easily keep them well. Asking them to wait for Medicare reform is like putting their lives on hold, and maybe into a lottery. It is unacceptable. It is unacceptable especially because it is so unnecessary. And I want you to know I don't intend to give up the battle until it is won.

And the good news is, because I vetoed the tax bill that would have taken away all the money to fix Medicare, we can still win it.

First, let's set the record straight. One of the key reasons no action was taken on prescription drugs this session was because the pharmaceutical industry spent millions of dollars on an all-out media campaign filled with flatout falsehoods. In ads featuring a fictional senior named Flo—[laughter]—the special interests say that our Medicare proposal—and I quote—"would put big Government in your medicine cabinet."

I might point out that even though we do, thanks to the leadership of these people, have the smallest Federal Government since 1962, it's still not small enough to get in your medicine cabinet. [Laughter]

It says—and I quote—"all seniors will be forced into a Government-run plan." The truth is, under our plan, there are no Government restrictions of any kind. Doctors would be able to prescribe any needed drug for any patient at any time, and the benefit would be purely voluntary, completely optional. If seniors want to keep their current coverage, they're perfectly free to do so.

We cannot stand by and watch the pharmaceutical industry go on and distort this debate.

We have to expose these deceptions and give the American people the facts. I wish they'd spend this ad money explaining why seniors have to get on the bus and go to Canada to buy drugs at less than half the price they can buy them in America, when the drugs are made in America with the benefit of the American system and American research and American tax systems. I wish they would spend their advertising money explaining that to the American people.

I guess if you've got a weak case, the best thing to do is change the subject. *[Laughter]* But I would like for Flo to get on TV and tell me about that. I'm sure she could explain it. *[Laughter]* And it would be so enlightening to us. *[Laughter]* Meanwhile, the rest of us are going to keep on talking about expanding access to affordable prescription drugs.

Another thing I don't understand is, I know they're worried that if we buy drugs in bulk the way the private sector does, that their profit per package of drugs will be smaller. But if we cover all the seniors, the volume will be so much greater, they will make more money. Do you remember when Medicare came in? All the people were saying, "Oh, my goodness, the people providing health care are going to go broke." But they didn't.

The pharmaceutical companies are going to do fine under this. We're not going to have the Government try to take them over. We're not going to have a big price control system. But we ought to be able to bargain to get American seniors a decent deal. And the volume, the increase in volume will more than offset the better prices that large purchases get.

Besides that, old Flo's up there arguing for keeping 13 million seniors, just like her, from having any access to any drugs. Bet she wouldn't be making that ad if she had found herself in the same position.

So this is really important. Look, all these issues are complicated. We're a big, grownup country; we don't have to have bogus ads out there confusing people about what the truth is. This is a matter of life or death. Everybody this man's age, who has the ability to be standing and talking and being what he was up here today, ought to have the same chance. That's what we believe.

Now, beyond dealing with the ad campaign to illustrate that the failure to add a prescription drug benefit has actual consequences, I am

going to gather clear and indisputable evidence of what this failure costs in physical and financial terms. Today I'm directing Secretary Shalala to produce a sweeping study—the first of its kind—to examine prescription drug costs in America. In 90 days she will present me with an analysis of what the most commonly prescribed drugs cost for those with and without coverage to help assess whether people without coverage are paying too much. The analysis will also report on trends in drug spending by age and by income to help us document the increasing toll high drug costs are taking on our seniors, on people with disabilities, and on their families.

Combined with a State-by-State analysis on our seniors' prescription drug needs, which I've already ordered, the new cost study should help to lay the foundation for a more informed debate in the coming year.

Finally, as part of the plan to safeguard the Social Security surplus, tomorrow I will send to Congress legislation that would reserve a third of the non-Social Security surplus—the non-Social Security surplus—all of which would be gone if I hadn't vetoed the tax cut bill—*[laughter]*—that would reserve a third of this for extending the solvency of Medicare and for funding a prescription drug benefit.

Now, I stand ready to work with Congress across party lines on crafting a Medicare reform plan that has the best chance of gaining bipartisan support. But even if Congress won't pass the Medicare modernization plan this fall, it can and should adopt at least a proposal for protecting the Social Security surplus.

I challenge Congress to pass this legislation as part of the final budget negotiations now underway, to ensure that Social Security and Medicare will have the resources they need to meet the challenges in the new century.

Let me just say what the difference in my proposal is and the proposal of the Republican majority. Anybody under any circumstances who saves the Social Security surplus gives America one big benefit, which is, if we don't spend the Social Security surplus, we pay down more of the debt every year; interest rates stay lower; the economy grows more. Our two plans have that in common.

The difference is that under my plan, starting at about 10 years, we will take the interest savings we get from reducing the debt from the Social Security surplus and put it into the Social

Security Trust Fund, which will take the Trust Fund out to 2050 and go beyond the life expectancy of the baby boom generation. That's the big difference.

If you just save the Social Security surplus, if you don't do anything else, it doesn't add to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund. Because all those years, from 1983 forward, when the deficit was made to look smaller because we were spending the Social Security surplus, the Social Security surplus got a Government bond, and it gets the money back, and it pays the seniors. So if you want to do something meaningful for the baby boom generation, it's not enough to save the Social Security surplus. You've got to take the interest savings you get on the budget from saving the surplus and put it into Social Security, so you add to the life of the Social Security Trust Fund.

So we have a lot more work to do, even though we're already in the last week of October. Congress still has not done a lot of things. Because they have not taken action to protect the privacy of medical records, I will use the power of my office to do that in the coming days. I think that's a very important issue. But there are other agreements we have to make before we can end this year. Congress made a commitment last year, which I applauded, a bipartisan commitment, to 100,000 more teachers in our schools to reduce class size and paid for 30,000 of them. Now they want to totally undo it. I think it's wrong.

They have not yet given our families the vital protections of a Patients' Bill of Rights. They took the hate crimes legislation out of the legislation that they've sent me to fund the Justice Department. They have not yet raised the minimum wage. And they have not yet fixed the flawed system that prevents people with disabilities from going to work. All those things can be done in the next few weeks, and we intend to work hard to see that they are done.

But let me close again with the subject that brought us here today. Colleen Kayden came here and spoke about her experience as a pharmacist. She also spoke for every pharmacist and every community pharmacy in America. Stephen Callus came here and talked about his life. He could have been speaking for millions upon millions of seniors.

Time is passing here, and I want to get back to the point I made at the beginning. I hope to be one of those baby boom seniors one day, and it's getting there in a terrible hurry—[laughter]—but I have lived already quite a good number of years. Never in my lifetime has this country had the opportunity we now have—free of war, free of internal discord—to chart a course for the future that will embrace all Americans and that will consciously deal with the great challenges before us.

Only once in my lifetime have we had an economy that approximated this economy. That was in the early sixties, but we had to deal with the civil rights challenge and with the Vietnam war. We have never had an economy like this and, basically, the freedom within our own hands to just chart a course for the future. And there are some things that we know are going to be out there, including how many kids we're going to have and what their different backgrounds are; and how many seniors we're going to have and what their absolutely certain health challenges will be. And we absolutely have no conceivable excuse for walking away from the chance of a lifetime to build the century of our dreams.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Medicare recipient Stephen Callus, who introduced the President; and pharmacist Colleen Kayden.

Remarks on the Fiscal Year 2000 Budget and an Exchange With Reporters October 25, 1999

The President. Last February I sent to the Congress a balanced budget that maintains our fiscal discipline, pays down the debt, saves Social

Security, strengthens and modernized Medicare with a prescription drug coverage, and meets our most pressing priorities: putting 100,000

teachers in the classroom, another 50,000 community police on our street, protecting the environment, and strengthening our national security. And everything in the budget I sent is paid for without touching a penny of the Social Security surplus.

Unfortunately, the congressional majority has rejected the approach I recommended. And so, in the 8 months since I sent them the balanced budget, they have failed to produce a budget of their own that meets our Nation's priorities and values. Instead, they have tried one thing after another, one unsuccessful scheme after another, to meet the budget priorities.

Now the majority wants an arbitrary across-the-board cut in all Federal investment. The plan would cut military recruiting and, according to the Department of Defense, would cut as many as 70,000 men and women from our Armed Forces. Their plan would cut off thousands of children from the benefits of Head Start, cut childhood immunizations and our cleanup of toxic waste. It would do something they have pledged not to do. With all these cuts, it would still spend the Social Security surplus, as their own Congressional Budget Office has said it would do.

And yet, in spite of this, Congress has seen fit to fund its own pork-barrel projects, like a ship the Pentagon says it doesn't need and aircraft it didn't ask for. They've found a way to fund corporate welfare for oil companies and other special interests and to fund their own pay raise.

Now, the American people sent us here to make tough choices. But these are the wrong choices. I will not allow Congress to raise its own pay and fund its own pork-barrel projects and still make devastating across-the-board cuts in everything from education to child nutrition to the FBI. I will not sign any budget that puts special interests above the national interest.

Now, this week I may be forced to veto several of the appropriations bills because they fail to meet our most pressing national priorities. I have decided to sign into law the Department of Defense appropriations bill, and I have just done that, because in good conscience I cannot allow our national security needs to be held hostage to this budget battle. This legislation provides funding for our most critical military needs, including weapons procurement and modernization, research and development, and,

importantly, a much needed pay raise for our men and women in uniform.

I had proposed the first sustained increase in defense spending in a decade, and this bill will help to maintain that. Still, what Congress sent me is far from perfect. The legislation is loaded with things the Pentagon didn't ask for and doesn't need. It applies accounting gimmicks to important areas.

For example—listen to this—Congress designated the \$7.2 billion for base operations and basic training, something our military needs and depends upon every year, year-in and year-out, as an “unforeseen emergency” expense.

Despite my reservations, I am signing this bill—I have signed it—because it's crucial to our national security and our military readiness, because the troops that defend our interests abroad deserve the strongest support we can provide here at home.

The second action I have just taken is on the appropriations bills for the Departments of State, Justice, and Commerce. Today I vetoed that bill. I vetoed it because it fails to fund the additional 50,000 community police we need to keep crime going down in our communities. We have the lowest crime rate in 30 years, but we can't stop until America is the safest big country in the world.

This bill fails to provide the funding to give the American people their day in court against the tobacco companies. It fails to take a strong stand, indeed, it fails, inexplicably, to take any stand, whatever, against hate crimes. And by failing to provide for our obligations, including our U.N. dues in arrears, it imperils not only our vote in the United Nations but the ability to meet our obligations and, therefore, to maintain our national security.

The appropriations bill for the Interior Department is no better. If Congress sends it to me in its current form, with provisions that weaken, rather than strengthen our environmental programs, I will have to veto that, too.

On Friday the temporary resolution that keeps the Government running again will expire. That's the second such measure to have come and gone—another week, another deadline—and still we don't have a budget like the one I proposed that pays down the debt, saves Social Security, reforms and modernizes Medicare, and meets our most important national priorities.

They have not lived up to their obligations and the commitment they made last year to

put 100,000 teachers in our classroom. They have not provided for another 50,000 community police to keep crime going down in our community. They have not done what is necessary to protect our environment.

Now, even though time is short, we still have a good chance to meet these goals. Today my budget negotiators are continuing to work with Congress to finish the job. I hope that the Members of Congress will work with us in good faith to make this a season of progress. And I remain committed to that end.

Thank you very much.

Learjet Crash in South Dakota

Q. Mr. President, was there a possibility you might have had to order an attack on that plane, the Learjet, as it was flying north?

The President. Well, let me say, first of all, I am profoundly sorry for the loss of Payne Stewart, who has had such a remarkable career and impact on his sport, and a remarkable resurgence in the last couple of years; and the members of his group, including the two pilots and two others who were with him. This is a very sad day.

I am very grateful for the work the FAA did and for the two Air Force pilots and the others in the Air Force that monitored this plane and made every effort to try to make contact with it. They did everything that could humanly be done, and they were looking out for the safety of everyone involved. And I'm just sorry that it crashed and what happened, happened.

Candidacy of Pat Buchanan

Q. Mr. President, Pat Buchanan announced today he will run for the Reform Party nomination. Any comments from you, sir?

The President. No. [Laughter]

Defense Department Appropriations Bill

Q. Mr. President, on the defense bill, sir, given your strong objections to it, why couldn't you have vetoed the bill and gotten the provisions which you wanted by negotiating with Congress? Did you not have the Democratic votes to sustain your veto?

The President. Well, I think we could have sustained a veto, although it would have been a close call. I'm fairly confident we could have sustained it. But I didn't think it was fair, frankly, to put the Democrats in the position of being

attacked by the Republicans for being against the defense budget that the Democratic Party has basically pursued.

The core of this budget is the policy of our party—not just me as President and not just our administration; the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of Defense—it's the policy of our party to give the military a chance, after 10 years of defense reductions, to have the pay increase, to have the improvements in quality of life, and to have the military modernization.

The pork barrel that is in this defense bill is not unknown to Capitol Hill. But what is unknown, of course, that we've never seen anything like before, is declaring daily operations to be emergencies so that they can appear not to be spending the Social Security surplus when they are.

But I felt, on balance, given the urgent need to get the pay increase out and to begin the modernization programs, it was the right thing to do. I also thought it would show good faith with the Members of Congress.

But I think it is—I will say again, I also felt, as a practical matter, that we should focus on the bills where the substantive deficiencies are, in the teachers, in the police officers, in the environmental programs, in the absence of hate crimes legislation, in the failure to pay the U.N. dues. I think we should focus on the bills where the real flaws are.

And I think—and I have made it clear that insofar as I proposed increased investments over and above what the Congress has recommended, I am prepared to pay for them, and I think they ought to do the same with theirs. And we need to work together and get this worked out. We can do this. This is terribly important, and we can do it.

But the idea of just saying, "Well, we'll have an across-the-board cut," and using some percentage term that makes it seem smaller than it is without considering the consequences, I think, is terrible.

And let me point out, just on the defense bill, if they put in this across-the-board cut, after having mandated that so much money to this plane or this boat or this depot or this reconstruction project, the Pentagon will have no choice but to lay off, the DOD says, up to 70,000 people.

So I don't think that's an acceptable resolution to this, and I hope that we can work together and work through this. But I am determined

to keep fighting for something that we can all be proud of. And we can still do it.

Yes, ma'am.

Alternatives in Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, you've made clear you oppose across-the-board spending cuts, and the Republicans have made clear they don't support your revenue proposals. Would you be willing to find common ground in spending bills that are based on a combination of OMB and CBO scoring?

The President. Well, they're already doing—they've used a few OMB scoring devices when it worked to their advantage, but I have no objection to that, because we think we're right and on balance. Over the last 7 years, our scoring has been quite accurate. So I will work with them on that.

I also think there are other alternatives here. There are alternatives between turning every ordinary expenditure into an emergency and their adopting my proposal for a 55 cent cigarette tax. There are lots of other ways that we can bridge these gaps.

What I have recommended in investments, in the Middle East peace talks, in reducing the nuclear threat, in paying our U.N. dues, in the 100,000 teachers, what I've recommended in this coming year does not amount to a great deal of money. I can offer them ways to pay for that. And then they need to find ways to pay for some of their extra spending. And if we'll work together, we can do this. We can do it in a timely fashion, and we won't have to have a whole series of other continuing resolutions.

And I hope we can do it. I think we can do it in the next couple of weeks if we put our minds to it.

Third Continuing Resolution

Q. Mr. President, are you prepared to sign another continuing resolution, sir?

The President. Of course. I think—let me say, I have serious problems with a lot of this, as I've said. But I can also tell you, we are making some progress. I see the progress being made, and it's just a question—they will have to decide if they want to work with me to get this resolved. But I think I owe it to them, because

we committed to work in good faith, to sign another continuing resolution, and I will do that.

Thank you.

Q. In weeks? Days?

The President. Well, I don't know how many days it will be. But it ought to be an appropriate amount of time for us to finish. And it shouldn't be too long, but there needs to be enough time for us to finish. And I'll keep working with them.

Thank you.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, on the hate crimes situation and Pat Buchanan, may I just try one more on that? Do you think his campaign at this time is going to further incite racial and ethnic hatred?

The President. Well, I hope not, but that's more up to him than it is to me. And it's also a matter of how we respond to it. All I'm saying is, after all we've been through in this country in the last couple of years and all the hate crimes we've seen, I just don't see how we can possibly walk away from this session of Congress and not pass this.

And I guess I ought to say, in reaction to the previous question about the continuing resolution, we should remember that in addition to the budgets, the fact that there is a continuing resolution and the Congress will stay in session gives us the chance to pass the bill that would enable more disabled people to go to work. It gives us a chance to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. It gives us a chance to pass the minimum wage. We've got a chance to do a lot of other good things to end the year on a very high note and a very positive note for the American people. So we have to just keep plugging away.

And I think all of us have an obligation to try to minimize racial, ethnic, and other kinds of discrimination, and we just have to keep working at it. And I'm going to do that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:03 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for New York City. In his remarks, he referred to Learjet crash victims professional golfer Payne Stewart, his agents Robert Fraley and Van Ardan, and the pilots Michael Kling and Stephanie Bellegarrigue.

Statement on Chinese-American Veterans of World War II October 25, 1999

I am honored to recognize the contributions of Chinese-Americans during World War II. This untold story is one of great patriotism and heroism. Some 20,000 Chinese-Americans served our country during this period as aviation specialists, paratroopers, military intelligence officers, medics, in the Women Army Corps (WAC's) and Women Army Air Force Service (WASP's) and so on. From Normandy to prisoner of war camps, they served this Nation with great pride and courage.

Asian-Americans, as demonstrated by the veterans I met today, have proved over and over again their loyalty to this country. It is intolerable that the patriotism of Asian-Americans continues to be questioned, in the light of the re-

cent allegations of espionage at one of our national laboratories. Asian-American scientists like those who have served proudly in our military have made significant contributions to our national security and have made the U.S. the foremost leader in scientific achievements. Yet instead of our thanks, many have received nothing by suspicion and prejudice.

Racism and stereotyping have no place in our Nation of diverse peoples who trace their ancestry to every corner of the globe. The remarkable men and women that I met today are examples of why our diversity is our greatest strength. Today I honor these Chinese-American veterans of World War II and their service and steadfast loyalty to this country.

Statement on the Election of Fernando de la Rúa as President of Argentina October 25, 1999

On behalf of the people of the United States, I congratulate Fernando de la Rúa on his victory in Argentina's Presidential election. The Argentine elections were a model of civic participation

and a testament to the strength and vibrancy of Argentina's democracy.

I look forward to working with President-elect de la Rúa and to deepening the partnership between our two nations.

Remarks at a "Broadway for Hillary" Celebration in New York City October 25, 1999

Now, you all just relax while I get used to my new role. *[Laughter]* Somewhere between the amen corner for Jimmy Naughton, the straight man for Rosie, and the warmup for Hillary, I'll figure out something to do. *[Laughter]*

Jim, that was a heck of a speech. It's a good thing you didn't file; Al and Bill would be nervous about that. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all of you for being here tonight. I'm profoundly grateful to everyone who conceived and put together this program, and all the people who gave their time. I remember the "Broadway for Clinton" program back in June of '92. And I remember the people who

performed and the people who came, because I was running third in the polls back then. *[Laughter]* But by the time the convention rolled around, everything had changed.

I want to thank Senator Schumer for his remarks and his support; the New York legislative leaders that are here: Speaker Silver, Majority Leader Bragman, Senator Martin Connor; Judith Hope, the State Democratic chair; our borough president, C. Virginia Fields; the Bronx borough president, Freddy Ferrer; City Council Speaker Peter Vallone; Comptroller Alan Hevesi; and Mark Green, our longtime friend, the public

advocate. Thank you all very much. And thank you, Rosie, and everyone else who performed.

Jim Naughton said most of the stuff I was going to say—[laughter]—and better. So I would just like to say a few things. First, thank you for being so good to us in New York. Thank you for 1992, for the convention, for the vote. Thank you for 1996, the largest margin of victory we had in any State in America. Thank you for welcoming us here when we leave the White House. Thank you for being here tonight, not only as supporters but as friends.

October's a great month for us and our family. First, we celebrate, on the 11th, our anniversary. We just had our 24th wedding anniversary. And then we celebrate Hillary's birthday. And now, thanks to your doing this, and the fact we get back about 2 in the morning, we expect to have like a 24-hour celebration.

We have been very blessed, Hillary and I, and we've been blessed by our family, our friends, and the opportunity to serve in public life. I am very grateful for all the work that we have done together over all these years. I am very grateful that now my wife has a chance to do what I thought she ought to do 26 years ago when we finished law school. And I was really afraid, as I have told many of our friends—and some of our old friends are nodding their heads out there—the only thing that really worried me about our getting married was that somehow she would be denied the opportunity to share her gifts in the most important way. For we have always only cared most, in our work life, about public service. I have watched her for over 30 years give—I've only watched her for 29 years, but for 30 years and more—care passionately about children and give herself to service.

The first job she had out of law school was with the Children's Defense Fund. She could have gone to work for any number of law firms, but she wanted to help kids. Then she became head of the Legal Services Corporation Board, when President Carter was in office. She then became chair of the Children's Defense Fund board. She headed the education reform movement in Arkansas when I was Governor. And as First Lady, she has literally inspired tens of millions of mothers and their children all around the world, trying to get a better deal for young girls and their families in poor villages from Africa to Latin America to Asia.

She has been a major force in the passage of legislation that will enable us to insure over 5 million children with health insurance. It makes it easier for people to adopt children. She has worked on all the things we have done to try to reduce violence against our young people. She has played a major role in all of our reforms in education, early childhood learning, and health care. And in so doing, she has always been willing to do it without getting, really, anything like the credit she deserved for the work she did and the impact she had. Over all these years, I have seen her driven by a personal sense of responsibility to serve, partly because she does believe it takes a village to raise a child or to raise a country.

When we went to Washington in 1992, late '92, about 3 weeks before the inaugural, we had some ideas that we thought would work to turn our country around in a very troubled time. They were just ideas, just an argument. But the country gave us a chance, and the results have been good. Jimmy Naughton listed some of them.

What I want to say to you tonight in bringing Hillary on is this: In my lifetime, we have never had the chance, as a nation, we have today. The country was going in the wrong direction; now it's going in the right direction. We have the lowest unemployment in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 30 years, first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. We're moving in the right direction.

But we all know there are these huge challenges out there: the aging of America, the largest and most diverse group of kids we ever had, the opportunity and the responsibility we have to give poor people a chance to be a part of this prosperity for the first time ever. In my lifetime, this has never happened. In the 1960's, we had an economy that, for a few years, was maybe about like this. But we had the civil rights crisis, and we had the war in Vietnam, and we became divided, and we never got around to doing it. Now all we have to overcome is the politics of pettiness and personal destruction. We have to lift ourselves out of that as one country, one America.

All the things that Jim said a Senator will have to decide are true. But the thing you ought to think about is this: New York has distinct challenges and unprecedented opportunities.

Your country has the first chance in your lifetime to imagine and then to build the future of our dreams for our children and for our grandchildren. And it will only happen if we are led by the right people.

I have done everything I could do to leave this country in good shape. There is still a lot more we can do in the next 15 months. But fundamentally, the decisions the voters make in the year 2000, the millennial year, will determine whether we do what so many people do when times are good—get distracted, become self-indulgent, make short-term and often foolish decisions; or we seize the chance of a lifetime.

The best I can give the American people now is to do my best to make sure that they know that the person I love most in the world is without any doubt the ablest, most passionate,

most committed, most visionary public servant I have ever known.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at the Ford Center for the Performing Arts. In his remarks, he referred to author James Naughton, who introduced the President; talk show host and event emcee Rosie O'Donnell; Vice President Al Gore and former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic candidates for President; Sheldon Silver, speaker, and Michael J. Bragman, majority leader, New York State Assembly; State Senator Martin Connor; C. Virginia Fields, president, Borough of Manhattan; Fernando Ferrer, president, Borough of the Bronx; and Alan Hevesi, comptroller, and Mark Green, public advocate, New York City. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Appropriations Legislation for Commerce, Justice, and Foreign Affairs October 25, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 2670, the "Departments of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000."

This legislation should embody the continuing commitment of this Administration on a broad range of fundamental principles. First and foremost amongst these tenets is the notion that the United States of America should be the safest country in the world. Our families must feel secure in their neighborhoods. Since 1993, the progress realized toward that end has been impressive and must not be impeded.

Moreover, America must continue to lead the community of nations toward a safer, more prosperous and democratic world. This guidepost has for generations advanced the cause of peace and freedom internationally, and an erosion of this policy is untenable and unacceptable at this critical moment in history.

This great Nation serves as example to the world of a just and humane society. We must continue to lead by our example and maintain a system that vigorously protects and rigorously respects the civil rights of individuals, the dignity

of every citizen, and the basic justice and fairness afforded to every American.

Unfortunately, this bill fails to uphold these principles.

Specifically, and most notably, the bill fails to adequately fund the proposed 21st Century Policing Initiative, which builds on the success of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. I requested \$1.275 billion in new appropriations, and this bill provides only \$325 million. To date, the COPS program has funded more than 100,000 additional police officers for our streets. The 21st Century Policing initiative would place an additional 30,000 to 50,000 police officers on the street over the next 5 years and would expand the concept of community policing to include community prosecution, law enforcement technology assistance, and crime prevention. Funding the COPS program required a bipartisan commitment, and it paid off; recently released statistics show that we have the lowest murder rate in 31 years and the longest continuous decline in crime on record. I strongly believe we must forge a similar commitment to support the COPS program's logical successor.

The bill would also threaten America's ability to lead in the world by failing to meet our obligation to pay our dues and our debts to the United Nations. This is a problem I have been working with the Congress to resolve for several years, but this bill fails to provide a solution.

Though the bill does include adequate funds to support our annual contribution to the United Nations regular budget, it conditions the funding on separate authorizing legislation, continuing an unacceptable linkage to an unrelated issue. For this reason, because of additional provisions, and because the bill is inconsistent with provisions agreed to by the authorizing committees, the bill would still cause the United States to lose its vote in the United Nations. It would undercut efforts that matter to America in which the U.N. plays an important role, from our fight against terrorism and proliferation, to our efforts to promote human rights, the well-being of children, and the health of our environment. It would undermine our ability to shape the U.N.'s agenda in all these areas and to press for reforms that will make its work more effective. All this is unacceptable. Great nations meet their responsibilities, and I am determined that we will meet ours.

In addition, the bill includes only \$200 million for International Peacekeeping Activities, a reduction of almost 60-percent from my request. The requested level of \$485 million is necessary to meet anticipated peacekeeping requirements in East Timor, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. In each of these places, the United States has worked with allies and friends to end conflicts that have claimed countless innocent lives and thrown whole regions into turmoil. In each case, the U.N. either has been or may be asked to help implement fragile peace agreements, by performing essential tasks such as separating adversaries, maintaining cease-fires, enabling refugees to go home, training police forces, and overseeing civilian institutions. In each case, as in all U.N. peacekeeping missions, other countries will pay 75 percent of the cost and provide virtually all the military personnel.

It is clearly in America's national interest to support an institution through which other countries share the burden of making peace. Refusing to do our part would be dangerous and self-defeating. It could undermine fragile peace agreements that America helped forge, and

spark new emergencies to which we could only respond later at far greater cost. It would leave America with an unacceptable choice in times of conflict and crisis abroad: a choice between acting alone and doing nothing.

The bill includes a number of provisions regarding the conduct of foreign affairs that raise serious constitutional concerns. Provisions concerning Jerusalem are objectionable on constitutional, foreign policy, and operational grounds. The actions called for by these provisions would prejudice the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian permanent status negotiations, which have recently begun and which the parties are committed to concluding within a year. The bill also includes a provision that could be read to prevent the United States from engaging in diplomatic efforts regarding the Kyoto protocol. Applying restrictions to the President's authority to engage in international negotiations and activities raises serious constitutional concerns. Other provisions that should be deleted from the bill because they would unconstitutionally constrain the President's authority include provisions on Haiti, Vietnam, and command and control of United Nations Peacekeeping efforts. My Administration's objections to these and other language provisions have been made clear in previous statements of Administration policy regarding this bill.

This bill does not contain a needed hate crimes provision that was included in the Senate version of the bill. I urge the Congress to pass legislation in a timely manner that would strengthen the Federal Government's ability to combat hate crimes by relaxing jurisdictional obstacles and by giving Federal prosecutors the ability to prosecute hate crimes that are based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability, along with those based on race, color, religion, and national origin.

The bill freezes the funding level for the Legal Services Corporation. Adequate funding for legal services is essential to ensuring that all citizens have access to the Nation's justice system. I urge the Congress to fully fund my request, which provides an increase of \$40 million over the FY 1999 enacted level. Also, funding for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is frozen at the enacted level. This level would undermine EEOC's progress in reducing the backlog of employment discrimination cases.

Similarly, inadequate funding is provided for the United States Commission on Civil Rights and the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice. The bill does not fund my requested \$13 million increase for the Civil Rights Division, including increases for law enforcement actions related to hate crimes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and fair housing and lending. I ask the Congress to restore requested funds for these law enforcement enhancements.

The bill contains adequate funding for the decennial census, but I oppose language that could inhibit the Census Bureau's ability to actually conduct the census. The bill would require the Census Bureau to obtain approval from certain committees if it chooses to shift funds among eight functions or frameworks. This approval process would impose an unnecessary and potentially time-consuming constraint on the management of the decennial census. It is imperative that we move forward on the census; this legislation could impede it.

The United States has recently entered into the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Agreement. The agreement ends years of contention between the U.S. and Canada regarding expired fishing harvest restrictions and provides for improved fisheries management. This bill includes extraneous legislative riders that would hinder the implementation of that important Agreement. These riders would prohibit the application of the Endangered Species Act to Alaskan salmon fisheries and would change the voting structure of the Pacific Salmon Commission, the decision-making body established by the Agreement. In essence, the voting structure rider would prevent the Federal Government from negotiating agreements that balance the interests of all States. In addition to the riders, the bill provides only \$10 million of the \$60 million requested to implement the Salmon Agreement. Similarly, funding for the Salmon Recovery Fund falls far short of that needed to work cooperatively with the States of Washington, Oregon, California, and Alaska and with Treaty Tribes to help them mount effective State-based plans to restore Pacific coastal salmon runs. These shortfalls together would severely inhibit our ability to recover this important species.

In addition, the enrolled bill does not provide my request for a number of other environmental programs, including my Lands Legacy Initiative, Endangered Species Act activities, the Clean Water Action Plan, and the Global Learning and

Observations to Benefit the Environment program. The additional funds required to bring these programs to my requested levels are small compared to the benefits they provide to our natural resources.

The bill does not include \$100 million in new funding for the Drug Intervention Program, which would have provided critical assistance to State and local governments developing and implementing comprehensive systems for drug testing, drug treatment, and graduated sanctions for drug offenders. These resources are critical to reducing drug use in America.

The bill does not provide additional requested funding to the Justice Department for tobacco litigation. Smoking-related health expenses cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year through Medicare, veterans' and military health, and other Federal health programs. The Department of Justice needs the \$20 million I requested to represent the interests of the taxpayers, who should not have to bear the responsibility for these staggering costs.

This bill would also hurt our Nation's small businesses. The level provided for the Small Business Administration's (SBA's) operating expenses would inhibit my Administration's ability to provide service to the Nation's 24 million small businesses. The bill also fails to provide sufficient funds for the Disaster Loan program within the SBA. Without additional funding, the SBA will not be able to respond adequately to the needs arising from Hurricane Floyd and other natural disasters. In addition, the bill does not include funds for my New Markets Initiative to invest in targeted rural and urban areas.

The bill fails to include a proposed provision to clarify current law and protect taxpayer interests in the telecommunications spectrum auction process. Currently, \$5.6 billion of bid-for-spectrum is tied up in bankruptcy court, with a very real risk that spectrum licensees will be able to retain spectrum at a fraction of its real market value. The requested provision would maintain the integrity of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) auction process while also ensuring speedy deployment of new telecommunications services. The bill would also deny funds needed by the FCC for investments in technology to better serve the communications industry. Also, the bill does not provide sufficient funds for the continued operations of the FCC. The Commission requires additional

funds to invest in technology to serve the communications industry more effectively.

In conference action, a rider was added that would amend the recently-enacted Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act to expand the prohibition of discrimination against individuals who refuse to “prescribe” contraceptives to individuals who “otherwise provide for” contraceptives (all nonphysician providers) in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. As an example, this language could allow pharmacists to refuse to dispense contraceptive prescriptions. This action violated jurisdictional concerns and is also unacceptable policy.

The bill underfunds a number of high-priority programs within the Department of Commerce. My Administration sought an additional \$9 million to help public broadcasters meet the Federal deadline to establish digital broadcasting capability by May 1, 2003. The bill would provide less than half of last year’s funding level for the Critical Infrastructure Assurance Office. The bill also fails to fund the Department’s other

programs to protect critical information and communications infrastructures. The Congress must restore these funds if the Department is to continue performing its important and emerging role in coordinating activities that support our economic and national security.

The bill does not include any funds to reimburse Guam and other territories for the costs of detaining and repatriating smuggled Chinese aliens. These entities deserve our support for assisting in this interdiction effort.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support, and to passage of one that will facilitate our shared objectives.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 25, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 26.

Statement on Senate Action on Proposed Legislation To Provide Assistance to African Nations

October 26, 1999

I applaud the strong, bipartisan vote in the Senate to move forward with consideration of the African growth and opportunity act. This historic legislation will help build a partnership that will strengthen economic and political ties, increase trade, and boost economic growth and

opportunity in both the United States and Africa. It will strengthen the relationship between our Nation and a continent entering a new era of democracy and economic progress. I urge Congress to pass this legislation this year.

Statement on Signing the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999

October 26, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999. By making it easier to use wireless phones to report emergencies, this bill could save thousands of lives every year.

Nearly 100,000 times each day, someone uses a wireless phone to make an emergency call. People with wireless phones can speed the deliv-

ery of public safety services by providing rapid reports of car crashes, incidents of aggressive or drunk driving, serious crimes, and natural disasters. Getting rapid care to someone who is suffering from a heart attack or is involved in a car crash can mean the difference between life and death.

The legislation I am signing today will improve emergency wireless communications in several ways. First, it will make 9-1-1 the universal emergency telephone number for wireless and “wireline” telephones across the United States. Currently, there are 20 different emergency wireless numbers in different States. Second, it will encourage statewide coordination of the efforts of public safety and law enforcement officials to protect our citizens and save lives. Finally, it will increase private sector investment

in emergency wireless services by providing wireless companies with the same level of liability protection that “wireline” telecommunications companies have.

I want to thank Members of Congress, the wireless industry, public safety officials, and medical professionals who worked together to pass this important legislation.

NOTE: S. 800, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law No. 106-81.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Proposed Legislation To Strengthen Social Security and Medicare

October 26, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith for your immediate consideration a legislative proposal entitled the “Strengthen Social Security and Medicare Act of 1999.”

The Social Security system is one of the cornerstones of American national policy and together with the additional protections afforded by the Medicare system, has helped provide retirement security for millions of Americans over the last 60 years. However, the long-term solvency of the Social Security and Medicare trust funds is not guaranteed. The Social Security trust fund is currently expected to become insolvent starting in 2034 as the number of retired workers doubles. The Medicare system also faces significant financial shortfalls, with the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund projected to become exhausted in 2015. We need to take additional steps to strengthen Social Security and Medicare for future generations of Americans.

In addition to preserving Social Security and Medicare, the Congress and the President have a responsibility to future generations to reduce the debt held by the public. Paying down the debt will produce substantial interest savings, and this legislation proposes to devote these entirely to Social Security after 2010. At the same time, by contributing to the growth of the overall economy debt reduction will improve the Government’s ability to fulfill its responsibilities and to face future challenges, including preserving and strengthening Social Security and Medicare.

The enclosed bill would help achieve these goals by devoting the entire Social Security surpluses to debt reduction, extending the solvency of Social Security to 2050, protecting Social Security and Medicare funds in the budget process, reserving one-third of the non-Social Security surplus to strengthen and modernize Medicare, and paying down the debt by 2015. It is clear and straightforward legislation that would strengthen and preserve Social Security and Medicare for our children and grandchildren. The bill would:

- Extend the life of Social Security from 2034 to 2050 by reinvesting the interest savings from the debt reduction resulting from Social Security surpluses.
- Establish a Medicare surplus reserve equal to one-third of any on-budget surplus for the total of the period of fiscal years 2000 through 2009 to strengthen and modernize Medicare.
- Add a further protection for Social Security and Medicare by extending the budget enforcement rules that have provided the foundation for our fiscal discipline, including the discretionary caps and pay-as-you-go budget rules.

I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this proposal.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 26, 1999.

Remarks at a Vogue Magazine Reception October 26, 1999

Thank you very much, Annie, Anna, Madam Secretary, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, you've just heard in Madeleine Albright, who has done a magnificent job for our country, the introduction; give her a hand. *[Applause]* She was so generous to me, it was a perfect illustration of Clinton's third law of politics: Always be introduced by someone you appointed to high office.

It was so nice, I had to pinch myself to make sure I was still alive. *[Laughter]* Normally, you have to keel over before people say things like that for you. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, I am so honored to have all of you here for this truly historic moment in the cultural history of our country. We're here to honor two groups of people that I think are very important to our present and to our future, women and photographers. *[Laughter]* The White House—some of my former photographers, as well as some of my present ones, are here tonight, but a lot of people in the office have almost made fun of me, because I'm always comparing the job of a photographer in Washington with the job of a reporter or a columnist. And in some ways, the job of the photographer is easy, because a photographer is rewarded just for looking to see what's there and capturing it in some remarkable, clear, crystal way. The poor reporters and columnists have to perform reverse plastic surgery on the event to get any notice whatever. *[Laughter]* But it's a really important thing.

I want to say one thing. I'm delighted that Senator and Mrs. Leahy are here. Senator Leahy, some of you may know, is also a very accomplished photographer. And we have in the home of our cabin at Camp David a magnificent picture that he took in Tibet, which we treasure very much. So there are a lot of people here who admire you, Annie, and your craft.

I also want to thank Susan Sontag for her participation in this. You never know how a book like this is going to do, but in terms of its appropriateness at this moment in our history, it strikes me that it could have the kind of impact that James Agee and Walker Evans had so many decades ago with their magnificent book, "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men," which

captured the faces of the Depression. And for people like me who grew up the children of Depression-era parents in very poor places, it had a profound impact. And that's what I sense is possible here.

This work also—you heard about our vital voices initiative that Hillary has worked so hard on, the Secretary of State has worked so hard to support. But vital voices has a lot in common with what is being celebrated here, because it has worked to empower women all over the world who are just interested in making politics what it's supposed to be, an instrument of solving common problems. And I have seen the power of this.

Hillary and I went to Africa a couple of years ago, and we were in, I think it was Senegal, at the end of our trip, but we went to this meeting. Hillary is always getting to go to these meetings and talk to people about solving—*[laughter]*. And all of a sudden—and she said, "You know, I met these people the last time I was here from this little village, these women who were determined to end the practice of female genital mutilation." And they had a few token guys there who were cheering them on. It's the same thing everywhere. *[Laughter]* "And they have come all the way to the Capital to meet you. So you've got to understand this, and you've got to handle this."

So we go into this meeting, and there are these people just in these resplendent, bright, brilliant, beautiful native dresses, these women and their token male supporters, who were also pretty dolled up and pretty proud of themselves for trekking in and sticking up. *[Laughter]* But they were alive.

I met with Irish women that Hillary had been working with for several years, by the time I met with them, who had been critical to the progress we've made in the Irish peace process. In Bosnia, when the Muslims and Croats and the Serbs wouldn't even talk to each other, there were women in groups reaching across the ethnic and religious lines to work for the common future of their children. And they weren't really antipolitical. They were political in the best sense.

One of the things that happens to all political systems and all movements is that people tend to acquire a vested interest in the perpetuation of whatever the problem is, because that's how they got where they are. And we all have to be willing to let it go and go on.

And this vital voice, she just got back from Iceland. And in Reykjavik, they had women from central Europe, from the Baltic States, from Russia, from all the Scandinavian countries coming together to talk about common problems. This is a huge potential force in world politics. And I, for one, am very grateful.

I've also seen the work that we have done since we've been here—and I thank you, Secretary Albright—through our AID programs. We fund now 2 million microenterprise loans every single year, almost all of which go to poor village women in Latin America and Asia and Africa, who with just a little bit of money can change the future.

We met a woman in Uganda in a little village who was now in the rabbit business, having gone up from the chicken business. We met another woman who had started her own restaurant in this little village. All these things are an important part of changing the new millennium for women and their daughters.

I'm especially grateful, too, for the work that Hillary and Madeleine have done to try to encourage the education of young women. And I loved it, when we were in Africa and Uganda, they were bragging about the fact that they had more girls in school than other African countries, that they knew we wanted to hear it. They knew we cared, but they knew it was the right thing to do.

And the last thing I would like to say, because no one has mentioned this yet, perhaps the most difficult place in the world for women today is still Afghanistan. And I hope that the fact that we have had two Afghan women here in one of our human rights events and the fact that we continue to push for changes in the

lives of those people and to take as many in as we can here will someday lead to a change in that country because no women should have to undergo what those women have experienced.

Now, we celebrate tonight Annie Leibovitz's photographs of our women, from coal miners to Supreme Court justices. We say that they are all important, that they all matter, that they are not any longer invisible, nor are they any longer discounted, that we know our ability to manage all of our other diversities in America, and we are fast becoming the most diverse, complicated, big democracy in the world, racially, ethnically, religiously, many other ways.

Our ability to manage them all must begin with our ability to have genuine equal treatment, mutual respect, and equal empowerment of women and men. And I truly believe that the stunning gifts of this great artist and fine human being, who happens to be a woman, will make a major contribution to that end.

I'm glad you brought your family. They're a pretty rowdy bunch. *[Laughter]* And I see where you got your spirit. And I see how you became so observant. It was probably necessary from time to time to be observant just to survive in this crowd. *[Laughter]* I thank you, Annie, for doing this. I thank you for your dedication to your work. I thank you for showing that capturing the simple truth about people is the most interesting thing of all.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:52 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to photographer Annie Leibovitz; Anna Wintour, editor-in-chief, Vogue magazine; Senator Leahy's wife, Marcelle; and author and critic Susan Sontag whose essay appears in "Annie Leibovitz: Women," a companion catalog to the exhibit of the same title which opened at the Corcoran Gallery of Art on October 27. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Telephone Remarks on the Oprah Winfrey Show October 21, 1999

Ms. Winfrey. Someone is on the phone who wants to speak with you, so you look right there, and then you can hear them speak.

The President. Mary Beth?

Mary Beth Talley. Uh-huh?

The President. It's President Clinton. How are you?

Ms. Talley. Good.

The President. Well, I heard about you when that terrible thing happened, and I had a good visit with your minister at the church. But I just wanted to call and thank you for what you've done and for being so humble about it. You did show great courage. You were selfless. And I think you represent something really good in the young people of our country today.

Yesterday I had a lot of young people here who were serving in our national service program, AmeriCorps—150,000 have in the last 5 years. The day before, I met with young people who came from all over America to lobby Congress to do more things to help combat violence and pass sensible gun legislation.

But you know, I think that everyone watching this program should look at you and see not only that you are a wonderful person who did a wonderful thing, but I think you represent something profoundly good in the young people of our country. And I hope more and more people will follow your lead, in daily life, in ways that may not require as much courage but do require as much commitment to the welfare of other people.

And I hope you'll always be willing to share your story and those terrible moments, which prove that you are a truly wonderful person.

Ms. Winfrey. Thank you, President Clinton. We have a number of young people here today who, in the face of difficult times, have shown that they were willing to make a difference. So I know you wanted to say something to all of them, as well as Mary Beth.

The President. I do. I think, you know, for many years, there was this sort of typecasting of young people today as generation X-ers, people that were only interested in themselves and didn't care about the larger society or the problems of less fortunate people or people in trouble. And I think every day you all prove that it's not true.

I believe today's generation of young Americans is the most idealistic, the most concerned and, in some ways, the most committed to good citizenship of any generation of young people we've ever had. And I just want you to get out there and spread the word and let people know what you're doing and who you are and where you're coming from and try to make sure other young people follow your lead.

I am very proud of you and very grateful for what you do to make our country a better place.

Ms. Winfrey. Thank you, President Clinton. Say hello to Hillary for us.

The President. I'll do it. She's doing great. She said to say hello, Oprah.

Ms. Winfrey. Thank you.

The President. Goodbye, everybody.

Ms. Winfrey. Isn't this great?

The President. Goodbye, Mary Beth.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to program honoree Mary Beth Talley, who protected her friend Heather McDonald during the shooting at Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, on September 15; and Rev. Albert R. Meredith, senior pastor, Wedgewood Baptist Church. These remarks were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 27, the day the program aired. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Debt Reduction and an Exchange With Reporters October 27, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Nearly 7 years ago, at a time of economic distress, social division, and political drift, we set out on a course to put America's fiscal house in order with an economic strategy rooted in common sense and common values, committed to bringing down the deficit, investing more in people, and expanding trade.

With the historic 1993 economic plan and the 1997 Balanced Budget Act, we made the tough choices to reduce the deficit and balance the budget the right way. Year-in and year-out, we have resisted politically attractive but economically unwise tax cuts that would have abandoned this commitment and taken us in the wrong direction. It hasn't been easy, and all along the way many said our approach wouldn't work. Some Members of Congress who, in 1993, took the courageous stand for our future even lost their seats as a result of what they did.

But this economic strategy has paid off. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history.

America has now enjoyed 7 consecutive years of fiscal improvement and economic growth, withstanding along the way the Asian financial crisis and helping to bring the world back toward prosperity. Now we have further evidence that our economic plan is working.

Today the Department of the Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget are releasing the financial totals for the fiscal year that just ended. It is now official, and I'm proud to announce that we posted a budget surplus of \$123 billion, the largest surplus in American history.

And in the last 2 years alone, we have paid down our Nation's debt by \$140 billion, the largest debt reduction in our Nation's history. We have closed the book on deficits and opened the door on a new era of economic opportunity. These new numbers also show that last year we came within \$1 billion of balancing the budget without using the Social Security surplus, for the first time in decades.

Unfortunately, this year's Republican budget reverses that course, spending about \$18 billion from the Social Security surplus, according to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office. That is wrong, and it doesn't have to be. Congress should pass the plan I submitted that meets our priorities, doesn't rely on the Social Security surplus, and continues our aggressive efforts to pay down the debt.

According to today's report, America's debt is now \$1.7 trillion lower than it was projected to be when I took office. What does that mean? For America it means lower interest payments on our debt and lower interest costs across-the-board. Last year the Government paid \$91 billion less in interest than was projected in 1993, creating a virtuous cycle that boosted the budget surplus and further reduced the debt.

For American business, debt reduction means that the Government is borrowing less, so there's more capital for business to invest at more modest prices. As a result, investments in technology, in particular, have boomed, bringing greater productivity, more jobs, higher wages.

The best story is perhaps what it means for working families. That's what the chart to my left shows. Debt reduction means lower interest rates and more money. It means \$2,000 less in home mortgage payments for the typical family. It means \$200 less in car payments and \$200 less in college loan payments. Debt reduction really means a tax cut and a sizable one for America's families. It proves that putting our fiscal house in order helps every American household.

Now, in spite of our progress, the congressional majority has continued to try to take us off this path, first with an irresponsible tax plan that I vetoed and then with a budget that fails to live up to our values and our interest for the future. Even without their tax cut—can you just imagine the fix we'd be in if that tax cut had become law? Even without their tax cut, they are set to spend several billion dollars of this year's Social Security surplus, while trying to disguise it with gimmicks. They are even set to enact an across-the-board spending cut that would have a destructive impact on our efforts

to educate our children, protect our environment, and modernize our military. Even with all this, they would not extend the solvency of Social Security or Medicare by one single day.

That is why, yesterday, I sent legislation to Capitol Hill that would ensure that all the Social Security surplus goes to debt reduction. And just like when a family cuts its debt, this will result in lower interest payments for the Government. I have also proposed, therefore, that we use these interest savings from Social Security surplus contributions to our debt reduction to extend the life of Social Security until the year 2050, which will encompass the life span of most of the baby boomers.

Now, we can do this and still have a budget that puts 100,000 teachers in the classroom, 50,000 police on the street, provides real protection for our environment, strengthen and modernizes Medicare, and keeps us on track to becoming debt-free for the first time since 1835.

Today's good news is a result of hard-won economic choices that put our people first. That strategy has created the most prosperous economy in generations. If we seize this historic moment, we can now create a generation of prosperity. That is the debt we still owe to our children and to America's future in the new century.

I am committed to working with the Congress to make good on that commitment and to get the job done.

Thank you very much.

Attack at the Armenian Parliament

Q. Mr. President, how concerned are you about the situation in Armenia, and who do you believe is responsible for that coup attempt?

The President. Well, as to the last, I'm very concerned about it and my heart and prayers go out to the people of Armenia and the families of the very important officials who have been killed already. We are not sure who is responsible. The situation is ongoing. As soon as we know more, we will let you know.

We have a good relationship with Armenia, and as you know, we've done a lot of work with Armenia and Azerbaijan to try to resolve the difficulties surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. The two Presidents have been very forthcoming, and this is a real blow to that country and to that region, and I'm very sorry about it. But I don't know any more at this time.

Privacy of Medical Records

Q. Mr. President, is it really possible to keep a privacy of medical records guaranteed at a time of electronic data keeping and when those records are worth a lot of money in marketing?

The President. Well, they are worth a lot of money in marketing, which is why we're determined to keep them private, except in appropriate circumstances or where the patients, themselves, agree.

It's a complicated question, as you know, which is, presumably, why the Congress in 1996 agreed to let me take executive action if they were unable to resolve it legislatively. I still think as a matter of policy, because it's such an important sweeping matter, it would be better if we could have legislation on this. But I intend to proceed and to propose the regulations, open them for public comment.

I do believe that there are technological fixes which could protect the privacy of records. It's complex; we're trying to make the rules as understandable, as clear as possible, and as susceptible of enforcement and honoring as possible by the people who have to implement them.

But this privacy issue is a big deal. And the more we become digitalized and the more all of our records are stored electronically, the more we'll have to do. In the financial modernization bill, which we've reached agreement on, I'm very pleased that we were able to allow the financial modernization to proceed, which, I think, will be good for our economy. I'm very pleased that we were able to preserve the strong Community Reinvestment Act, which has been a major part of our antipoverty strategy. But I do think there—the privacy rules are not as strong as they might be, and I hope there will be an effort, congressionally, to deal with that issue as well.

Trade With Europe

Q. Mr. President, when you talked to Mr. Prodi today, did you talk about American beef and the bananas? What are the results of these conversations?

The President. Well, they agreed to work with us to try to resolve both those matters in an expeditious fashion. They are causing real trouble, not only between the United States and the European Union but for our efforts to build a global trading system. Because if there is an international body which is supposed to resolve

these disputes and you win and then you win again and then you win again and nothing happens, it's very frustrating. It undermines our ability to build support in the Congress and in the country for a new trade round which, as you know, I think is very, very important.

Nuclear Weapons in Armenia

Q. Sir, on Armenia, on nuclear weapons, are there nuclear weapons or nuclear stores in Armenia that you know about?

The President. I believe that what we have done on the nuclear weapons issue and getting the nuclear weapons out of all the republics of the former Soviet Union, except for Russia, is well-known, and I have no reason to believe that we have not succeeded in that.

Payment of United Nations Dues

Q. Mr. President, what would be the message sent if the U.S. again fails to pay its U.N. dues? And will you use your veto pen to ensure that the U.N. dues are paid this year?

The President. Well, I have already vetoed the legislation which didn't provide for that, as

you know. And now I'm working very, very hard to try to resolve that. I hope that the responsible leaders in the Senate and the House, in the Republican and the Democratic Party, in the pro-life and pro-choice camps, will work through this.

It is wrong for the United States not to meet its responsibilities to the United Nations, and we get a lot out of that. You know, there are these people in Kosovo and elsewhere around the world, in East Timor and other places, doing work that America does not have to do because of the United Nations. And all they want us to do is to pay our fair share, and that's what I think we ought to do.

I've got to go to President Ford's Medal of Freedom now—I mean, Congressional Medal. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House prior to departure for the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to President Robert Kocharian of Armenia; President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan; and European Commission President Romano Prodi.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Former President Gerald R. Ford and Former First Lady Betty Ford

October 27, 1999

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Gephardt, Mr. Armey, Mr. Ehlers, Senator Lott, Senator Daschel, Senator Thurmond, Senator Abraham, Governor, Chaplain Ford, Chaplain Ogilvie; to the members of the Ford family and the Members of the Congress who are here; Secretary Albright, Secretary Cohen, Ambassador Holbrooke; Senator and Mrs. Dole, good to see you; and Mr. Michel, Secretary Laird, so many other great Americans who are here.

You know, so many wonderful things have been said here today, I wouldn't be surprised if President Ford didn't leave here and check to see whether the filing is closed in the New Hampshire primary. *[Laughter]*

I would like to say that I think every Member of Congress and every former colleague you have here is proud to be here, without regard to his or her party. There is one person who is not here I would like to take just 15 seconds

to acknowledge because he embodied so many of the qualities that we now revere you for, and that's Senator John Chafee from Rhode Island. We miss him, and we are grateful, too, for his contributions to our Nation.

It was just a couple of months ago that I had the honor of welcoming President and Mrs. Ford back to the White House to award Gerald Ford the Presidential Medal of Freedom, so he wouldn't be the only person in his house without one. *[Laughter]* It is fitting now that both the White House and the Congress have bestowed their highest awards on the Fords because they served both the Congress and the White House so nobly.

In these hallowed halls, President Ford, as Congressman Ford, worked for 25 years. On the House floor, he was a forceful leader. In the caucus room, he was a loyal party leader. In the cloakroom and the committee room, he

knew when to put politics aside for the sake of the people.

As has been said, he never sought the Presidency. But thank goodness for the rest of us he did not shrink from it, either. He steered us through stormy seas to new and brighter beginnings for human rights, for the reduction of nuclear arms, for America's role in the world.

And so many of the issues that occupied him then continue to be on his agenda today, whether he's advising his successors in the Oval Office or defending affirmative action or making the case for free trade. I am immensely grateful for all the times we have spent together, for his counsel, for his support, for his always constructive criticism, and for the occasional golf game.

I also want to say, as so many have, a personal word of thanks to Betty Ford. Perhaps no First Lady in our history, with the possible exception of Eleanor Roosevelt, has touched so many of us in such a personal way. Because I lost my mother to breast cancer, Betty Ford is a heroine to me. Because my family has been victimized by alcoholism, and I know what it's like to see good, fine people stare into the abyss of their own personal despair, I will be forever grateful to the Betty Ford Clinic—and for the millions of other people whose lives have literally been turned around and often saved. They may not have gone to that clinic but went somewhere because she showed them it was not wrong for a good person and a strong person to be imperfect and ask for help. You gave us a gift, and we thank you.

I also want to say that there's something special about them together. Their children are here, still rooting for them, and that's something, because kids go through hell if their folks are in politics. They get all the burdens and none of the benefits.

I'll tell you a little story. On September 19, 1993, for what I understand was the only time in the history of America, four Presidents had dinner in the White House. President and Mrs. Ford were there; President and Mrs. Carter was there; and President Bush joined Hillary and me in the White House. It was a magnificent night. It was the night after the Middle East peace signing between Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat, and it was the night before we kicked off the campaign to ratify the North American Free Trade Agreement. And we were all sort of carried away by the moment.

I invited all the Presidents to spend the night in the White House. I thought that would be a neat thing, kind of a bunking party, you know. And President Bush stayed, and President and Mrs. Carter stayed. But President and Mrs. Ford said that they were going to spend the night in the hotel room where they had spent their first night as a married couple nearly 50 years before. They did not have time to come to the White House. They were seeing to their own business, and I love that. *[Laughter]* I've told that story a hundred times ever since, and I never get tired of it. It think they made the right decision. *[Laughter]*

Gerald Ford had the great honor of being President on our Bicentennial. And on that July 4th, 23 years ago, he stood in Valley Forge and spoke these words: "A nation survives only so long as the spirit of sacrifice and self-discipline is strong within its people." We are here today in no small measure because that spirit was so strong within Gerald and Betty Ford.

Mr. President, there's one other personal thing I want to say. Every American remembers where he or she was when you became President. We're all up here talking now about how great you were in healing the country and the wonderful words you said. But you made some tough decisions, too. And when you made your healing decisions, you made the Democrats and the liberals mad one day, and then you made the conservatives mad the next day. You made everybody mad at you.

I was a young politician trying to get elected to Congress. Thank God I failed. *[Laughter]* Otherwise I would have never become President, probably. But I want you to know something personal. It was easy for us to criticize you, because we were caught up in the moment. You didn't get caught up in the moment, and you were right. You were right for the controversial decisions you made to keep the country together, and I thank you for that.

So it is our common honor to thank these people for their contributions for America and my pleasure now to ask the Speaker and Senator Thurmond to join me as we present them the Congressional Gold Medal.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:02 p.m. in the rotunda at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. John Engler of Michigan; U.S. Special Envoy Richard C. Holbrooke; former Senator Bob

Dole, and his wife Elizabeth; former Representative Robert H. Michel; and former Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included

the remarks of the former President Gerald R. Ford, former First Lady Betty Ford, and Speaker J. Dennis Hastert.

Statement on the Attack at the Armenian Parliament

October 27, 1999

I am shocked and saddened by today's armed attacks in the Armenian Parliament. I condemn this senseless act against individuals actively engaged in building democracy in their country. The victims and their families are in our thoughts and prayers.

The United States has built strong ties with Armenia, focused on helping the Armenian peo-

ple build a prosperous, secure, and democratic future. At this time of tragedy, we renew our support for the Armenian people and their leaders as they continue to build on the principles that today's victims have so courageously embodied.

Joint Declaration by President William Jefferson Clinton and European Commission President Romano Prodi

October 27, 1999

1. President Clinton and President Prodi held a wide-ranging discussion on 27 October about the prospects for launching a new Round of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO) next month at Seattle. There was an essential overlap of interests and a desire to collaborate closely to bridge remaining differences.

2. They recalled the EU-U.S. Bonn Declaration of June 1999, where we agreed that "together we can advance our shared values, our common security and our mutual prosperity more effectively than either of us alone. Together . . . we can face . . . the complexity of ensuring that democracy and free markets improve tangibly the lives of people in a rapidly globalizing world."

3. Mindful of the essential role played by the multilateral trading system in supporting over the last 50 years the greatest economic expansion in history and more recently in containing the adverse impacts of economic downturns in Asia and elsewhere, the two leaders agreed to strive to secure agreement in Seattle to launch a new Round of global trade negotiations.

4. Their discussions concentrated on the possible topics for a new Round and how to provide momentum for a successful launch at Seattle. Not only agriculture and services, but a number of other issues need to be included, to meet the U.S. and EU's respective interests and those of our partners, but also to ensure that the WTO continues to be a leading part of the solution to the problems that will confront the global economy in the next century. In this respect, they discussed topics such as comprehensive market access; greater coherence in international economic policy making to complement and enhance the work underway in the Bretton Woods institutions and other UN agencies; government procurement (including transparency and market access); foreign direct investment; electronic commerce (including extension of the moratorium agreed last May); competition; trade facilitation; trade-related intellectual property rights protection (TRIPS); technical barriers to trade; and the issue of early agreements, provisional where necessary. While differences remain between the United States and the European Union as to the most appropriate scope for the forthcoming negotiations, both sides

agreed to continue to take forward their discussions in a constructive spirit in forthcoming weeks.

5. The leaders agreed that the new round had to be definitively different in content and process from its predecessors. For example, we had to take into account the rapid advances in technology, particularly related to electronic commerce. They agreed on the goal of better addressing the social dimensions of trade by promoting a substantive dialogue with our partners, involving the WTO and the ILO, although we still differ on the modalities. The dialogue would include an examination of the relationship between trade policy, trade liberalization, development and fundamental labor rights, so as to maximize the benefits of open trade for workers. The two leaders also agreed that the new round should enhance the potential for positive synergies between trade liberalization, environmental protection and economic development.

6. But the agenda for the new Round also had to address the needs and interests of all our partners. Although major players in the world economy, the U.S. and EU needed to do more than in previous Rounds to work with all our partners in the WTO system. The new Round should offer major opportunities to the

developing countries, strengthening their role in the world economy. Particular attention needs to be paid to the least developed countries. Their concerns and interests should be fully taken into account, including through specifically targeted, enhanced, and effective market access and capacity building.

7. An additional important new element was to make the multilateral trading system as responsive as possible to all our citizens. The two leaders agreed to work vigorously to assure the public that the trading system and the WTO as an institution works in the broadest interests of everyone—and to ensure that this remains the case. Both leaders renewed their commitment to the WTO Dispute Settlement System, and agreed that WTO decisions should be respected and implemented. The leaders also anticipated ratifying at Seattle a package of improvements to the Dispute Settlement Understanding. Additionally, they agreed to work towards enhanced transparency in the WTO decision-making process.

Washington, D.C.,
27 October 1999

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint declaration.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative David E. Bonior *October 27, 1999*

Thank you very much. Thank you, David, and thank you, Vic. I'm glad to know you still have to pay some political dues for the price of going into private life. [*Laughter*]

Let me say, I'm honored to be here for David Bonior. And the most important thing I can say to all of you is, thank you, because you know it's important that he be reelected or you wouldn't be here. I do think it is worth pointing out that he represents the kind of district that is pretty reflective of America; it could go either way. And he always has a competitive race because they spend a lot of money against him, and they try to say things that will turn the voters against him and convince them that he's something he isn't.

Dave and Judy go home every summer; they knock on thousands of doors; they actually talk

to people. I know that if you give money to a lot of candidates, one of the things you want to know is, now, if I really back this person, is he or she going to work hard? This guy kills himself to fulfill his responsibilities to his country and to his party in Washington and to his district back home. And he does as good a job in as difficult a situation as anybody in the United States.

The other thing I want to say is that I am in a unique position having worked with him for nearly 7 years now, under some of the most difficult conceivable circumstances with very hard issues, to tell you that he is a great leader who is both loved and admired. Some of the people in the other party, they seem fond of electing people that they can then be terrified of, so they have to be browbeaten into doing

whatever it is they want to do. This guy is followed because he is respected, admired, and loved by people who sometimes don't agree with him on every issue.

The last point I want to make is this. We are very close now to returning a majority of the House of Representatives to the Democrats. We can't lose any seats, and we've got to win some. And we certainly don't want to fool with a leadership team that is working and is producing for our party and, more importantly, for our country.

The most important thing in politics is to have, first of all, the right ideas and then, secondly, the right people. And I define the right people as people who understand how ideas affect real peoples' lives and identify with them and then have the courage to fight for them.

One of the things that David didn't say, that I think he ought to take a lot of credit for back home—in a district of prudent, conservative Americans—is that, when I came into office, the deficit was \$290 billion. We just got the final numbers on last year's budget. We had a \$123 billion surplus. We paid \$140 billion down on the debt in the last 2 years. If I had run for President in 1992 and I had told you, "Vote for me. I'll turn this \$290 billion deficit into a surplus. We'll do it 2 years in a row, and I'll pay \$140 billion on the debt," you would have said, "You know, he's a very nice young man, but he's totally delusional, and we should send him home." [Laughter]

Now, that reduction, on average, for the average American family, has been worth \$2,000 savings in home mortgage payments, a \$200 savings in car payments, and a \$200 savings in college loan payments. So the average American family has gotten a \$2,400 tax cut, in effect, from responsible economic policies brought to you by our party. And it's not just the President. None of this would have happened if we hadn't had the votes in for the '93 economic plan and if David and Vic and others hadn't been up there whipping it. We did not have a single vote to spare, and the Vice President had to break a tie in the Senate, and it turned the country around.

And for that reason alone, in a district that thinks of itself as a moderately conservative district, I wouldn't give away a man without whom it would not have happened. This country's economic recovery was sparked by our commitment to that and by enacting it, and David Bonior

deserves an enormous amount of credit for it, and I'm very grateful to him, and I thank him.

The second point I want to make, only because a lot of you run in the circles of our friends, is he was too modest in the litany he gave. And I say this because, again I say, I could have done none of this without his help and others. But here are the real numbers. This country now has the longest peacetime expansion in history. If it goes on until February, it will be the longest economic expansion in the history of America, and we didn't have a war during this. It's unthinkable. The highest homeownership in history. And here are the numbers. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest crime rate in 30 years, the lowest teen pregnancy rate in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. Now, that is a record that you ought to be able to run on in any congressional district in America and be very proud of.

And I'll close with this; this is by far the most important point. The real issue before the American people—and Senator Bradley and Vice President Gore are having a town meeting right now in New Hampshire while we're here—the issue is not whether we're going to change; of course we are. The world is changing. It's practically moving under our feet. The question is, how are we going to change? Are we going to, on the one hand, take a U-turn and go back to the policies that got us in so much trouble in the first place, which is essentially what all the people running for the other party's nomination advocate on economic and social policy? Are we going to forget what got us here in the first place and forget about things that will maintain our economic prosperity? Or are we going to build on what has happened, to take advantage of this moment to meet the big challenges of the new century?

This is the first time in my lifetime that our people, as a people, have had a chance to essentially build the future of their dreams for their children. You know, the last time we had an economy that was about this good was in the 1960's: We had the civil rights crisis; we had the Vietnam war. Now we have no excuse. But a nation is no different from a business or a family or an individual. You are most vulnerable to making a mistake in life when you think

everything is peachy-keen, because it's easy to just relax, it's easy to get distracted, it's easy to do something that's in the short-term selfish interest that doesn't deal with the long run.

The challenges this country faces is no different than the challenges that you have seen in your businesses, in your families, and in your lives. When things are really good, it's hard to muster the vision, the will, and the focus to do the right, big things. That's what the candidates should all be questioned about this year.

The most important reason for his candidacy and his leadership is so we can save Social Security for the baby boom generation, so we can modernize Medicare and put a prescription drug benefit, so we can radically improve the education of the largest and most diverse group of kids in the country's history, so we can bring prosperity to the people and places that still haven't felt it, so we can keep on until we pay down the debt completely for the first time since 1835, so we can stop all these assaults on the environment and prove that we can clean the environment and grow the economy at the same time, so that we can meet our responsibilities in the world.

David is an internationalist, and Gerald Ford spoke so passionately today about the importance of a bipartisan commitment to our global responsibilities, which means, do what it takes to continue to fight for peace and against ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, continue to support the Irish peace process, continue to support the Africans, who want to stop further tribal wars, continue to work for peace in Northern Ireland, continue to work for peace in the Middle East, continue to work against the prolifera-

tion of nuclear weapons, continue to work for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, continue to work against terrorism.

This is an important part of our future. If you don't think that all this stuff we're enjoying could be interrupted tomorrow by a collapse of the international economic system, by a rise in global terrorism, by America walking away from its responsibilities to peace in these important areas, think again. So I say to you, this is an important part of it.

And the last thing I'll say is, we Democrats, we may have lost a lot of votes over the last 30 years because we believe in one America, without regard to race or gender or religion or sexual orientation. But if you look at the way the world is in turmoil today and if you look at the horrible, though isolated, instances of hate-related violence in America today, I think you will agree that it's pretty important that we hang in there together.

Dave Bonior has a big heart, a good mind, and a steel spine. He will fight a buzz saw for what he believes in. And that's why the people who follow his lead both respect him and love him. You did a good thing in coming here tonight, but we've got a lot of work to do between now and next year at this time. If we do it, we're going to have a lot to celebrate.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 p.m. in the Concorde Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to former Representative Vic Fazio; and Representative Bonior's wife, Judy.

Remarks at a Blue Ribbon Schools Award Ceremony October 28, 1999

Thank you. Good morning. Congratulations. I want to begin by thanking Ruth Summerlin for her introduction and for the power of her example which includes not only turning her school around but asking for a little more help. Did you notice the way she slipped that in there? *[Laughter]* That was pretty impressive.

I want to thank Secretary Riley for his wonderful leadership. All the things he said about

me, he might have said about himself. He is clearly not only the longest serving but the ablest, the most dedicated, and most effective Secretary of Education we have ever had.

When the new millennium rolls around in January, we will have completed 21 years of working together, as friends and colleagues, since we were young Governors in the South trying to start our education reform programs,

more than two decades ago. And every year has been a joy, and I'm very grateful for what he's done in this administration.

I want to acknowledge the presence in the audience of Vincent Ferrandino, the executive director of the National Association of Elementary School Principals. And I also want to thank Bill Ivey—as the Secretary did—the chair of the NEA and say just a brief word about—before I get into a couple of other announcements—about what Ruth said about bringing the arts back into the schools. I would urge all of you to see this new movie that's out, that I had screened at the White House, starring Meryl Streep, called “Music of the Heart,” about the East Harlem violin program.

But I have been mortified at the collapse of the availability of music and the arts in the schools all over America because of all kinds of issues that you understand better than I do. But I've been active in VH1's effort to get people to donate instruments and other support for music programs back in the schools. The NEA has worked very hard to support arts programs in the schools.

There is not only concrete evidence that such programs improve student learning in others areas because of the way they make the brain work; there's also a lot of evidence that many people with equal learning capacities learn in different ways, in ways that sometimes are nonlinear. And I think it is a terrible mistake to deprive these children of access to music and the arts if we can avoid it at all. So I urge you to look at the movie. And for those of you who agree, this movie may give you a lot of boost, because I'll be surprised if it's not also a commercial success. It's a terrific film.

Now, I'd also like to say a word about some new economic news before I get into talking about education. When I came here as President, almost 7 years ago, our administration—Vice President Gore and I—we said we would try to turn America around. And a lot of people have forgotten it. There was a lot of economic distress then, an enormous amount of social division—we'd had that big riot in Los Angeles—a lot of alienation, and a sense of political drift. And so we said, “Give us a chance, and we will have economic policies that promote opportunity for all, social policies that promote responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. We'll try to pull this country together and move it forward.”

A big part of our economic policy was investing in our people, from early childhood up, also expanding our ability to sell American products, and finally, getting this deficit down and getting rid of it, which was keeping interest rates high and stagnating the economy all over America.

We just got the news today that in the third quarter of this year—that is the quarter ending on the last day of September—our economy grew at an amazing rate of 4.8 percent, after growing 4.3 percent last year, 4.1 percent in 1996, and all of this with the lowest inflation rate in decades, while we were actually cutting the size of the Federal Government.

So in the years since I've been President, the economy has grown 3.8 percent. If you take out the shrinking of the Federal Government and the shrinking of the deficit, it's grown over the last 7 years by well over 4 percent and with no inflation. It's virtually, as far as I know, unprecedented in our time.

It has given us over 19 million new jobs; along with the welfare reform law, it's given us the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years. And in the new housing numbers released today, more Americans now own their own homes, over two-thirds of us, for the first time in the history of the United States.

The percentage of Hispanic- and African-American homeowners has also broken new records, as Hispanic- and African-American unemployment has dropped to record lows since we've been keeping separate statistics, nearly 30 years ago.

This new report shows, once again, that if we have strong fiscal discipline, strong investment, and a strong commitment to education and the new economy, we can get an investment boom and maximize the benefits of the information and technology revolutions now going on all over the world.

If we keep this going, in February, without having had a war, we will have the longest economic expansion in history. It's now the longest peacetime expansion in history. Wars guarantee you an economic expansion. In February, it will be the longest economic expansion of any kind in history, without a major conflict. And we can be very grateful for that. It's a tribute to the American people and their innovation.

Yesterday I pointed out that we had the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years; 42 years since the Government was in the black

2 years in a row. And that has saved us about \$1.7 trillion in debt over what it was projected to be when I took office. And those savings are worth, to the average American family, \$2,000 in lower mortgage rates, \$200 in lower car payment rates, \$200 in lower college loan rates.

This is the good news. But we now have a chance that no generation, at least in my lifetime, has had to shape the future of our dreams for our children in the absence of an overarching threat from without and in the absence of an overarching crisis within our borders. And I say that because the last time the economy was remotely this good was when I was a young man finishing high school in the early 1960's. But we had to deal with the civil rights challenge. It was an honor and a responsibility, but it had to be done. And then we had to deal with all the controversy about the war in Vietnam, our role in it, the cost of it, and we never got around to finishing our assault on poverty and doing a lot of other things.

But a lot of great things happened then, including Medicare and Medicaid and the first substantial Federal aid to education, because of the potential. But never in my lifetime have we had the chance we now have to shape the future of our dreams for our children.

And since all of you deal with children all the time, I think you know the wisdom of something a wise, old sage told me 20 years ago in politics when I got elected Governor at 32. I was too young to know what I was doing, I think, at the time. *[Laughter]* But he said, "Let me tell you something, Bill. In this life, you're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable." And if you think about it, what I want you to understand is, countries are no different than businesses or schools or families or individuals. When things are rocking along really good, because we're human, it's easy to get distracted. When there is a threat, it's easy to be focused.

I told somebody the other day—I got a big laugh—I said, "You know, I get so angry at all these conflicts around the world and these expressions of hatred here at home based on race or religion or sexual orientation. If we were being attacked by space aliens, like in that movie, 'Independence Day,' we'd all be looking for a foxhole to get in together and a gun to pick up together." The absence of a threat

sometimes causes us to lose our sense of focus, our center, our concentration.

But the truth is that this is the greatest opportunity that we've had in my lifetime. And so we have to look to the great challenges of the future, because we know that they're out there. There's going to be twice as many of us over 65 in 30 years, only two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. So for younger people, it's imperative that we reform Social Security and Medicare, so that the baby boom generation, when we retire, doesn't bankrupt our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren.

We know the recovery of our economy has left a lot of people and places behind, probably in a lot of communities represented here. We now have a chance to embrace those places and the working poor of our country in a way we never have. And we better do it now, when the economy's good.

We know that we have a chance to get not only—now we're paying down the debt. We paid the debt down \$140 billion in the last 2 years. The most we ever did. We can actually get rid of it in 15 years. Can you imagine, in 1992, if I'd run for office and said, "Folks, we've got this \$300 billion deficit. Vote for me. I'll give you back-to-back surpluses. I'll pay \$140 billion on the debt, and I'll show you how to get us out of debt for the first time since 1835?" People would have said, "You know, he seems like a nice young man, but we'd better send him home to Arkansas. He's a little touched in the head." *[Laughter]*

But we can do that now. And we ought to do it, because we ought to keep the interest rates down, we ought to keep the economy going, we ought to keep things moving. And I'm smart enough to know when this happens, the State taxes roll in, and the State coffers are in good shape, and they have more money to give to schools. And that's important, to keep the economy going to help the schools. It's important.

But one challenge above all we have to look at, and that is the fact that we now have the largest and most diverse group of students in our history and more diversity everywhere. And my home State of Arkansas, which, in the 1980 census was second only to West Virginia in having the highest percentage of people living in the State that were born in the State, this year was second in the country in the percentage

growth of the Hispanic population. There's a Catholic church in the northwest part of my State in an area where there were no minorities 20 years ago, literally, none when I started out in politics, that now has to have mass in Spanish every single Sunday.

Across the river here, there's a Baptist minister from Arkansas who is the cousin of my minister at home, who moved up here to find that the biggest congregation he had besides the regular one at 11 o'clock every Sunday morning was a separate Korean congregation. And he now has these massive language classes in his church. These things—America is changing, and all of you are dealing with this.

Now, our Founders understood all this. If you go back to the dawn of the Republic, Thomas Jefferson said, "an enlightened citizenry is indispensable to the proper functioning of a republic." And keep in mind, what does the Declaration of Independence say? We're establishing a democratic republic because it's the best way for people to pursue life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Then Jefferson said, because an enlightened citizen is indispensable for the proper functioning of a republic, he went on to say, "therefore, educate and inform the whole mass of people."

So they knew then what is even more true today because of the nature of the economy and society in which we live. Every one of you representing every one of these 266 blue ribbon schools is, therefore, living out the faith of the Founders of this country, that all of our children can learn and that all of them must learn. And for that, we are all in your debt. There are schools here from every region and every neighborhood. In each of your schools there are many differences, but in each school, students are learning at a high level.

We have already made some real progress in the last few years, and I think it's worth pointing out. The very idea of standards, which was championed in our Goals 2000 legislation and embodied in 1989 in the National Education Goals, is now taking root across the country. But it takes a good while to turn the education system around. In 1996, as late as 1996, there were only 14 States with measurable performances for students, measurable standards for students' performance—1996. Today, there are 50. That may be one reason why reading and math scores are up nationwide, including in

some of our most disadvantaged poor areas, urban, small town, and rural.

More and more schools are reducing class size with the help of the initiative begun last fall, the bipartisan support of Congress to put 30,000 of our goal of 100,000 new, highly trained teachers in the classroom. Greenwood Elementary in Newport News, a blue ribbon winner, hired new teachers this fall, bringing class sizes down in the first and second grades, from 27 children per teacher to 20. And you just heard Ruth say that they had used the class size funds to have teachers in her school.

Many other blue ribbon schools are using the Vice President's E-rate program to connect their classrooms and libraries to the Internet. I just want to talk about that a minute. A few years ago the Vice President and I went out to California for the first of our NetDays, and we hooked up—we wired a school so that all the classrooms could be hooked up to the Internet, as part of our goal of trying to get everybody hooked up by the end of next year. And we were wiring this school, and I looked at him, and I said, "Well, how are these places going to afford to use the Internet?" It's sort of an Alphonse and Gaston routine we do; the fact that I'm technologically challenged has become legendary in our administration. *[Laughter]*

And he said, "Well, we've got to give them a discount." And so we came up with this idea in the Telecommunications Act of giving the Federal Communications Commission the ability to give a discount for schools and hospitals and libraries. And there was the awfulest squalling about it you ever heard around here for a long time. And our political opponents started calling it Gore tax—*[laughter]*—you know, on the take-off, because he likes to run around in GORE-TEX, I guess. *[Laughter]* But we were attacked for it. We were opposed in it, but we hung in there. And it was the right thing to do, and that E-rate has literally empowered—some of our poorer schools get a 90 percent subsidy for the E-rate. And it has been a wonderful thing, because one of the things we cannot do in this country is allow a digital divide to develop. It already exists. We're determined to close it.

Our objective is to see Internet access in America become as universal as telephone access. And if we can do that, we will open up all kinds of educational and economic opportunities to people and places left behind. I also

believe if we can have the same sort of penetration around the world in poor countries of cell phones and the Internet as quickly as possible, a lot of countries with whom we deal and whom we'd like to help could skip 30 years of economic development and make a great leap into the new century.

So I want to thank you, all of you who supported us with the E-rate program, because it's making a big difference. For example, to mention one of the schools here, with the help of the E-rate, seventh graders at Whitehead School in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, are communicating directly with scientists conducting research in Africa. I didn't do that when I was in the seventh grade. [Laughter] Students are writing papers based on that research. The E-rate gives every seventh grader in America at least the chance to do that as we get the schools wired and hooked up.

And Secretary Riley would never forgive me if I didn't mention this, just parenthetically. Some of our schools are too old to be wired and too decrepit. And they need to be modernized and rewired in all kinds of ways. One of our proposals here that is not particularly costly would allow us to help local school districts build or modernize 6,000 schools. And if you're for that, I hope you'll help us pass it.

In Philadelphia, the average school building is 65 years old; New York City, 40 percent of the schools are over 70 years old—40 percent. All kinds—there's a large number of schools that are schools that are still heated by coal furnaces. And then I've been to—I was in a little town in Florida the other day where they had a dozen trailers behind the school building—a dozen—just one little school. So this is a big issue, and I hope that we can continue to work on it.

But to begin with the good news. You should all be very proud, not only of what you have done but of what you represent. In the last 16 years since the issuance of the "Nation At Risk" report in 1983, there has been a sea change in attitudes and commitments on the part of American educators and their supporters, among parents and business leaders and community leaders, and a genuine commitment to excellence in education from all kinds of schools in all kinds of places.

And it's been a difficult process because some schools have adequate funding and some don't, and because, at least for the public schools, they

get their money from three different places, which means that you have to hire more people in the administrative arm of the schools to keep up with and be accountable to. And there are all kinds of issues here.

But we are getting it, and you prove that all of our kids can learn and that we can turn America's education system toward the 21st century, and that is the good news. But it is terribly important that we all recognize that we still have work to do and that this will always be a moving target. No one believes, yet, that we are giving every child in America a world-class education in K through 12. Everybody knows we have the best system of higher education in the world. Therefore, we cannot quit until we know that we have done the same with K through 12.

And I think that this is the attitude we ought to have. Keep in mind, you don't know when we'll have an economic time like this again. You don't know when we'll be living through a time when we feel secure from outside threat again for this long a period of time. And I think when you go home, you need to try to give people some historical sense of this. And in your communities, you need to get people imbued with a passionate commitment about this and every other challenge.

I'll give you another example. We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years now. Now, that's wonderful—[inaudible]—everyone who thinks it's low enough, please raise your hand. [Laughter] You see what I mean? So why should we quit until America's the safest big country in the world? If we want to be the freest big country, why not? Why shouldn't we be the safest big country in the world? Why shouldn't we keep working to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children? Why shouldn't we keep working to make our—we should do it.

The point I want to make—again, I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but this is important—is that this is a time for intense focus and commitment, and we are most in danger of being distracted and drifting around because things seem to be going so well. But make no mistake about it, we will pay an enormous price in opportunities foregone and future problems in our lap if we don't use this magic moment to build the future of our dreams. And it's especially true in education.

And I am worried that what we see in Congress today in this debate on education is an

example of the kind of mental lapse or focus on short-term politics that we can see in other areas, not only in the Congress and in Washington but in the country, because it's so easy to indulge yourself in whatever's in front of your nose when things are rocking along and you're doing well. But it's a huge mistake.

Now, in Washington the good news is—assuming we work through this attempt to have an across-the-board cut, which includes education, that I'm against, but assuming we do that, the big issue in Washington now is more on how we spend money. I mean, I've been fighting for 4 or 5 years on whether to spend adequate amounts of money; now, we're fighting about how to spend it.

For example, last year we reached an agreement with Congress to begin hiring 100,000 new, highly trained teachers to lower class sizes in the early grades for obvious reasons. The size of our schools is exploding. And the research is clear that smaller classes and quality teachers bring higher achievements. Last year congressional Republicans not only agreed to it, they went home and campaigned on it and bragged about the fact that the proposal I made reflected Republican principles, because there was no bureaucracy in it. We just gave the money to the schools, and they hired the teachers. We disbursed the money; schools have gone out; they've hired new teachers.

Now suddenly, the same people who, just before the election last year, thought this was the greatest thing since sliced bread, have not only refused to add any more teachers, they have abandoned the commitment to the ones we've already hired and proposed, basically, to just send the blank check to the districts, and if they don't keep the teachers, fine.

So you have to understand, one of the key things in my mind about what this education debate is about is whether we're going to keep what we've done and continue to add to our goal of putting 100,000 teachers in the classroom. [*Applause*] It's very important. This debate is eerily reminiscent of the debate I had in 1994 in the Congress about putting 100,000 police on the street. And it wasn't rocket science: Violent crime tripled between 1964 and 1994, and the size of our police forces went up 10 percent. A third-grade arithmetic student could figure out the ratio had gotten worse, and that was part of the problem. And part of the reason we've got the lowest crime rate

in 30 years is we put those 100,000 police out there, ahead of schedule and under budget.

So if it was true in law enforcement, it will be even more true in education. It's a very important issue. I thank you for your applause, but I want you to stay with us on this. This is not a partisan issue anywhere but Washington. And frankly, I still can't figure out how it got to be a partisan issue since just a year ago we were all being canonized by the same people for doing this.

Now the budget debate is also about accountability, about getting real results for the education dollars. When all of us are held accountable for meeting higher standards and all the actors in education are given the resources they need to meet those standards from smaller schools to after-school programs, we have progress. And we have seen whole schools can be turned around in a relatively short period of time. Ruth explained how her school was selected by the State of South Carolina, given more resources, and turned itself around. This is not an isolated case.

Two years ago, North Carolina drew up a list of the State's 15 worst performing schools, sent assistance teams to each school, and focused on them. A year later, 14 of the 15 schools had been taken off the bad performance list.

Last year, I was in Cabrini-Green in Chicago, one of the biggest housing projects in the country, one of the most difficult areas in the country, and one of the poorest areas in any big city in the country, to visit an elementary school which has had unbelievably poor performance. In 2 years, under the new system they have there, they doubled their math scores and tripled their reading scores. That's pretty good in 2 years. And even though they started from a low base, they're moving in the right direction. If you double your performance every 2 years, you can go from a very low base to 100 percent in no time. So it's very important.

Our budget has dedicated \$200 million to set aside funds to help States and school districts all over America put together teams that would identify and help to turn around or shut down the lowest performing schools. It's not a lot of money, but it's a very big deal because not every State is doing this. And I have a very strong conviction that—you know, I believe that social promotion should be ended. But I don't think you should identify schools or students

as failures and then tell the kids there is something wrong with them when the system is failing them. So I think we have to have systems in every State in the country to turn around these schools, because they can all be turned around.

I don't understand why the Congress has refused to put a dime into this \$200-million proposal to turn around low-performing schools. I know there is not going to be a press conference where the Republican leaders stand up and say, "We are unalterably opposed to accountability," or, "We're fine on accountability, but we want to punish the students instead of make the schools better." Maybe they think people just wake up in the morning knowing how to do this. But if everyone knew how to do it, it would be done now in every State in the country, in every school district.

So again, I ask for your help here. I presume in this room there are people who are Republicans and Democrats, people who disagree on all different kinds of issues. But if we've got something that we know works, then—to go back to the Framers; they said all of the States were supposed to be the laboratories of democracy. But in a laboratory, when you find a scientific discovery, you publish the results as soon as possible. Then everybody takes it on board, and they build on that scientific discovery and go on to the next one.

In education, when somebody does something that's a true breakthrough, sometimes it takes 3 years to get 15 miles down the road. [*Laughter*] You know this is true, don't you? You know this is true. This is true. I've been working this for 20 years. I can say it's one of our continuing difficulties here. So that's what we're trying to do.

Now, I don't believe that the leaders in Congress can explain why they thought the 100,000 teachers was a good idea last year and this year they're against it. I don't believe they can explain why we have a measure here that we know has succeeded in turning around failing schools in more than one State—that, I might add, the Republican Governors have come out and endorsed—that they won't fund.

They also are opposed to our proposal to help build or modernize 6,000 schools. Now, they also are opposed to funding our troops-to-teachers program, which has been very successful but very limited, trying to get retired military people to go into the schools in the areas where there's

a teacher shortage. Very important where we need more male teachers, particularly for role models. It's a very important issue here.

Although, I might say, because the military has opened up more opportunities for women, more and more women are staying as career officers and coming out, too, and enlisted people. But this is a really successful program. And I asked them to make it much bigger because we've got to hire 2 million new teachers, as Dick Riley has been telling me for years, as so many retire. So we've got a large number of teachers retiring, more and more kids coming into the schools; we've got to hire more teachers.

But again, for reasons I do not understand, there was no funding for our troops-to-teachers program to get more of these good people who are leaving the military, many of them quite young, in their forties, to go into the schools and give 20 more good years or more to the education of our children.

So the labor and education appropriations bill that the Congress is about to consider short-changes education. You should also know that now they're proposing to make across-the-board cuts in everything from the FBI to national defense to the environment to education. Now, if that bill passes, I will veto it, because I think we need more teachers, more accountability, and more investment in education.

I do not believe that the proper response to America's education challenge is fewer teachers, no accountability, and across-the-board cuts in education. I want to hire 100,000 more teachers, 50,000 more police. I want to protect the environment. I want us to invest in education strategies that work.

Look, we've got the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. The debate you're hearing over the budget is because, for the first time in decades, it is now possible for us to separate the budget that comes from—the surplus that comes from your Social Security taxes from the surplus that comes from other things. All these years before last year, all these years, for 20 years, you've been seeing what the deficit was. If you took away the surplus we got from people paying more into Social Security than they were taking out, which was a way of preparing for the baby boomers, the deficit would have been much bigger.

So for the first time—you need to know that's why we're having this—you must think this is

crazy, why—they've got a surplus, and they're cutting stuff. What is going on here? What you need to know is that leaders of both parties agreed at the beginning of this year that they would not spend the Social Security surplus anymore and only spend money coming out of the non-Social Security surplus.

Now, the good news is that that helps us pay down the debt. It doesn't do anything for Social Security, however, unless you take the interest savings from paying down the debt and put it into the Social Security Trust Fund, as I have recommended, so we can take it out to 2050 and take care of all the baby boom retirement, take a big burden off all your minds. That's another issue that I want to do.

So the reason we're having this budget fight is that our prosperity and this surplus made it possible for the first time in two decades to segregate out the Social Security surplus. We've been spending the Social Security surplus up here since who shot John. [Laughter] And economically, there's no difference in the two. It's just a good thing to set it aside, because it helps us to pay the debt down. And then it will make it easier, I hope, for Congress next year, if not this year, to agree with me to take the interest savings from paying the debt down and put it into Social Security, which so far, they haven't done—which leaves a much smaller amount of money to fund things. And this Congress has already spent \$18 billion more than that, and they tried to say they weren't spending the Social Security surplus, trying to blame us with wanting to, which is a miracle how they got that done. [Laughter]

But you need to know, and when you go back home—I can imagine the American people must be totally bumfuzzed—keep announcing surpluses, and we keep having budget fights. That's what's going on here. They committed to start right now not spending the Social Security surplus. So I said, "Okay, if you want to do that and you want to spend all this money on defense and we're going to adequately fund education, the environment, and health care, then here's what we ought to do. Here's some corporate loopholes we ought to close. We ought to make the polluters pay for their toxic waste dumps. And I think we ought to have an increase in the cigarette tax, and that's good health policy anywhere." That's what I said.

They said, "Nah, we don't want to do any of that." So they did things like say the census

was an emergency. We've seen it coming for 10 years; most emergencies are something of a surprise. [Laughter] They said that—I mean, this is a strange world up here. [Laughter] I want you to know what's going on here. They also said that a lot of the ordinary expenses of the Pentagon—I mean, people go to work over there every day—they've said that these are emergencies, even though the cold war's over. Just showing up for work is an emergency. [Laughter] I mean, this is—because if they can—you know, they take this stuff off the books, and then that helps them play these budget games.

And then when I say, "But you're not spending enough on education, and we've got to fund the Middle East peace process, and we've got to fund our efforts to take down and destroy nuclear weapons in Russia, make the world a safer place, and we've got to fund our responsibilities to the United Nations," then they go out and say, "Oh, Bill Clinton wants to spend the surplus for foreign aid," run all these little ads and stuff. It's a strange world up here.

And what I'm saying is—you all laughed when I said this before, I referenced that movie, "Independence Day," but you know, if we were being attacked by space aliens, we wouldn't be playing these kind of games. These kind of games are only possible because the economy is strong and the American people are self-confident, and people believe, therefore, that this is a moment when they can do frivolous things that they otherwise would never consider doing to try to get short-term political advantage. But it's a huge mistake, because our children are still out there and they are bigger and more diverse than ever before as a group and they have these massive challenges. And all of you have proved that we can give them a world-class education. So we don't have any excuse anymore. You show up in town, and you say, "Look, all children can learn. Look what we did. We don't have any excuse."

So I will say again, this should not be a partisan issue. We can find a way through this budget business. It's about accounting and taking modest, difficult measures. But we cannot sacrifice our responsibility to meet these big, long-term challenges, because we have never had a chance like this in our lifetime. Everybody in this audience that's anywhere remotely my age, you just think about it. Think about it.

We spent the 1930's trying to survive the Depression. We spent the 1940's trying to survive World War II and get ready for the cold war. We spent the 1950's and the 1960's trying to survive the cold war, dealing with the civil rights crisis, and then dealing with Vietnam, and it drug into 1975. And then we had the oil price shocks and all of our economic problems that went all the way into the 1980's. The Berlin Wall fell 10 years ago. We spent the early part of this decade turning the economy and the social problems around of this country and getting us in a position where we could literally explode. That's where we are now.

You represent proof positive that we can give every American child the education that he or she deserves, not only to thrive in the new century but to ensure the success of the United States. And your dedication to tomorrow and the fact that every day you have to get up and think about not only today's lessons plan but what these little children are going to turn out like, that is the attitude we need here in Washington, across party lines.

So I ask you all—you have shown us the way—do what you can to effect the attitudes

here. Do what you can to be heard here, and say, "Let's take this way beyond partisan politics. There's plenty to argue about down the road, but our children deserve our best. And our best should be driven by what our local principals and our local educators say, what the education research says, what we know works."

You have proved to us what works. All I'm trying to do is to figure out how to spread it more quickly and give people who are in real economic binds the opportunity to access things that others regularly take for granted.

We could be going into America's greatest years. I believe we are. But we dare not squander this magic moment.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. in the International Ballroom Center at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ruth Summerlin, principal, Beaufort Elementary School, Beaufort, SC. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

The President's News Conference With President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria

October 28, 1999

President Clinton. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Please be seated. President Obasanjo, Mrs. Obasanjo, members of the Nigerian Government, welcome to the White House.

The President has served his country in many ways, including a previous term as President, which was distinguished by his insistence on a peaceful transition to a successor chosen by the people. His recent election marks an even bigger turning point.

Since its birth in 1960, Nigeria's progress has been thwarted over and over again by military leaders with little concern for the 110 million people. For years, its most courageous citizens were jailed or killed; its vast wealth was lost to waste and corruption; its potential to lead its region and the continent toward a better future squandered.

In an early poem, "Flowers For My Land," Nigeria's Nobel laureate, Wole Soyinka, wrote that his beloved country had become a garden of decay. But President Obasanjo's election in May has signaled a new day for Nigeria and new hope for Africa, a fitting capstone to a decade of remarkable democratic revolutions from Poland to South Africa, to the important transition now underway in Indonesia.

It is very much in America's interests that Nigeria succeed, and therefore, we should assist them in their success. We intend to increase our assistance to Nigeria to expand law enforcement cooperation and to work toward an agreement to stimulate trade and investment between us. We intend to do what we can to help Nigeria recover assets plundered by the previous regime.

But we must do more to realize the promise of this moment for Nigeria and for Africa. I want to mention just three issues.

First, we need to recognize that barriers to trade are barriers to opportunity for Africans working hard to catch up to the global economy and for Americans who want to work with them. That's why it is vital that the Senate approve the African growth and opportunity act, which is now pending and on which I spent much of the afternoon working.

A second concrete step we can take, as President Obasanjo has reminded us, is to help relieve the crushing debt burden that is making it so hard for developing nations to get on their feet. It is neither morally right nor economically sound to say that young democracies like Nigeria, as they overcome the painful legacy of dictatorship or misrule, must choose between making interest payments on their debt and investing in the health and education of their children. As Nigeria undertakes its reforms, I will support generous debt rescheduling through the Paris Club and encourage other countries to take further steps.

Finally, we must keep doing our part to bring an end to Africa's remaining conflicts. Many of you have heard about the unspeakable atrocities visited upon the people of Sierra Leone. Nigeria spent billions of dollars leading the international force that ended civil wars there and in Liberia. And for that, the whole world is in its debt.

Now in Sierra Leone as well as in Congo and hopefully soon in Eritrea and Ethiopia, we have a precious opportunity to work with Africans to make peace last. African countries are assuming the largest burden and the greatest risks. All they ask is that we support their efforts, through the United Nations and their own regional organizations. The United States must not let them down.

That is another reason why it is so vital that we honor our obligations and pay our debts to the United Nations. If we fail to give others the tools to share the burdens of leadership in these situations, peace agreements we helped to forge may falter, and America would be left with an unacceptable choice in future conflicts, a choice between doing nothing or acting all alone.

I don't want to leave our children that bleak choice, and I intend to keep working with the Congress to get the resources to recognize our

mutual responsibilities with others so that we can prevent it.

President Obasanjo once said, "I am uncrushed by the past and hopeful of the future. There can be no freedom in fear." Those succinct words define the essence of democracy and its faith in the capacity of free people to overcome life's obstacles, a universal faith valid no matter where expressed.

Nigeria is a pivot point on which the future of all Africa and much of the world will turn. I am very glad that that country is in the hands of this leader today.

Mr. President, the floor is yours.

President Obasanjo. Mr. President, it is just for me to take this opportunity on behalf of my government and the people of Nigeria to express a deep appreciation for your concern and for your support for the new dispensation in my country for democracy. We thank you for your commitment and the commitment of your country to ensure that democracy will continue to be nurtured and to be sustained in our country and in our part of the world.

We believe that democracy is a process and not an event. And therefore, we must continue to work to expand, to widen, and to deepen the process of democracy, which we are committed to do. We also thank you for the understanding you have shown for the commitment and the sacrifice which our country and our people have made and which we continue to make for peace and stability in our subregion and our region of Africa. We do this knowing and believing that peace is indivisible, and if there is no peace in any part of our subregion, it has implication for us.

We also thank you for the commitment you have made that, while we make our commitment, you will continue to support our commitment, because our own commitment, which will make peace and stability an enduring feature of that part of the world, is a significant contribution to the world of peace, to the world of harmony, to the world of order and stability, which is so dear to all of us and which, of course, is of strategic importance and interest of the United States of America.

We thank you for the fact that you agree with us that in this day and age there should be no part of the world where any section of a society or a community should feel threatened for misgovernance, and we pledge, as we have done before, that whatever needs to be done

to ensure humanitarian intervention to save life—dear life—we will join hands with you to ensure it.

Thank you for the reception and the hospitality we have enjoyed here. And we look forward for the opportunity to reciprocate on our land. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

We will now alternate questions between the American and the Nigerian press members here, and I will call on the American reporters and then the President will call on the Nigerians who have questions. And we'll start with Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]. Go ahead.

Vice President Gore's 2000 Campaign

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. A domestic question. Mr. President, Vice President Gore last night felt compelled to say in New Hampshire, even though no one had asked anything about you, to say, "I understand the disappointment and anger that you feel toward President Clinton, and I felt it myself." Did the Vice President express that anger and disappointment to you at any time, and do you think that you have been a drag on the Vice President's campaign and a reminder of the Lewinsky impeachment issue?

President Clinton. No. You know, I think a lot of people who may not like me may hold it against him, but I don't think you hold him responsible. I don't think mature people hold one person responsible for another person's conduct. Do you?

I think if there had been some example of official misconduct in office which he had been a part of, that would be a different thing. But the American people are inherently fair. And insofar as they do blame him, I hope they give him some of the credit for the longest peacetime expansion in history and the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest crime rates in 30 years and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years and a lot of credit for the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. So I would expect he should get some credit for that, and most Americans kind of like that.

If you ask Americans what kind of changes they want—I've told you before, if somebody polled me in one of these things and said, "Do you want more of the same, or do you want change," I would vote for change. You ask them

what kind of changes they want. I bet you they will tell you they want to make better schools; they want more accessible health care; they want us to save Social Security and Medicare; they want America to continue to be safer; they want sensible gun restraint measures. And I think that's what the election will be about.

You know, people are not dumb. They vote for what is in their interest. And sometimes some of your fraternity get them—try to get them confused about what they should be voting on or what they should vote against, but in the end, they almost always get it right, and they vote for what's best for themselves and their children. Otherwise we wouldn't still be here after over 200 years. So that's what I think.

In terms of what he said, he hasn't said anything I hadn't said. He also said some other things that were, I noticed, omitted in the way you characterized the questions. But I was quite pleased with those other things he said. So I think the American people will make a decision based on what's in their interest.

I don't think—by the way, I don't think they ought to vote for him on the fact that we had a great record, either, except that the great record in evidence of what he can do and where he will lead. We get hired to work here. It's a privilege to serve. But if you do have a good record, it is certainly evidence of what you can do and what you will lead. And he has a great record and has been the most accomplished Vice President in history by a good, long ways.

You know, even my adversaries admit that I gave him a kind of partnership and a level of responsibility never before remotely equaled in the history of this country. And I think that is worth something in an election, because it shows what you can do.

But the public will make up their own mind based on what's best for them and their children and not be deterred by other people who would like the election to be about something other than what's best for them and their children.

President Obasanjo. Yes, the Nigerian side.

President Clinton. Otherwise, I don't have an opinion about that. [Laughter]

President Obasanjo. The Nigerian side, your question could be to me or to the President.

Q. I have two questions.

President Obasanjo. You are being greedy. [Laughter]

Q. Thank you.

The two questions: First of all, I want to thank President Clinton for going to Africa and for bringing African issues to the front burner of American policy initiatives. I want to tell you that the 2.5 million Africans in this country, they respect you, and they admire you. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you.

Return of Looted Assets/Slavery in Africa

Q. Then I have to ask my question. [Laughter] The first question is, Nigeria has spent a lot of money, President Clinton, in peacekeeping in Sierra Leone and in Liberia. As of yesterday, I believe that is about \$8 billion. And at the same time, Nigeria lost a lot of money through a lot of—I mean, our leaders looting the treasury and bringing the money not only to the U.S. but to Switzerland. What is the U.S. going to do about it, to recover that money, the money in this country and the money that is in Switzerland? That is the first question.

And then the next question is for the President of Nigeria, President Obasanjo. As we enter the 21st century, the next millennium, Africans in the Sudan—black Africans are being held slaves. The OAU has not done anything about it. And we would like to know, as the President of the largest African country in Africa, what the Government of Nigeria is going to do to ensure that there is no African who is a slave as we enter the 21st century.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Well, first I'll answer the question you asked me. I think it's important that we do whatever we can to help Nigeria recover money that was looted from the country and that belongs to the people of Nigeria. The Attorney General came to our meeting today, Attorney General Reno, and we are working with the Government of Nigeria, and I will do whatever we can legally do to help recover funds that are in this country and whatever we can do to assist in recovering funds that may be in Switzerland or elsewhere.

You know, we have—we may have to get some help, some voluntary help from the Swiss. You know, the laws are different in different countries, but we think there are quite a number of things we can do here, and we're committed to working with the Nigerian Government to do that.

President Obasanjo. Thank you very much. The only thing I can add to that is that the

Swiss authorities have already frozen some accounts in Switzerland, and other steps that have to be taken will be taken as a result of what they have done so far.

The issue of Sudan—I don't think you would be absolutely right to say that the OAU has done nothing about it. Maybe what the OAU has done about it has not achieved the desired result. But let me say this: Over the last 20 years that I was—well, less 3 years and a few months—that I was away in special custody—[laughter]—I have been seized with the Sudan problem.

Personally, I know it very well. I've dealt with all the leaders in the Sudan since I left public office in 1979 until now. And I also know that there are other African leaders who are concerned about the problem, particularly the IGAD leaders; that is the organization in the Horn of Africa. And even right now, they are prescribing solutions; they are suggesting and making recommendations to the two sides.

And our own position, Nigeria's position is that we should not have too many cooks; that will spoil the soup. We shall do everything together. And since IGAD is doing a good job, we should work through them; we should support them. And that is what we are doing. And we believe that that way there will be no diversion; there will be no distraction; and eventually we will get the right solution to the problem of Sudan.

But I agree with you. Anywhere in Africa or, indeed, anywhere in the world, there should be no situation of slavery or slave trade at this time, at this stage, at this point in the last year of the dying years of the 20th century, on the eve of the 21st century.

President Clinton. Lori [Lori Santos, United Press International].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. In Oslo, sir, what are you expecting from your meetings with Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak? And what are the next steps, and are you looking for any concrete results?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think it's a good thing that we're going to have this trilateral meeting, and it's just another step along the way. They've been making good progress, and they're working hard.

I wouldn't want to raise expectations excessively about what the results of this meeting will be, but they have put themselves on an

aggressive timetable, and they have a lot of tough issues to work through. And since the United States has, at least in my time, primarily played a role as a facilitator, with greater or lesser degrees of intensity and initiative—including the Wye talks, where no one slept for 9 days—I think that it's best for me not to speculate about what the substantive results will be.

Let me say this: I believe that both these leaders want to make peace. I believe they're committed to it. And I believe they know they're down to the difficult issues now. But I also believe they're imagining what a final agreement would look like, what they could live with, and what would be good for the other side, and mostly, what would preserve the integrity of their principles and the long-term peace of the region.

So I'm looking forward to the meeting. I'm looking forward to honoring the memory of Yitzhak Rabin. I think he would be very proud of what Prime Minister Barak and Mr. Arafat are doing now.

President Obasanjo. The Nigerian side?

President Clinton's Commitments to Nigeria

Q. Mr. President, in your statement here you were full of thanks to President Clinton for the support he has expressed to you, probably, during discussions today. Would you give us some of the specific commitment that he made to you during your discussions?

President Obasanjo. Well, the same specific commitment he made to me during our discussion, he has made here. He will support efforts to have resources taken away illegally from Nigeria, to recover them. He will support our efforts to lift the burden of debt, so that we can have a breather to be able to consolidate our democracy. He will support our efforts to be able to be strong enough internally, as a country, and within our subregion and our region, so that we can contribute to peace and stability in our region and in our subregion. He will support efforts to deal with crime, to fight against crime and narcotic traffic in our country.

Those are some of them, and I think for those commitments he deserves to be thanked. I don't know what you think.

President Clinton. Can I just say, also—I don't believe you said this exactly, Mr. President. I did make it clear that we have requested from the Congress funds sufficient to increase our

bilateral aid to Nigeria, somewhere between 3 and 4 times what it was before. And that's part of—and I vetoed the first bill that the Congress passed, and we're fighting now to try to get more funds in the aggregate for our foreign assistance programs. And this is one of the reasons that I want the money. And I believe that—I may be wrong, but I believe that both Republicans and Democrats in the United States Congress understand that Nigeria's future is very important to our own.

Arshad [Arshad Mohammed, Reuters].

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, Russia appears to have intensified its offensive against Chechnya this week with heavy bombardment and with ground troops approaching the capital, Grozny, from three directions. Do you think that this offensive may ultimately backfire on Russia and lead to greater bitterness among the Chechens toward Moscow and, ultimately, sow deeper seeds of conflict both in the region and also possibly that may bring itself back to Russian soil?

President Clinton. I think it depends upon whether, ultimately, there is a political solution or not or whether the Russian Government attempts to find a military solution. I have never believed that, ultimately, there could be a solution to any of these problems that was not a political one, that recognized the extraordinary, complex tapestry of ethnic and religious groups across the belly of Russia and just to the south.

As you know, it's an explosive part of the world. Not just in Chechnya, but we've had difficulties in Dagestan; the Georgians have had their challenges; we had the terrible, terrible shooting in Armenia yesterday and the loss of the Prime Minister and seven others.

So, you know, it has been our experience—that's all I can tell you—it's been our experience that in every place where there are genuine ethnic and religious difficulties and particularly when they're combined, that sooner or later people have to stop fighting and start talking and that any military strategy ought to be designed to do nothing more than to create the conditions within which a negotiated settlement can be reached, because in the end I think that's what will have to happen.

And what the United States hopes, since we also have a big stake in the success of democracy and freedom and prosperity in Russia, is that we will see a minimization of the casualties

and that we will hasten the day when there will be a negotiated solution that all the parties can live with.

Inducement To Invest in Nigeria

Q. Mr. President, you have the largest democracy in Africa. What are the initiatives you have to make it sustainable over some time? Also as far as debt consolidation is concerned, what are some of the measures your Government is doing to attract businesses and investors to invest in Nigeria?

President Obasanjo. Well, to invite investment into Nigeria, we have to create conducive environment for business to thrive. We have to create conducive environment for investors to want to invest in Nigeria because investors have choices. Therefore, we should make them choose to come to Nigeria.

And what are we doing? First of all, we are eliminating corruption as a way of life in Nigeria. Few—not many if at all any honest businessmen will want to rush into a corrupt atmosphere to do business. So we have to remove corruption, and we are doing that. We have to provide a level playing ground for all participants, so that there is equity, there is fairness, there is justice, and you can go in and compete. That we have done. The rules and regulations must be clear, so that you know what it is. There must be transparency. There must be openness. That, too, we have done, particularly in competition, so that when you do lose out, you are at least satisfied that the one who gets it is a better hand or has presented a better case or a better offer.

Again, we have to provide an environment that is reasonably—reasonably—devoid of crime. We are fighting against crime—crime—in such a way that lives and properties can be safe and secure, in such a way that investment can be secure. These and all the things we are doing—the rule of law, so that when you have to seek arbitration by the court, you can be sure that you get a fair deal from the court—we are doing all that we need to do to make the investors feel that all of the things put together, Nigeria is a better place to invest than any other place of comparative economic situation.

President Clinton. If I could just say, if I were in the audience, I would be applauding what the President said because, you know, I've spent a great deal of my time for 7 years trying to create economic opportunities for the Amer-

ican people and even trying to create special incentives for people to go to some of the poorest areas in our country, in our empowerment zone program that the Vice President has run for 6 years now. And everything he said is right. Nigeria is a great country. You have a large population, vast resources, good location, all that oil. You have to be well-governed and competitive.

What he said was absolutely right. I can just tell you as an outsider, Nigeria will be a very appealing place to people all over the world if they are convinced it is well-governed and serious about development. And in the end, the President—he's also a good salesman. He's out here working some of those opportunities while he's here in America, and I've been impressed.

John [John Palmer, NBC News], go ahead.

Enforcement of Gun Laws

Q. Mr. President, I have a domestic question. I don't know how much of an opportunity you have these days to listen to the radio. But the National Rifle Association is conducting quite a campaign, saying that we really don't need any new gun laws, if your administration would just enforce those that are on the books. How has your administration done in enforcing these laws, and how do you answer that rather serious charge?

President Clinton. Let me just say what they do. What they do is, they say, our prosecution for gun law violations, our volume is down. What they don't do is to look at the total prosecutions for gun law violations, the volume of which is up. The number of total gun law violations is up.

Now, what we have done, ever since Attorney General Reno came to the Justice Department, as a local prosecutor in a big urban prosecutorial district in Miami, we have worked to properly allocate the resources of the Justice Department and local prosecutors. And we have worked with all of our U.S. attorneys to do the same thing. So it's just not accurate to say, if you look at total prosecutions of existing laws, that they're down. That's the first thing I want to say.

Second thing I want to say is, the average sentence in America, I believe, is longer than it is in any other country in the world, except one, maybe. And the percentage of people we have behind bars is higher, I believe, than any

other country in the world. There are two possible exceptions. We might be as low as third, but I think we're first.

Now, the last thing I want to say about that is, they made this argument before. This is the argument they made against the Brady bill. Remember, they said two things: All you've got to do is really prosecute the existing laws; and the Brady bill won't do any good because criminals don't buy their guns at gun stores. Those were the two arguments they made.

Well, 5 years later we've got 400,000 people who haven't been able to buy guns because of the Brady bill, and we've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years. And you know, we've been all for enforcement. I'm trying to get more prosecutors right now. We've put 100,000 police on the street, I would remind you. I'm not against enforcement. But that is not an excuse for America to keep being the only major country in the world that still has gaping loopholes in its protections to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children.

And let me just say one thing. I know I've said this till a lot of you are sick of me saying this, but I'm going to say it until I leave here and after I'm gone. If their arguments were right, we would not have the kind of accidental death rate by guns that we do. The accidental death rate by gunshots of children in the United States is 9 times higher than the rate of the next 25 largest industrial economies put together.

We have not done enough to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. We can do more without interfering with the right to hunt and the right to sport shoot. And they're just wrong. It sounds clever. You know, it's interesting, the NRA, they're normally with the conservatives; they like it when you have States' rights, you know. So here we worked out a deal, and the local prosecutors do more cases which ought to be in the local courts, and we take the hard cases and put them in the Federal courts that take more time, more cost, or multi-State cases, and they conveniently take the Federal number and overlook the rest.

And I might say, I think in times past, maybe administrations that did not want to enforce—did not want to pass the Brady bill, did not want to have the assault weapons ban, did not want to close the loopholes in the background checks, might have gone out and filed a lot of cases to say, "Well, this is what we're doing."

The evidence is in. We have the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill played a big role in it.

So the NRA is fighting a rearguard action that's just wrong. They were wrong on the Brady bill, and they're wrong today. You don't have to take my word for it. Look at the evidence and ask yourself why, if you can enforce your way out of this, every other country in the world with an advanced economy still has a lower murder rate and a drastically lower rate of accidental killings by guns? You know, they never talk about that, because they can't.

Debt Relief for Nigeria

Q. My question is for either of the two Presidents. Specifically, with all emphasis on that word, the debt relief that has been proposed for Nigeria, is it consolation, partial or total, or rescheduling?

President Obasanjo. Well, let me put it this way: The best thing that I would want to have is not to have debt at all. But when you look at it, since 1985 or thereabout, when the total debt we had was about \$6 billion, we really haven't added much debt to it. And our debt stands at about \$28–\$30 billion today. And all that is essentially interest rescheduling and all that.

So when you talk about rescheduling, I'm apprehensive. When you talk of remission, even staying of interest for some time will be one way. But we cannot—we cannot—talk of being able to do what we need to do to nurture, to sustain democracy, and to give our people democracy dividend, bearing the burden of debt that is hanging over us at this point in time.

President Clinton. Let me answer the question, and I will try to be—I'll be very candid with you. First of all, you must understand this is not a question for the United States only to resolve. I have a much more aggressive attitude, generally, on debt relief than many of my counterparts do in other parts of the world, although not all of them. There are others who agree with me. And I have a more aggressive attitude than some people in our Congress do, although I hope I can persuade them before we go home this year.

Under the present framework, Nigeria is not eligible for total cancellation of debt because of its assets, its petroleum assets. As the President pointed out to me today, if you had a different measure, if you measured the real per

capita income of individual Nigerians or some of the other social indicators like infant mortality, it would present, I think, a more accurate picture of what life in Nigeria is like today.

Here is my view. Right now, we ought to get whatever relief we can, because you need to—even the rescheduling relief is worth something. It takes a burden off your back now and gives you a chance to get some breathing room and doesn't raise the questions of creditworthiness, so that we can get more investment into Nigeria and more loans into Nigeria as well, if they're necessary.

Then I think, frankly, that the more the President succeeds in the program that he's outlined, the more we will be able to work with the rest of the world to deal with the long-term interests of Nigeria and the long-term health of Nigeria. But the reason I said rescheduling today is I have concluded that that's really worth something to you, and that's all we can do right now, because of the standard by which the highly indebted poor countries are measured.

But if you look at what's happened to Nigeria's oil resources and what's happened in the previous years and what people are really living on, you could make a compelling case for more relief. And I think what we should do is take what we can get now and pocket it and try to get some more investment into your country and keep working to support the reforms that the President has outlined and just keep working to get more relief as we go along. That's what I think is the only realistic hope. And I am certainly open to that. And I think the more other world leaders get to see this President, get to see what's going on, the more likely we'll be to succeed.

We'll take one more each. Yes, go ahead. I didn't know who I pointed at—[laughter]—all three of you should stand up and shout. Give me a selection. I'll decide which one I want to answer. [Laughter]

Q. We could do it in unison.

President Clinton. All right, go ahead.

Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, it's late in the congressional budget process, and I'm wondering, is there any prospect at this point of a Government shutdown, and are there any of your priorities on which you will insist on be non-negotiable in the talks that are occurring right now?

President Clinton. I do not believe there will be a Government shutdown. I would be very surprised if there is one. But neither do I think we should just have continuing resolutions for the next year and a half. Somehow we have to come to terms with this.

Just today—I don't know if you saw it—the Congressional Budget Office said that the budget passed by the Republican majority is, even with the one percent across-the-board budget cut which you've already heard the Secretary of Defense and others say would have a very bad impacts, is still \$17 billion short and would require more than 4 percent more to be cut across the board, just as I told them all along.

So we're going to have to work together to get a budget that works. And all this sort of smoke and mirrors that they have been doing and claiming that we and the Democrats were trying to spend the Social Security surplus, when they were spending it all along, is not helpful.

Most Americans, as a matter of fact—and this is a service all of you could do for the country, actually. I just spoke to a bunch of educators today, and they all came up afterward and thanked me for explaining what was really going on, because most Americans can't figure out why, if we keep announcing bigger and bigger surpluses, why we're having a budget fight, and why we're having across-the-board cuts.

And of course, it's because both parties made a commitment at the beginning of this session that from this day forward we wouldn't spend the Social Security surplus, which could have been done without tough choices had it not been for the magnitude of the natural disasters and the farm crisis and the size of the defense increases that the Congress wanted, even over and above the substantial defense increases that I recommended.

So that's why we've got this problem. We can solve this problem. I am committed to doing it. But I think it would be a great mistake for us to walk away from here and abandon the commitment we made just last year to 100,000 teachers. We ought to get the 50,000 police started, just like we started the 100,000 police before, because it gave us the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and now we can look forward to being the safest big country in the world. And we need to adequately fund our environmental budget and get those riders out of there, those antienvironmental riders out of there.

I never thought I'd get 100 percent of what I wanted. I think they're making a big mistake not beginning the prescription drug benefit on Medicare and not adding any days to the life of the Medicare or the Social Security Trust Fund. But because I vetoed the tax cut, we can come back to all that early next year. But we shouldn't walk away from here having dismantled our commitment to 100,000 teachers, not dealing with the 50,000 police, not dealing with the environmental issues. And I'm prepared to work with them.

I don't want a partisan fight on this. This is crazy for us to be having a big partisan blow-out because they both made a commitment not to spend the Social Security surplus, and then it turned out to be harder than necessary, and all of it is being mixed into a sort of a combustible political mix. We need to sit down like grownups, go out and tell the American people the truth, and work through this. We can find the offsets. We don't have to spend the Social Security surplus. We can do this. And I hope they will work with me to do it.

Demographics in Nigeria

Q. According to a recent United Nations world population prospect report, 45 percent of Nigeria's 1.29 million population is under age 15, and an additional 18 is in the 15 to 24 years category. What this means is that we have about 63 percent of Nigeria's population which is under the age of 24. President Obasanjo, what does this mean to today's Nigeria and the country's future?

President Obasanjo. Well, to today's Nigeria it means that—simple—37 percent—if you take all the remainder as working, which is not the case—that 37 percent of Nigerians are working to keep 100 percent of Nigerians alive, because you know it, from age one to about age 24, you are preparing yourself for life. It's either you are in school, or you are learning a trade, or you are in the university or something of that nature. Now, that puts strain on Nigerians that are working if they are working. But are they really working? That's another question.

Then, for future, if we are able to train them, ah, the future is bright. There you will have that large population, if everything else is all right, that will be vibrant, educated, talented, and going places for Nigeria, well-governed, the economy buoyant. You can't ask for anything better. So if we train, we look after them and we prepare them adequately, good for future. But for now, it's a strain, and we have to bear out this strain.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 183d news conference began at 4:25 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, the President referred to Stella Obasanjo, wife of President Obasanjo; 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature recipient Wole Soyinka; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and murdered Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan of Armenia. President Obasanjo referred to OAU, the Organisation of African Unity, and IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Statement on the Navy Blue Angels Jet Crash

October 28, 1999

I am deeply saddened that today America lost two of its bravest and most distinguished Naval aviators in a tragic crash of a Navy jet belonging to the Blue Angels.

As a nation we all owe our military service-members a tremendous debt of gratitude.

At this time of great loss—a loss that we all share—my heartfelt prayers go to their families, their shipmates, and to the entire Navy.

Memorandum on Labor-Management Partnerships

October 28, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Reaffirmation of Executive Order 12871—Labor-Management Partnerships

When I became President, I believed that cooperation between Federal agencies and their unions could help create a Government that works better, costs less, and makes a positive difference in the lives of the American people. That is why I issued Executive Order 12871, Labor-Management Partnerships, and directed agencies to form partnerships with their unions; involve employees and union representatives as full partners in identifying and resolving workplace issues; provide training in consensual methods of dispute resolution; negotiate with unions over the subjects set forth in 5 U.S.C. 7106(b)(1); and evaluate bottom-line results achieved through partnership.

With your hard work and support, we have made great strides over the past 6 years. In many agencies, unions and management are working side by side on the tough challenges facing the Government and its employees. I am very proud of this success, but I am also convinced that we can do even more. I believe the time has come to redouble the Administration's efforts to create genuine labor-management partnerships. Therefore, I am taking new steps to reaffirm my strong commitment to partnership and to renew my call for agencies to work with their unions to achieve the important objectives of the Executive order.

First, I direct agencies to develop a plan with their unions at appropriate levels of recognition for implementing this memorandum and the Executive order. Every effort should be made to develop a plan that helps the agency and its employees deliver the highest quality service to the American people. Whenever possible, workplace issues should be resolved through consensus using interest-based problem-solving techniques.

Agencies should aggressively seek training, facilitation, and mediation assistance that can help foster an environment where partnerships can succeed and thrive.

Second, agencies are directed to report to me, through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), on the progress being made toward achieving the goals of this memorandum and the directives set forth in the Executive order. Reports must be submitted by April 14, 2000, and annually thereafter, and must be prepared with the involvement and input of the unions. Agencies shall describe the nature and extent of their efforts to comply with the Executive order and shall identify specific improvements in customer service, quality, productivity, efficiency, and quality of worklife that have been achieved as a result of partnership. These reports will not only help me assess our progress toward establishing successful partnerships, but will provide best practices that can assist unions and agencies in their efforts to develop effective partnership-building strategies. Finally, I am directing the Office of Personnel Management to analyze the information contained in these reports and, in coordination with OMB, to advise me on further steps that might be needed to ensure successful implementation of this memorandum and Executive Order 12871.

This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to and does not create any right to administrative or judicial review, or any other right, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Radio Remarks on Emergency Agricultural Assistance

October 29, 1999

Today, as provided for in the agriculture appropriations bill I signed last week, I am designating \$8.8 billion in emergency assistance to our Nation's farmers and ranchers. This assistance will hasten payments to farmers who are recovering from the second year in a row of low commodity prices and crop and livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

This is only a one-year temporary fix for the overall problems facing our farmers. They are the lifeblood of our land. Again I call on the

Congress to enact a permanent fix to the severe shortcomings in the 1996 farm bill.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 6:20 p.m. on October 28 in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 29. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Statement on Emergency Agricultural Assistance

October 29, 1999

I am pleased today to designate \$8.8 billion in emergency assistance for our Nation's farmers and ranchers, to help them recover from the second year in a row of low commodity prices and, for many, crop livestock losses from severe drought and flooding.

While this assistance will not adequately address all of the needs in our farm-based communities, I have taken this step in order to hasten payments to farmers and ranchers who simply cannot wait for the legislative improvements we have sought. I continue to be concerned that the income assistance in the Act is not targeted to producers most in need.

As with last year's disaster assistance, these funds provide only a one-year, temporary fix for the overall problems with the farm safety net. That is why I call on the Congress to enact a permanent fix to the shortcomings in the 1996 farm bill. A major step toward that goal can be achieved this year through crop insurance reform legislation if the Congress will act.

I want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Glickman for his work on behalf of American agriculture. I know he and his staff are hard at work right now setting the process in place so that most of the payments will be available within just a few weeks.

Remarks on Medical Records Privacy and an Exchange With Reporters

October 29, 1999

The President. Thank you, Secretary Shalala. I would like to thank you for all the work that you and so many people in your Department have done on this issue. I thank the representatives of the various groups who are here with me today for their concern for, and commitment to, the issue of medical records privacy. These health care and consumer advocates support what we are trying to do to protect the sanctity

of medical records. I believe the American people will support us as well.

Every American has a right to know that his or her medical records are protected at all times from falling into the wrong hands. And yet, more and more of our medical records are stored electronically, and as they have been stored electronically the threats to our privacy have substantially increased. So has the sense

of vulnerability that so many millions of Americans feel.

To be sure, storing and transmitting medical records electronically is a remarkable application of information technology. Electronic records are not only cost effective; they can save lives by helping doctors to make quicker and better informed decisions, by helping to prevent dangerous drug interactions, by giving patients in rural areas the benefit of specialist care hundreds of miles away. So, on balance, this has been a blessing.

But as Secretary Shalala just said, our electronic medical records are not protected under Federal law. The American people are concerned and rightfully so. Two-thirds of adults say they don't trust that their medical records will be kept safe. They have good reason. Today, with the click of a mouse, personal health information can easily and now legally be passed around without patients' consent to people who aren't doctors, for reasons that have nothing to do with health care.

A recent survey showed that more than a third of all Fortune 500 companies check medical records before they hire or promote. One large employer in Pennsylvania had no trouble obtaining detailed information on the prescription drugs taken by its workers, easily discovering that one employee was HIV positive. This is wrong. Americans should never have to worry that their employers are looking at the medications they take or the ailments they've had.

In 1999 Americans should never have to worry about nightmare scenarios depicted in George Orwell's "1984." I am determined to put an end to such violations of privacy. That's why I'm honoring the pledge I made in the State of Union Address and using the full authority of this office to create the first comprehensive national standards for protection of medical records.

The new standards I propose would apply to all electronic medical records and to all health plans. They would greatly limit the release of private health information without consent. They would require health plans to inform patients about how medical information is used and to whom it is disclosed. They would give patients the right to see their own health files and to request corrections. They would require health plans and providers to strengthen internal safeguards. They would create new criminal and

civil penalties for improper use or disclosure of the information.

These standards represent an unprecedented step toward putting Americans back in control of their own medical records. These standards were developed by Secretary Shalala and the Department of Health and Human Services. Over the next 60 days the Secretary and her Department will take comment from the public before we finalize the standards.

Again, on behalf of all the families in this country, I thank you, Madam Secretary, for this work.

Now let me say something that I think is now well known. I am taking this action today because Congress has failed to act and because a few years ago Congress explicitly gave me the authority to step in if they were unable to deal with this issue. I believe Congress should act. Members of Congress gave themselves 3 years to pass meaningful privacy protections, and then gave us the authority to act if they didn't. Two months ago their deadline expired. After 3 full years there wasn't a bill passed in either Chamber.

Even as we put forward our plan today, I think it is important to point out there are still protections, some of them, we can give our families only if there is an act of Congress passed. For example, only through legislation can we cover all paper records and all employers.

So today again I ask congressional leaders, please help protect America's families from new abuses of their privacy. You owe the American people a comprehensive medical privacy law. As we have found out in working through this order, the issues are complex; difficult decisions have to be made. But we will work with you in a bipartisan fashion. We can do this together, and we owe it to our families to protect their privacy in the most comprehensive way possible.

Thank you very much.

Nomination of Carol Moseley-Braun

Q. Mr. President, Senator Helms has offered to schedule a hearing on Carol Moseley-Braun's nomination next week if you will ensure that the IRS, the White House, and the Justice Department produce a bunch of documents by Monday. Do you see that as a serious offer, or do you think he is just toying with your nominee?

The President. I don't know. First of all, I have asked our White House staff to review

the request for information and evaluate it in terms of what would be proper to forward to the committee and whether there are some things that wouldn't be. I think we should at least take the request seriously because, I think, if she gets a hearing, she will be confirmed. And I don't think it's right for one of our strongest allies, New Zealand, to be denied an Ambassador or for a former Senator—in my judgment, did a good job in the United States Senate—to be denied the opportunity to serve because of a previous dispute with the chairman of the committee over the proper handling of a patent for the Daughters of the Confederacy. I think that that's, you know, not an appropriate basis on which to determine whether someone should serve as an Ambassador or not.

So I hope we can work it out, and I am going to—like I said, I have asked the White House staff to evaluate Senator Helms' request and to see whether it's possible for us to do.

Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, in Kosovo this week, an attack on Serb civilians has led some military officials to conclude that the peacekeeping force may need to be expanded. Do you agree with that, sir?

The President. Well, I think they have been doing a good job on the whole. But I think they have to be in a position to protect the civilians and to act appropriately when people come under fire. We actually have been in the process of reviewing not only that but also the progress of political developments there.

I am not sure that more forces will solve the problem. What we see—let me just say that what we see in Kosovo—and this is not surprising—is that there are a lot of communities that are doing quite well. And so they don't arise to the level of news coverage most days. You know, they are just good, old-fashioned people in small towns doing their business.

The peacekeepers have found that there are several communities where the local officials themselves are clearly in control, clearly have the support of the local population, and clearly committed to minimizing civilian violence or the exposure of civilians to violence, whatever their

ethnic group. Then there are some places that need more people.

So the first thing I would say in response to your question is, as regards to all these kinds of incidents but particularly that one which concerned me, we ought to make sure that we have deployed the resources that we have there in the best possible way before we make any decision that more are needed. Of course, we have a representative on the ground there, a leader that represents the United Nations, and he can give us some guidance about whether they need more people.

Republican Debates

Q. Did you watch the Republican debates last night, and what do you think about the fact that George W. Bush was not there?

The President. They all have to make their own decisions, and I didn't watch it. I kind of—I look at them wistfully. I really—I did, you know, a slew of them. I don't think I missed a single one in '92, and I enjoyed them all. [Laughter]

I do think they're useful. And even though, very often, they are not news events because you see that the similarities to the candidates are greater than their differences, and that's why, you know, Senator Bradley and Vice President Gore are Democrats and the other five are Republicans.

But I think it is useful to participate in them because you get a feel for what the issues are in specific States and also how people react, and they are, I think, a good thing. I think they strengthen democracy; they get people interested; and they make people more interested in voting.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:28 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Carol Moseley-Braun, nominee for Ambassador to New Zealand; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas, Republican candidate for President; and former Senator Bill Bradley, Democratic candidate for President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

Remarks at a Rally for Mayoral Candidate John F. Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

October 29, 1999

The President. Thank you.

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. I'll make you a deal. I'll ignore them if you will. We observed their free speech rights. Do you think they will observe ours?

Now, let me say, first, to all of you—

[*The disruption continued.*]

The President. Come on. Now, wait a minute, folks. I know something about this. You all relax here. I know something about this. They got their say. Now you give me mine, and you all think about where we are. Come on, let's go. That's actually—

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Let me say this. That's actually a very—don't boo them. That's actually a very serious issue. That's actually a very serious issue that we're working very hard on. Unfortunately, like so many serious issues that I have to deal with, it can't be solved by emotion at a rally. But it's an important issue that is worthy of the concern of the people of Puerto Rico and the people of the United States, and therefore, I appreciate their being here.

Let me say to all of you, I think that you know, every one of you, how much I have loved this city and how grateful I am to you and to the people of Pennsylvania. In 1992 and 1996 and 1998 and 1999, no place in America has been better or kinder to me and our administration and my family than the city of Philadelphia. And I will never forget that.

I want to thank your mayor for his leadership and his friendship. I thank the city council president. I thank chairman and Congressman Brady and Congressman Fattah and Congressman Borski, three wonderful people and great Members of the House of Representatives. I thank my great friend Senator Ted Kennedy for being here today.

You know, in a long and richly textured life in public service, I've had a lot of wonderful moments. But when Ed Rendell called me and told me that I was the first Democrat to equal President Kennedy's victory margin in Philadelphia, I was very moved.

Senator Kennedy's family lost three of its sons to public service, the President, Robert Kennedy, his oldest brother Joseph in World War II. But I can tell you this: Edward Kennedy has redeemed the sacrifice of his family in service to the people of Massachusetts and the people of America. He is one of the finest and ablest and most productive people in the history of the United States Senate.

Now, I want to thank all the other people who are here who have done so much for John Street, the religious leaders, the labor leaders—nobody ever says this from a podium—I want to thank the fundraisers, the people in the business community and others, who stuck by John Street when people said they wouldn't do it and gave him a chance to be competitive.

You know, I remember once when I was running for office in 1984, and President Reagan came in to campaign for my opponent. And I was—and he was very popular in my State. You remember, he was getting reelected by a big margin. And he came in, and he campaigned against me, and then he got 62 percent in the election, and so did I. And it made me always a little apprehensive. So I want you to know I come here not as President to tell you how to vote, but I hope you will listen to me as someone who has tried to be a good friend to Philadelphia, to talk about why.

You know, I'm not running for anything anymore. I kind of hate it, but I'm not. And I want you to listen to me not about how but why. I have the whole rest of my life to try to be a good citizen and give back to the American people for all of the chances they've given me to serve. And I have some things that I wanted to come to Philadelphia to say to all of you in this hall, because the harder you work between now and Tuesday, the bigger the margin of victory will be—and to those beyond this hall, who may hear or see or read about what we say here today, who may be still trying to make up their mind.

First thing I want to say is, I follow this race very closely in the press, and I know something about—I think—the fact that you can't always tell what's going on, exactly, from what

you read, you know? Now, John Street—so I read that there was this campaign for mayor of Philadelphia, and the Democrat was a very good man, but he didn't have any vision, and he wasn't very charismatic. And I don't know who they were talking about, but that guy that introduced me had vision and charisma when he was up here speaking a few minutes ago.

But I want you to listen to my argument, because if you think that our administration, if you think that Bill Clinton and Al Gore have been good for the people of Philadelphia, what I want you to understand is, none of it would have been possible if we hadn't had a partnership. And when I ran for President in 1992, and the people of this city and this State voted for me, I said—and let me say, times have been good for a good long while now, so a lot of people don't remember what it was like before the Clinton-Gore administration or before Rendell and Street. They don't remember. So let me remind you.

It was a time of severe economic distress. It was a time of deepening social division. It was a time of political drift, and the whole enterprise of Government had been discredited in the eyes of many people. So I said, "Give me a chance, and I will pursue some new ideas designed to give opportunity to everybody, to challenge every citizen to be a responsible citizen, and to create an American community of all people, and to give you a Government that is smaller, that actually does a good job for you in what we're supposed to do, which is to empower people and families and communities to control their own destiny and seek the future of their dreams. Now, it was just an argument, just like when you voted for Rendell and Street. It was just an argument. You took that chance on them. But it's not an argument anymore. The evidence is in. And what I want to say to you is, when people say you ought to throw all this away, let me remind you of what they're saying.

In America, we have 19½ million new jobs, the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 30 years, the lowest teen pregnancy rates in 30 years, the lowest inflation rates in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42

years, the lowest crime rates in 32 years, with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. You took a chance, and you were right in 1992 and 1996.

Now, in Philadelphia, in Philadelphia, after years of deficit spending, under this administration you've got seven balanced budgets in a row. You have the first job growth in Philadelphia in 30 years. You have declining crime and welfare rolls. You have people working together across racial lines. Look around this place today. So I say to you—and Ed Rendell has said that John Street's the most qualified person ever to run and that he couldn't have done anything he's done as mayor without him.

Now, just because you've done a good job doesn't mean you're automatically entitled to an election. I remember I was running for Governor for the fifth term, and I'd been in 10 years. And I went out to the State fair in my home State, and this old boy in overalls came up to me and said, "You gonna run again?" [Laughter] And I said, "Well, if I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I guess so. I always have." [Laughter] And I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me after all these years?" He said, "No, but nearly everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And I got hurt, and I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Yeah, but you got a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?" [Laughter]

So it's not enough, but you've got to think about it before you throw it away. And one of the things I will say about the job John Street has done is, it is evidence of what he can do and where he will lead the city. So if he says to you—if he says to you, we ought to invest in education; if he says to you, we've got a plan to make our streets safer; if he says to you, we ought to take Congressman Fattah's mentoring program, his GEAR UP program, which says to middle school kids, if you stay in school and you learn your lessons, here's the money you can get to go to college, and every one of you can go; if he says to you he's going to do these things, at least you have some evidence that he will. And it's a whole lot of evidence, 8 long years of evidence, success, and progress and change in people's lives.

And let me say, he talked about the tax issue. Well, what he didn't say that I want to tell you is, they're lowering taxes. And we've cut taxes in Washington. But what we said is, we will cut taxes, all right, but we want to make

sure that tax cuts are fair, that the working poor get the biggest break. We want to make sure that we don't get the budget out of balance because financial help is critical to social progress. The Democrats ought to be the party of fiscal conservatism because when you've got low interest rates and balanced books, you have more jobs, higher wages, lower mortgage payments, lower car payments, lower college loan payments, and a better future.

Now, John Street understood that before a lot of members of our party did, that by making Philadelphia fiscally conservative and paying its bills and making sure people knew that they could do business here, he was doing something progressive to create jobs and give people a chance to build their own lives, to bring some money into the city coffers and the State coffers, so we could invest in people and their future. So that's the position we're in in Washington.

They wanted to have a tax cut that could throw away the whole surplus that wasn't attributable to your Social Security taxes. And I said, "We can't afford it." Now, they can't even pay the bills without the tax cut, without getting into the Social Security. You've got the same debate here.

Now, who are you going to believe? I think you can believe the guy on tax cuts, number one, John Street has a plan for modest tax cuts, and number two, he's balanced the books for 7 years. I don't think it's even close. It's not even close, who you're going to believe.

On the education issue, they say they're for vouchers, because they feel bad that a lot of poor kids don't get a good education. Well, I feel bad about it, too. And if I had given up on the public schools, I might be where they are. But let me tell you something. We know if you give parents and children a choice of where their kids go to school, we know if you impose high standards and you have accountability, and then you help failing schools, we know if you give every kid who needs it an after-school program and a summer school program—so, yes, don't just promote them whether they know anything or not, but don't blame them if the system is failing them. Give them the after-school programs. Give them the summer school programs. Give them the opportunities they need.

We have evidence, evidence that that helps more kids more quickly than the voucher program, which takes needed money away from

the schools when there is not enough in the first place. There is evidence about this.

So if you have evidence on the main issue of education, and you have evidence on the main issue of tax cuts and fiscal responsibility and the economy, what is the deal here? [Laughter]

Let me tell you, I read some of these editorial arguments. They say, John Street has done a great job; we wouldn't be here without him; give him a gold watch and send him home. Well, let me tell you something. This is a young, vigorous, brilliant, committed public servant. You heard him up here today. You heard him up here today. His heart is on fire for the children and the future of this city. He has all the experience in the world.

And I say, remember what it was like before. Remember how far we have come. Reward his record because it's in your interest to have somebody who can produce that record do what he talked about doing in your future from this podium today.

Now, I'm telling you, there is a difference in the way we approach it. Today I signed another continuing resolution to keep the Government in Washington open for another week because Congress still can't pass a budget because they can't figure out what to do. They want you to believe they're for certain things, but they don't want to pay the price for being for them. And I'm trying to say, let's put party aside and at least pass a budget. John Street's proved he could do that.

I want them to do that in Washington. I want you to think about this. I've, on purpose, not given you a big, whoop-dee-doo political speech. I want you to think about the arguments. What will it say to the people and the children of Philadelphia if on Tuesday, the message coming out of the election is, "Well, old John did a good job, and boy, he had some good ideas about the future, but I had something else to do, and I couldn't be bothered to vote, so he lost." What will it say?

You think about this in your churches on Sunday when you're talking to people about their responsibilities. What will it say? How will you ever say—how will you say to these little kids here, you work hard now and you do a good job and you might grow up to be mayor or Governor or Senator or President, because you will be judged on the job you do? What will it say if you stay home or anybody you know

stays home, after the job this man has done, and you don't elect him the mayor of this great city? Don't you do that.

And what will it say—what will it say if the message coming out of the normally Democratic wards is: Well, he's done a great job, but the other fellow sang a good song? [Laughter] And I want to give him that. I think he's run an adroit campaign. I compliment him. My hat's off to him. And I know something about singing a good song. I've sung a few myself over the years. [Laughter] But in the end—in the end what matters is, can you stand and deliver?

What message will it send to the children of this city and their future if, after the record this man has amassed, the competence he has demonstrated, the character he has demonstrated, the leadership he has demonstrated, and the program he has outlined—which is

plainly in the interests of the people of this city—he is not elected?

I'm telling you, you have a great opportunity here to lift him up on Tuesday night and say, "We are proud of what we have done these last 8 years. We are proud that we did it together across all racial and religious and neighborhood and income lines. We are proud we did it together, and we are proudly going into the future with someone we trust and we know can lead us to a brighter tomorrow."

Thank you, and God bless you. Help him, now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. at LaSalle University. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Edward G. Rendell and city council president Anna Verna of Philadelphia; and Republican mayoral candidate Sam Katz.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan

October 29, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Sudanese emergency is to continue in effect beyond November 3, 1999, to the *Federal Register* for publication.

The crisis between the United States and Sudan that led to the declaration on November 3, 1997, of a national emergency has not been resolved. The Government of Sudan continues to support international terrorism and efforts to

destabilize neighboring governments, and engage in human rights violations, including the denial of religious freedom. Such Sudanese actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to apply economic pressure on the Government of Sudan.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 29, 1999.

NOTE: The notice of October 29 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Ireland-United States Tax Convention

October 29, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Convention Amending the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Ireland for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital Gains signed at Dublin on July 28, 1997. The Convention, which was negotiated pursuant to the Senate's resolution of October 31, 1997, granting

advice and consent to the 1997 Convention, modifies the tax treatment of dividends received from Real Estate Investment Trusts.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 29, 1999.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Atlanta, Georgia

October 29, 1999

Thank you so much. Well, first, Larry and Carol, thank you for opening your home. This is a beautiful tent. I was complimenting Larry on the tent, and he said, "Well, it covers the parking lot." [Laughter] And I said, "Well, maybe you ought to just leave it up then." [Laughter] It's wonderful, and we could probably, most of us, be back tomorrow night if you'll have us here. [Laughter] This is really, really beautiful.

And I want to compliment you, too, Doctor, on your short speech, where you said everything that needed to be said. And maybe we'll get a chance to vote for you someday; if you give speeches like that, you'll be elected to anything.

I want to thank our DNC chair, Joe Andrew, for coming down with me tonight and for his leadership, and my good friend Andy Tobias and your State chair, David Worley. Thank you, David. I also want to acknowledge our finance director, Fran Katz, who is here. And her sister's family is here tonight. And I think this is Fran's last event. She has been magnificent for us, and thank you, Fran, for all the work you've done.

I want to thank my longtime friend Senator Max Cleland and tell all of you that, in my opinion at least—I may be a little biased because we've been friends a long time, and I was the happiest person in America outside

Georgia when he got elected in 1996. But he is doing a wonderful job for you, and you should be very proud of him.

I want to thank Senator Charles Walker, the majority leader of the Senate, for being here; and Mike Thurmond, your labor commissioner; and all the other officials that are here: my longtime friend Michael Hightower, the Fulton County executive. Thank you all for coming.

I will try to make a fairly brief speech tonight, but it occurred to me you have so many new people here tonight that don't normally come to these things, and two of them I see are from Arkansas. I don't know if the others have any excuse or not. [Laughter] But it occurred to me that if people were asking you why you were doing this, that tomorrow, people might ask the rest of you why you were here. And I would like to give you a few reasons, because they're why I'm here.

And Joe Andrew's right. I guess I don't have to be here; I'm not running for anything. I kind of hate it; I wish I could. [Laughter] But that's the system we've got and every time I see a debate, I wish I were part of it. When the Republicans were debating in New Hampshire the other night, I wish I had been part of it, you know. [Laughter] I'm always convinced I could turn just one more, you know.

I come here tonight because I believe in what we have done these last 7 years, because I believe the choices before the American people are stark but also marvelous, and because I believe that we are now in a position to do something that in my whole lifetime—in my whole lifetime, which now spans 53 years—we have never been able to do as a country before. We are, for the first time in my lifetime, economically and socially and politically strong enough and free enough of external and internal debilitating crises that we actually have a chance to write the future of our dreams for our children.

And I'd like to tell you how I think that came to be and what I think the choices are. And tomorrow I hope you'll be able to tell people why you came.

When I came to Georgia in 1991 and 1992, the United States was in a period of economic distress, social division—we had a big riot in Los Angeles, remember?—political drift, where the so-called vision thing was derided and government itself had been discredited. Even liberals thought government would mess up a two-car parade. And I came before the people of Georgia, and I said, "Look I have some new ideas. It's time to put people back at the center of our politics. It's time to work for unity, not division. It's time to build a country with a goal of opportunity for every citizen and responsibility from every citizen and a community of all of our people, meeting our responsibilities at home but also our responsibilities to lead the world for peace and freedom and prosperity."

And Georgia was good to me. I remember when I ran in the Georgia primary, all the Washington experts said that "Governor Clinton heads south to Georgia in deep trouble. If he doesn't get at least 40 percent in the Georgia primary, he's toast." It was by then I'd already been declared dead three times. Now it's happened so often, I'm going to open a tombstone business when I leave office. [Laughter] But anyway—and the people of Georgia in the primary gave me 57 percent of the vote in 1992 and sent me on my way. And I'm very grateful for that.

And then I remember, we had a rally in a football stadium outside Atlanta, in the weekend before the election of '92. You remember that, Max? And we filled it. And I think Buddy Darden was there. We filled the rally. And I remember Hank Aaron was there, and there

were over 25,000 people there. And we won the State by 13,000 votes. So everyone who spoke at that rally can fairly claim to have made me President of the United States, since there were twice as many people there as we won the State by. But we made it, and the rest is history.

I believe that a parallel process has been going on in Georgia, trying to create a new Democratic Party with Max and, first, Governor Miller and now Governor Barnes, with the election of Mike Thurmond and Thurbert Baker, Senator Walker, all the other people on your team, a new generation of leadership, reflecting the broad society of this great State.

We've been working at this now, the Vice President and I and our team, for 7 years. And when I came in '92, we made an argument to the people. We said, "Hey, give us a chance; the country's in trouble." And the American people gave us a chance. But there is no more argument, because the results are in. And from the day I became President to this day, this is the record: We have 19½ million new jobs and the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, which by February, if it continues, will be the longest expansion ever, including all that has occurred during our wars; we have the highest homeownership in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, the lowest teen pregnancy rate in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 30 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years; we've paid \$140 billion, all for the national debt, the largest in history in the last 2 years; and we've done it with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years.

Now, those are not arguments; those are the facts. And it was done by a Democratic Party with a modern philosophy rooted in old values that proved that we could manage the economy, balance the budget, reform welfare, be for high standards and more investment in education, be for the right kind of crime policies, and move this country forward. And it wasn't easy.

We had our casualties. One of them is Buddy Darden, sitting right back there. He was one of the people who was brave enough to stand up and vote for my economic plan. When the Republicans said, falsely, that it would raise taxes on all Americans, it didn't. It raised taxes on most everybody in this room, including me—

[laughter]—but not all Americans. And we said, “Look, everybody’s been talking about this deficit, but nobody wants to do anything about it. If we don’t cut the deficit in half in 4 years, we’re never going to turn the economy around.” And most everybody in this room has made more from the stock market and their investments and the healthy economy and low interest rates than the higher taxes of ’93 cost. But Buddy Darden’s just one of the people who was brave enough to lay down his job in Congress to build up a better future for our people and our country, and I will never forget it.

So the first thing I want to say is, these are real numbers. And everywhere along the way, we had to fight in the face of bitter partisan opposition for our economic plan, for our crime plan, for the right kind of welfare reform that required able-bodied people to work, but also protected their children’s food and medicine, and gave their parents more child care. And it’s working. It’s working. And you should be proud of that.

So the first thing you can say is, “Well, we gave those guys a chance 7 years ago, and it’s worked out pretty well.” Now, that ought to be the first part of your answer.

And the second thing we have to ask ourselves is, now what? You know, all these polls say, well—and the press always, because they love to kind of stick the knife in and see if you squirm while they’re sticking you—they’re always saying, “Well, but the polls say 70 percent of the people want a change.” And I always say, “Well, if they’d polled me, I’d have been in the 70 percent.” If someone said, “Vote for me; I’ll do everything Bill Clinton did,” I’d vote against that person. Why? Because the world is changing very fast. And because what I have tried to do, compared to where we were in 1991 and 1992, is get this country turned around. It’s like turning around an ocean liner in the middle of the ocean; you can’t do it overnight. And we are moving in the right direction. But there are a lot of big challenges out there.

So the second thing I want you to think about is, what are we going to do now? My belief is, since this is the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams, we ought to be taking on the big challenges and seizing on the big opportunities. And I’d like to tell you what they are. And then I’d like to compare our position with the contemporary Republican position.

But first, let me just make a general observation here. Twenty-one years ago, when I ran for Governor for the first time—and I was 32 years old, and I didn’t know what I was doing, I don’t think—I asked this kind of old sage in Arkansas, I said, “You got any advice for me?” I was about 30 points ahead in the polls. He said, “Yes, Bill.” He said, “Let me tell you something. In this business, you’re always most vulnerable when you think you’re invulnerable.” And if you think about that, that’s a pretty good rule for life. You know, I’m convinced one of the reasons that we’ve had such intense partisan battles in the last year is that the majority party of Congress believe they have the luxury of doing it because the country’s doing so well, so there can’t be any really adverse consequences to not paying our United Nations dues and not ratifying the test ban treaty and not funding the Wye peace talks or anything else, fooling around with the environment. Because, after all, things are going well and everybody’s in a good humor, and so this will be treated with a certain amount of frivolity.

And if you think about it, countries are no different than businesses or families or individuals. How many times have you made a mistake in your life because you relaxed your concentration or you got diverted when things were going well, and you felt that nothing possibly could happen very bad? I see a lot of you nodding your heads. This is a common human challenge.

So it is not self-evident that we will use this great moment of prosperity and success to do what we ought to do. But if you think about the children and the grandchildren that we all have or hope to have, and what we owe to them and how, at least in my 53 years, our country has never had this kind of a chance before, we’ll have a hard time explaining why we didn’t make the most of it if we don’t.

So here’s what I think we ought to be doing to build that bridge to the new century for our kids. Number one, we have to deal with the aging of America. We’re going to double the number of people over 65 in 30 years. That means we have to save Social Security for the baby boom generation, which is a gift not only to the baby boom generation but to their children and grandchildren who won’t have to support us if we save Social Security. It means we have to save Medicare, and we should reform it to make it more like the best private sector practices in medicine, but also we should

add a prescription drug benefit, because 75 percent of our seniors don't have affordable prescription drugs.

It means that we should deal with the children of America. For the first time ever in the last 2 years, we have more kids in the public schools than we had in the baby boom generation. And they're a very different crowd. They are the most racially and ethnically, culturally and religiously diverse group of children we have ever had. It is true here in Atlanta, where you have more foreign companies headquartered than any other city in America. It is true just across the river from the Nation's Capital in Washington, in Fairfax County, which has the most diverse school district in America, children from 180 different national and ethnic groups in one school district. It's true in my home State of Arkansas, which in the 1980 census had the highest percentage of people living in Arkansas who were born there of any State in the country except West Virginia, now ranks second in the country in the percentage growth of Hispanics. This is a nationwide thing. We are changing the whole scope of what it means to be an American in our schools before our very eyes. And we must be committed to giving these kids, every one of them, a genuinely world-class education.

We need higher standards; we need more accountability; we need to be committed to turn around failing schools or close them down. But we don't need to brand kids failures if the system is failing them. We need the after-school programs, the summer school programs, the modern schools, all of our classrooms hooked up to the Internet, smaller classes that we want to bring with 100,000 teachers there. There are a lot of things we can do. But we don't get there unless we make it our priority.

We need to deal with the fact that not everybody in our country has participated in our recovery. I'll give you some surprising examples. In the State of South Dakota, the unemployment rate is 2.8 percent. On the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the unemployment rate is 73 percent. In the Mississippi Delta, we still have in my part of the country the poorest part of America, on the average, in the lower Mississippi Delta valley. In Appalachia, there are still places where, because of their physical isolation, there is no new enterprise and opportunity. In many of our inner cities from coast to coast that is so.

But I'll give you another surprising thing. If you look at New York State and you take out New York City and the suburban counties in New York, the rest of New York ranks 49th in job growth since I've been President—if it were a separate State. That includes Albany, Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, big towns that you know about.

I have proposed to double the number of the empowerment zones that the Vice President has managed so well over the last 6 years—which put intense effort into bringing cities back and rural areas back—and to pass something I call the new markets initiative, which would simply give people like you the same financial incentives to invest in poor areas in America we now give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America, in the Caribbean, in Africa, in China. I think that you should have those incentives.

I think we have to do more to build a balance between family and work in the 21st century, when almost all parents, fathers and mothers, will be working. We have to find a way to extend health care to all of our children. We have to find a way to extend child care to working families who need it. Only about 10 percent—in spite of the fact that we have increased dramatically in my administration, only about 10 percent of the people who are eligible for child care assistance actually get it.

We need to have a real equal pay law for equal work for women and men. We've still got problems there. We need to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We need to continue to invest in biomedical research. We need to make a commitment that everybody who works 40 hours a week should not live in poverty. It's time to raise the minimum wage again. I feel very strongly about that.

But the main point I want to make is this: We need an administration with a focus on trying to balance family and work so that our goal is that people can succeed at home and at work. The most important job of any society is raising children. It dwarfs the importance of any other job.

So if people who are at work, either because they want to be or they have to be, are worried sick all day that their kids are in trouble, they're not going to be very productive workers. On the other hand, if people, because they're worried about it, don't go to work at all when they

want to and could, and could make a contribution to our society, we won't be as strong a country. We have got to be more deliberate and disciplined in creating a framework of support for people to succeed at home and at work.

I can mention a lot of other things. Just let me mention a couple more issues that are really important. We need a commitment to build 21st century communities that are both safe and livable. I told you the crime rate's at a 30-year low, and it is. And I'm proud of it. Murder rate's at a 32-year low. Does anybody in this audience tonight believe that America is safe enough? Of course not.

So I say we should set ourselves a real goal. If we're the freest big country in the world, why shouldn't we be the safest big country in the world? Why shouldn't we say, if it worked to put 100,000 police on the street, and it gave us a 30-year low in the crime rate, I promise you, if you put 50,000 more out there concentrated in the high crime areas, we can drive this crime rate down more.

If the Brady bill kept 400,000 people with criminal or mental health backgrounds from buying handguns, and didn't deprive one single hunter of a day of deer season or one single sports shooter of one contest, then we ought to close the loophole in the Brady bill and apply it to the urban flea markets and the gun shows and get some more people out there.

We also ought to recognize that having 21st century communities means we have to find a way to preserve the environment and grow the economy. We're going to have to do more to provide green space in urban areas. More people need to live in cities where you get to drive through woods, like we did to come here tonight. And we can do that. We can do that. We have a whole agenda before the American people.

One of the things that I'm proudest of as President is that under our administration, we have protected more land than any administration in the entire history of America except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt, and I'm proud of that. But we have to do more of that.

So the aging of America, the children of America, the continuing poverty challenge of America, balancing family and work, building 21st century communities, ensuring the long-term prosperity of America—you hear all these people running for President and they're prom-

ising all these tax cuts and all these spending programs, you just remember one thing. We got to the dance that we're enjoying today because we got rid of that awful deficit, and we had the first back-to-back surpluses in 42 years. And that has given us low interest rates and a booming environment for entrepreneurs to succeed in. We now have a chance. If we stay within the parameters of the budget I sent to this Congress, we can actually pay off the debt of America and be debt-free within 15 years for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835.

Now, if we do that, if we do that, what does it mean? Does it mean there will never be another recession? Of course not. But it means no matter what, interest rates will be lower, that means more jobs, higher incomes, more new businesses, cheaper home mortgages, car loans, and college loan payments. Because we have paid the debt down \$140 billion in the last 2 years, because the aggregate debt is over 1½—listen to this—trillion dollars less than the experts said it would be when I became President, that amounts to a tax cut and lower mortgage payments of \$2,000 a year to the average family, \$200 a year in car interest payments, \$200 a year in college loan payments to the average family in America.

We don't want to forget what got us here. The Democrats are the progressive party. We like to invest money in people. We like to help people, and we ought to. But we have to do it within a framework that says it is this economy that has been our best social program, those 19½ million new jobs, every year a new record in new businesses started, creating an environment in which people like a lot of the great entrepreneurs here present have been able to be so successful.

So I say we ought to set a big goal. Let's get ourselves out of debt over the next 15 years, and then we'll have more money than we know what to do with. And our children and grandchildren can look forward to a generation of prosperity.

You mentioned the world earlier, and how concerned you were. I believe that America has special responsibilities that are, if anything, even greater now than the cold war's over. And it bothers me that the majority in Congress don't want to pay our U.N. dues; that they so blithely walked away from a Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty that our nuclear allies Britain

and France and 150 other countries had signed; that they wouldn't even let us offer the safeguards that answered the problems they said were there with the treaty; that it was just a political issue.

It bothers me that they passed a foreign assistance package that not only had no money to meet America's commitments that I made pursuant to a 25-year bipartisan involvement in the Middle East peace process, nothing for the Wye peace accord, to finance it and do our part, when we're at a very critical juncture in the Middle East talks, and I'm about to go off to Oslo to meet with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat; nothing to continue the denuclearization program started by Georgia's Senator Sam Nunn and Dick Lugar of Indiana, the Nunn-Lugar program, which has done more to make the world safe than anything else we've done lately, because it destroys nuclear weapons in Russia—no money for that—no money for America to join everybody from His Holiness the Pope to the European Union to Japan in providing debt relief to the poorest countries in the world in the year 2000, so they can begin to grow and buy our products—some of them really think that the only thing we've got to do is build a bigger bomb and a bigger wall and we'll be fine, because the cold war's over. I think that is nuts.

You know, we went in and won a war in Kosovo so that people could go home and not be butchered because of their ethnic and religious background. But when we left, the European Union and our other Allies are bearing the lion's share of the costs and the burden in Kosovo now. We helped to end a terrible, brief, bitter conflict in East Timor, after the people there voted for independence, and stopped another ethnic slaughter. But when we left, our friends from Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, and other places went in and did the lion's share of the work. They needed us to help them get in there, but they did it. We get something out of cooperating with other people in the world. And if we stop it and we don't want to pay our fair share, then someday we'll be confronted with crisis after crisis after crisis where we've either got to go alone or watch while nothing happens.

Every President since Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman endorsed the idea of the United Nations, has understood that America would be more influential if we were a good neighbor

and a good partner, and did a responsible job of paying our fair share. And I think it's important.

And the last point I want to make is the most important of all. If I had to leave the Presidency tomorrow—as much as I have worked on all the things we just talked about: the economy, the family, the environment, the children, the seniors—and I could give America one gift, my one gift would be to give America the ability to be one America, to bridge all of the divides.

It is so ironic that we're celebrating the explosion of technology, the explosion of biology, the solving of the mystery of the human genome. We look ahead to all these unbelievable things happening, and the biggest problem of the world is the oldest problem of human society. We're still scared of people who aren't like us. And when you strip it all away, that's what's going on in Northern Ireland; that's what's going on in the Middle East; that's what's going on in the Balkans; that's what's going on in the tribal wars in Africa; and that's what you see when Matthew Shepard gets killed in Wyoming, or James Byrd gets torn apart in Texas, or the little Jewish kids get shot at going to the community center, and the Filipino postalworker gets murdered in California, or the Korean Christian gets shot coming out of church in Indiana, right after the African-American basketball coach gets murdered walking on the street in Chicago.

What happened to all these people? We still can't form a society where no one hates anybody else because they're different. And it all starts with fear, which leads to distance, which leads to looking down on people, which leads to eventually dehumanizing them, which then justifies violence against them.

So if I could leave this country with one gift, it would be the gift of just being one America. Because people are smart in this country. We nearly always get it right when we've got enough time. That's why we're still around here after 200 years, you know, we eventually get it figured out. And the reason—so the second reason that I hope you will say, if people ask you why you're here, say, "You know, they had some good ideas, and they've got a good record, the Democrats do," first thing; secondly, "They want to take on the big challenges for the 21st century, and so do I, and I agree with them on what they are."

The third thing I want to point out, just briefly, is that the new Republican Party wanted a tax cut that's so big, it would have spent all the non-Social Security surplus and there would have been no money to do any of this I talked about. We wanted a tax cut, too, but one that would be consistent with paying off the debt and investing in the education of our children and dealing with the aging of America.

The second thing I want to say is, it may be popular in the South, but I think it's wrong. I don't think it's so popular anymore. Even the new Republican Party is for whatever the NRA says they ought to do on these gun fights. Now, you know, I once had a lifetime membership in the NRA. I've even got my jacket here. I'm sure they revoked it somewhere now. *[Laughter]* But you listen—hadn't anybody missed a day of deer season on what I've done, nobody, and nobody's been knocked out of one sporting contest for what I've advocated. But there are people alive today because of these background checks. We did the right thing.

So we differ. We're for the Patients' Bill of Rights, and they're against it. We believe our education program ought to include 100,000 teachers, and we ought to build or modernize 6,000 schools. I was just in Philadelphia today where the average school building is 65 years old. In New York City, 40 percent of school buildings are over 70 years old, and they still are heated by coal. There are places in this country where we cannot hook up the rooms to the Internet because they cannot be wired. I was in Florida, in a little town, the other day; there were 12 housetrailer out behind the elementary school in a little town where the kids were going to school. This is an important issue.

In our budget, we not only don't spend the Social Security surplus, we extend the life of Social Security and Medicare. Their budget doesn't add a day to the life of Social Security and Medicare. They're opposed to our initiatives on the environment. You know what they've done in foreign policy; we've talked about it earlier. So we have profound differences.

And I hope tomorrow you'll say, "You know, whether I voted Democrat or Republican over the last 20 years, looking at the next 10, I agree with the Democrats. Those are three pretty good reasons to have been here. I like the record; I like the agenda; I agree with them on the differences."

But if you don't remember anything else, just remember this. We're all pretty lucky or we wouldn't be sitting under this tent tonight. The good Lord has been good to us. And most all of us would like for people to believe we were born in a log cabin we built ourselves, but the truth is we've all had a lot of luck and a lot of kindness and a lot of gifts. And with all the turmoil, the person in this room I believe has made the greatest sacrifices for our country is Max Cleland, and I think he would tell you even he feels lucky to be here and be with us.

So if you don't remember anything else, just remember this. I'm not running for anything. I'm 53 years old; I've had the best life I could imagine. I will never be able to give this country enough to repay what has been given to me. But if I could give you anything, you would remember this—believe me, this is the only chance in my lifetime we have ever had to build the future of our dreams for our children, and we dare not pass it by.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:20 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Larry and Carol Cooper; Andy Tobias, treasurer, and Fran Katz, national finance director, Democratic National Committee; State Democratic Party Chair David Worley; former Representative Buddy Darden; former Senator Sam Nunn; State Senator Charles Walker; Fulton County Commissioner Michael Hightower; State Attorney General Thurbert E. Baker; baseball Hall of Famer Henry (Hank) Aaron; former Gov. Zell Miller and current Gov. Roy E. Barnes of Georgia; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Pope John Paul II.

Remarks at an Anti-Defamation League Dinner in Atlanta October 29, 1999

The President. Thank you so much.

Audience member. I came to kiss you, Mr. President!

The President. Well, if you came to kiss me, if you'll wait until I finish, I'll be right down there. [Laughter] Don't you go anywhere. I'll be right there. [Laughter] That sort of cuts the atmosphere, doesn't it? That's great. [Laughter] What was I going to say? [Laughter]

Howard, thank you for your introduction and for your many years of friendship and support and for your leadership. Abe Foxman, thank you for your long leadership of the ADL. Glenn Tobias, thank you for your service.

I know the president of the city council, President Pitts, is here; and De Kalb County Chief Executive Levetan is here. I thank them for their presence. And I'm especially grateful to be here with my friend and I believe one of the greatest living Americans, Congressman John Lewis. And Lillian, hello. Lillian, it's nice to see you. Thank you.

More than anything else tonight, except to get my kiss—[laughter]—more than anything else tonight, I came here to say thank you. Thank you for nearly 7 years of working with me and Hillary and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore, year-in and year-out. Thank you for your commitment to genuine peace in the Middle East. Thank you for fighting anti-Semitism and terrorism and for promoting religious freedom throughout the world. Thank you for developing a model hate crimes statute, which is now the law in 40 of our 50 States. Thank you for helping us to organize the first-ever White House Conference on Hate Crimes. Thank you for standing with us to promote excellence and diversity and equal opportunity with the appointments of people like Bill Lann Lee and Jim Hormel. Thank you for your pioneering work to filter out hate on the Internet, which lamentably was a part of the poison that led to the tragedy of Columbine High School. Thank you for making a world of difference, through your World of Difference Institute, to teach tolerance on campuses and to law enforcement officials across our land. I thank you for all that.

The Talmud says, "Should anyone turn aside the right of a stranger, it is as though he were to turn aside the right of the most high God." Well, that passage carries special meaning in the world in which we live, because the great irony of this time is that we stand on the threshold of unbelievable discoveries in science and technology, amidst the greatest revolution in telecommunications the world has ever known.

I was in Silicon Valley the other night with a bunch of people that started this great company, eBay. You ever buy anything on eBay? Nearly everybody has now. What you might find interesting is that over 20,000 Americans, including many former welfare recipients, are now making a living on eBay, not working for the company but trading on eBay.

I was talking the other night, just a few months ago, at one of the millennial lectures that Hillary put together, with the brilliant Cambridge physicist Stephen Hawking, who wrote a book called, "A Brief History of Time" which I pretended to read. [Laughter] And we were talking about how the new century will bring with it the discovery of millions, perhaps even tens of millions of new galaxies, and perhaps the capacity to pierce the black holes in the universe, to see what is there.

We had an evening the other night, about which I'll say more later, a fascinating evening at the White House that Hillary sponsored, with a man named Vint Cerf, who essentially developed the architecture of the Internet and gave the first E-mail, 18 years ago, to his profoundly deaf wife—he thought about the E-mail as a way to communicate with his wife while he was at work, because she was so deaf even hearing aids could not help her; she now hears, by the way, because of deep implanted computer chips in her ear canals—and Professor Lander from Harvard, one of America's most prominent scholars of the human genome. And they were saying that in a matter of a few years, children will come home from the hospital with a genetic map and with the genuine prospect of a life expectancy of 100 years or more.

Isn't it interesting that in this most modern of all imaginable worlds, with even more breathtaking discoveries just around the corner—that

I believe will also include cures for many of the most severe forms of cancer and the ability to give people with severed spinal cords the capacity to walk again, all these miracles—that the biggest problem the world faces is the oldest problem of human society, the fear of the other? We all still continue to turn aside the rights of a stranger, people we do not know, therefore we do not understand, therefore we easily fear, therefore we easily dismiss and pretty soon dehumanize them after that. How easy it is to justify violence.

And so, the most urgent task, as we stand on the threshold of the new millennium, is not to plumb the depths of outer space or the inner depths of the human gene, but to follow the oldest admonitions of our Scriptures, and to build what Congressman Lewis, in his marvelous autobiography, and before him, Dr. King, called “the beloved community,” one in which we genuinely love those even with whom we disagree because we do not fear those who are different. The ADL has always stood for that. And most of all, I say thank you.

You know, I’ve spent a lot of time now going around to political events to try to stir the party faithful, and I feel like a beast of burden since I can’t run for anything anymore doing that. I kind of hate that. But I do it—[laughter]—but I do it happily because I want to say to people, I think we’re leading the country in the right direction. And it’s nice for me, after these years of work and labor and often bitter disputes, to say to the American people that we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19½ million new jobs, and highest homeownership ever, and a 29-year low in unemployment, a 30-year low in welfare rolls, and a 30-year low in the crime rate and a 30-year low in inflation and a 20-year low in the poverty rate and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years achieved by the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. That’s pretty good, and I like saying that.

This week I was able to say we had gone from a \$290 billion deficit to a \$123 billion surplus. In the last 2 years, we paid \$140 billion down on our national debt. That’s the most we’ve ever done on that. I like saying that.

But what I want to say to you tonight is that the real issue is not the marvelous way America has come in the 7 years that I’ve had the privilege to be President. The real issue before the American people is, what are we

going to do with this moment of great good fortune? And again, you can plumb the depths of our Scriptures to find ample evidence that sometimes a good time can be a great hazard to people.

A nation is no different from a family or an individual or a business. Sometimes you’re most prone to mess up when things are going well. And I often think that some of the bitter partisanship and sort of shortsightedness we’ve seen in the last 2 years have occurred because people think they have the luxury to do that, because things are going so well, they can’t imagine there could be any adverse consequences to not paying the U.N. dues, or contributing our fair share to the alleviation of the debt of the poorest countries in the world, or adopting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, or moving to clean up the environment, or any of the number of other issues.

And what I have tried to say to the American people is I think this is an enormous responsibility that we have, not just me as President or the Democrats and Republicans in Congress, but as a people. I’m 53 years old. And in my lifetime, not once, not even once, have we had the combination of prosperity, social progress, and the absence of emergency necessary to allow a people to literally imagine the future of their dreams and build it for their children.

We had an economy maybe almost this good in the sixties, but we had to deal with the awful realities of the civil rights revolution and then with the burden of the Vietnam war. Before that, it was the cold war; and before that, World War II; and before that, the Depression. We have never had a time like this in my lifetime.

And I have asked the American people to meet the challenge of the aging of America, save Social Security, save Medicare, add a prescription drug benefit to it; meet the challenge of the largest and most diverse group of schoolchildren in our history, give them all a world-class education, turn the failing schools around or shut them down, but give the kids the after-school programs, the summer school programs, the modern schools, the Internet, the small classes they deserve; to meet the challenge of—now that we have a 30-year low in the crime rate, no one thinks it’s as safe as it ought to be in America—make our country the safest big country in the world.

And do the things we know will help us to do that: do more to keep guns out of the hands

of criminals and children; do more to put police on our streets in the most violent neighborhoods; do more to make our communities more livable and meet our international environmental responsibilities and still grow the economy; do more to bring economic opportunity to people in places left behind.

The other day, I was in South Dakota, where the unemployment rate is 2.8 percent, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where the unemployment rate is 73 percent. I think we ought to give all of you the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give you to invest in poor areas in Latin America, or Africa, or Asia, because if we don't, if we can't bring enterprise and opportunity to our poorest Americans now, we'll never get around to dealing with it.

That's why I've asked America to guarantee our long-term prosperity by adopting a long-term plan for the budget that by the year 2015 will have us completely out of debt for the first time since Andrew Jackson was President in 1835, because I believe it'll bring long prosperity to us.

But I would say to you all, as important as those things are, there are two things that relate to the irony I mentioned at the beginning: the fact that we enter a new millennium with all these modern possibilities bedeviled by the oldest failing of human society. But there are two other issues without which we cannot proceed successfully.

One is to meet our responsibilities around the world as the world's leading force for peace and freedom and reconciliation, against terror and the other forces of destruction, including proliferation of nuclear and chemical and biological weapons. That's why we ought to pay our debt to the U.N. That's why we ought to make our contribution to alleviate the debt of the poorest countries in the world. That's why we ought to continue to fund the program begun by former Senator Sam Nunn from Georgia, to take down these nuclear weapons in Russia, that they want us to help them destroy. And that's why we ought to pay our commitment, made at the Wye peace talks pursuant to 25 years of bipartisan—bipartisan—efforts for peace in the Middle East, to contribute to the success of the Wye talks, and the modified efforts under Barak and Arafat.

On Sunday night I will leave for Oslo to honor the memory of my friend Yitzhak Rabin

and to continue his mission. We're now at a critical moment in the peace process. Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat have made some real movement forward. They've made some hard decisions. They're working hard on preserving security and fighting terrorism, and they're making progress in implementing the provisions of the Oslo agreement.

We actually have a chance within the reasonably near future for peace for Israel and its neighbors, for security so necessary for progress and prosperity and freedom and justice all across that region.

But like all chances in life, it is fleeting. It will require hard choices and hard work within a short timeframe. And it cannot be done without the support of the most determined friends of peace, like those of you in this room.

I still believe that we're either going to go forward or drift backward. We can't just freeze this moment. The region could reverse course. There's still plenty of extremists and terrorists out there. There's still people all over the world who represent the forces of destruction and the enemies of the nation-state—not simply Israel, but everywhere—working to develop weapons of mass destruction that can be miniaturized and carried around and used at a moment's notice. And the same technology that gives you a tiny, tiny cell phone that guys with big fingers like me can hardly dial these days will lead to the miniaturization of weapons in the 21st century.

Make no mistake about it. Our problems with the enemies of peace, with the terrorists, are far from over. And I'll make you a prediction. Within 10 years, it will be normal to see a very sophisticated alliance all around the world between terrorists, drugrunners, and organized crime, maximizing the same modern technologies that we all seek to access to do good.

This is the moment that we must seize. It is so important for America to support the peace process and to provide the resources to make peace work. I don't know how many times I have heard one of my leaders at the Pentagon say, "Mr. President, the most expensive peace is far, far cheaper than the cheapest war." It is inexcusable that we would not fund a national security budget for peace, necessary to meet our responsibilities in the Middle East.

Congress sent me a foreign aid bill without the \$800 million I requested this year, or the \$500 million for next year to fund our part of

the Wye River agreement. The bill sent a terrible signal to our friends in the Middle East, the strongest possible encouragement to the enemies of peace that there will be no immediate rewards for peace. That's why I vetoed it, and I'll veto it again if it doesn't provide for the funding of our obligations around the world.

I ask you to support the other provisions of the bill, the funds necessary to reduce the nuclear threat from Russia, to provide debt relief to the poorest countries as the Pope and so many others have asked us to do in the millennial year, to meet our obligations to the United Nations, to do the other things that promote democracy and opportunities for trade and investment.

We must sustain America's leadership. I want you to know, on a subject I know you care a lot about, I have urged the Russian leadership not to allow the current challenges they face to undermine respect for human rights and individual liberty and opposition to anti-Semitism in Russia. If we want—I will say again, if we want to have influence with other countries, none of them are asking us to buy our way into their favor. But as the wealthiest, most powerful country in the world at the moment of our greatest success, for us not to even pay our fair share when already we spend a smaller percentage of our income on nonmilitary national security measures than any major country in the world is inexcusable.

So for all of those other challenges I mentioned, we must be a force for good around the world. And we cannot do that for free. We get a lot out of our interdependence with others. We contribute to the United Nations so that when something happens like Kosovo—yes, our planes flew the bulk of the mission, and yes, we bore the bulk of the financial burdens to save those 800,000 people from ethnic cleansing, and I'm glad we did it.

But today, as they work to rebuild, the bulk of the burdens in manpower and in money is being borne by our allies in Europe. Yes, it was necessary for the United States to take a strong position on the problem in East Timor to stop the terrible slaughter there as a result of their vote for independence. But now the bulk of the load is being carried by our friends, like Australia and Malaysia and others there, because we live in an interdependent world where we share responsibility.

Yes, we spend some money in Africa to train troops, but that means the next time a horrible slaughter like Rwanda comes along, it can be handled by the Africans and we can give them support, and they won't have to look at us and say, "Why didn't you send 100,000 Americans to stop this before it started?" We get a lot out of being good neighbors and responsible parties, and we need to continue to do it.

The last point I want to make is one the ADL well knows. We can't be a force for good abroad unless we are a force for good at home. And while, thank God, we have been spared the ravages in the modern age of mass conflict based on religion as in Northern Ireland, or religion and ethnic differences as in the Middle East or the Balkans, or tribal bloodshed as in Rwanda, Burundi, and other places in Africa, we see in these hate crimes—the murder of young Matthew Shepard in Wyoming, the horrible dragging death of James Byrd in Texas, the killing of the postman, the Filipino postman; and the shooting of the children at the Jewish community center in Los Angeles, the murder spree in the Midwest that took the lives of the African-American basketball coach outside Chicago and a young Korean Christian as he walked outside his church, those perpetrated by a man who claimed he belonged to a church that did not believe in God, but did believe in white supremacy—we see that we are not immune from this. And why is that? Because it is a part of human nature. Why was it in the Torah in that provision I read earlier? Because of the knowledge from God that in us, there is all the tendency, in all of us, to turn away from the right of a stranger.

Every one of us, I believe—maybe you don't; maybe you guys are perfect—I wake up every day, and I know—I sort of think of my life and my attitude toward the world and of its people as being governed by an internal scale, and on one side of the scale there is light and on the other side there is darkness, and you always want it tilting toward the light, but not so much as to be naive, but enough to have a genuine charitable view toward others, a genuine respect, a genuine humility, and understand that you may not always be right but you have an obligation to recognize the integrity and the common humanity of others.

But it's easy to get that scale out of balance. Even all of us have our good days and our bad days. When it gets badly out of balance,

then the fear and the dehumanization of the other drives people to these terrible, tormented acts of slaughter. Sometimes there's a political patina on it, so people can actually act as if it's justified. Sometimes it's just some poor, demented, twisted soul, acting out of pain and fear and anger and blindness. Nothing is more important to our future than flushing that not only from the killers but flushing that feeling in its less violent manifestations from all of our hearts.

If I could leave America after my Presidency with one wish, it would be to be one America, to revel in our diversity, to respect it, to celebrate it, to enjoy it, to make it interesting.

It can only happen—you can only have fun—in a diverse country. You can only find it interesting to examine whether someone else's religious perspective or cultural heritage has some validity for you, something you can learn. You can only really revel in it if you believe that our common humanity is more important than the things which make us different.

Now, that means, it seems to me, we need to stand against manifestations of our inhumanity, and we need to do more to reaffirm our common humanity. That's why I was so disturbed when the Republican majority on the relevant committees of Congress took out the hate crimes legislation in the form of the bill that had already passed the Senate. I vetoed the bill that came to me, in part because it didn't contain those hate crimes provisions.

And I think it's very important that we say, "Look, it's not that the victims of these hate crimes"—you know, the people that say we don't need these things are saying, "You're saying those victims are more important than other victims." That's not true. What we are saying is that hate crimes victimize not only the victim but they victimize society as a whole in a special way, because they contradict the very idea of America we are trying to build. We're not letting somebody else off the hook. We're saying we want a clear and unambiguous stand against things that contradict the very idea of the America we want to build.

The other point I'd like to make is, it's not enough just to be against things. We need to be for things that will enable us to live up to our full potential. That's why I'm also for strengthening the equal pay law, for the employment nondiscrimination act or the so-called Kennedy-Jeffords bill to let people with disabili-

ties go into the workplace and keep their Government health care through Medicaid, so that they can work and be a part of our society. We need to be for things that bring us together.

I want to close with these two stories. I told you earlier we had this millennial evening at the White House, with the genome scholar from Harvard and Vint Cerf, who was one of the architects of the Internet. And we were talking about—they were talking about how the mysteries of the human gene could not have been solved without the advances in computer science. And then they put them all up on the screens, the formula for what our genes look like. And I pretended to understand that. [Laughter]

But I did understand the point they were making. So I said to them, I said, "Look, with these 100,000 sequences and all the possibilities and permutations, how much are we alike or different?" And Professor Lander said, "The truth is that all people, genetically, are 99.9 percent the same." That confirms your philosophy, right?

Here's the next point he made, which is more interesting to me. He said if you were to get groups of people together by ethnicity or race—let's suppose you've got 100 European Jews together, and you've got 100 Arabs, and you've got 100 Iranians, and then you've got 100 people from the Yoruba Tribe in Nigeria, and you've got 100 Irish people together—and you put them all in a room with their groups, here's what they said. They said the genetic differences among the individual groups—that is, among the Yorubas, among the Irish, among the Jews, among the Arabs—the genetic differences within the groups would be greater than the genetic differences between any one group and any other group. Now, think about that.

When you look at a profile of any sizeable ethnic group—Hispanic, African, you name it—the genetic differences of the individuals within the group are greater than the group genetic profile of one group as compared with another. In other words, the most advanced scientific knowledge confirms the wisdom of the Torah and tells us not to turn aside a stranger. Because it turns out a stranger is not so strange after all.

In the summer of 1994, as I remember, it was just before we went to the Wadi Araba to sign the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan. The late Prime Minister Rabin and the

late King Hussein addressed the United States Congress. Near the end of his speech, Rabin turned to Hussein and said, and I quote, "We have both seen a lot in our lifetime. We have seen too much suffering. What will you leave to your children? What will I leave to my grandchildren? I have only dreams," he said, "to build a better world, a world of understanding and harmony, a world in which it is a joy to live. That is not asking for too much."

That dream has united those of you in this organization for 85 years now. That dream in our time requires us to build one America and requires America to be a force for peace and harmony in the world. Think of it: Rabin gave his life so that we might build a world in which it is a joy to live. It is not asking for too much, but it will require all we can give.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 p.m. at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Howard P. Berkowitz, national chairman, Abraham H. Foxman, national director, and Glenn Tobias, national executive committee chairman, Anti-Defamation League; Atlanta City Council President Robb Pitts; De Kalb County Chief Executive Liane Levetan; Representative John Lewis' wife, Lillian; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Pope John Paul II.

The President's Radio Address

October 30, 1999

Good morning. Two weeks ago I reaffirmed our Nation's commitment to environmental protection and announced our plan to protect more than 40 million acres of roadless area in our national forests. Today I'm announcing new actions we're taking to protect our air, our water, and some of our most precious lands.

One of the simplest but most potent tools in our fight against pollution is public information. By requiring industries to tell communities how much they pollute the air and water, we empower citizens to fight back and create a powerful incentive for industry to pollute less. Remarkably, in the decades since the public's right-to-know about chemical releases became the law of the land, industry's toxic pollution has fallen nearly 50 percent.

Today, my administration is again expanding the public's right-to-know. We're acting to protect families against some of the most dangerous chemicals ever known, including mercury, dioxin, and PCB's. These chemicals are troubling for two reasons. First, they don't break down easily; instead, they build up in the environment and in our bodies. Second, many of them heighten the risk of cancer or other illness, even at very low doses.

Right now companies are required to disclose their uses of these chemicals only if they handle huge quantities. Beginning January 1st, we'll require companies to inform the public even if they're using much smaller quantities, in some cases just 10 pounds a year. In the case of dioxin, a chemical that can cause harm even in minute quantities, companies must report if they produce as little as a tenth of a gram.

By posting this information for all to see, we can speed the day when families no longer need worry about hidden dangers in the air they breathe and the water they drink.

As we step up our fight against pollution, we must work as well to preserve lands across America that are still pristine. Today I'm announcing a new effort to protect the incomparable California desert so future generations can enjoy it in all its splendor. Five years ago I signed the California Desert Act, preserving millions of acres of stark but fragile landscape, rich with history and precious wildlife.

Today, to mark the anniversary, the nonprofit Wildlands Conservancy is donating to the Federal Government an additional 14,000 acres within the Joshua Tree National Park, lands that

otherwise might be developed. It's through partnerships like this that we can protect vital pieces of our national endowment.

We have also just completed our agreement to preserve New Mexico's spectacular Baca Ranch, home to one of the largest herds of wild elk anywhere in the world. I'm working closely with Congress to secure the funding to complete this purchase so that we can preserve this extraordinary land for all time.

In my balanced budget for this year, I proposed a \$1 billion lands legacy initiative to preserve other natural treasures and to help communities protect local green spaces. Regrettably, Congress has failed to provide even half the necessary funding.

And even more troubling, the Interior bill that Congress has produced once again is laden with provisions that would benefit special interests at the expense of our public interest and our environment. One of these provisions would allow excessive logging on our national forests. Another would let mining companies dump more toxic wastes on public lands. A third would grant a windfall to major companies that produce oil on Federal lands.

This makes no sense. Today, while I'm taking action to protect communities against toxic chemicals, Congress is giving special interests

license to pollute our public lands. While I'm taking action to save some of our most treasured places, Congress is putting other precious lands at greater risk.

So let me be clear: If Congress sends me this Interior bill, I'll veto it. Again, I urge Congress to work with me on a better bill that is unburdened by these antienvironmental provisions and that has adequate funding to protect our natural landscape through the lands legacy initiative.

All though this century, since Theodore Roosevelt set us on the path of conservation, Americans have worked together across party lines to protect public health and restore and protect our environment. As we begin the new millennium, let our gift to the future be a new effort, together across party lines, to clean our air, to ensure safe water, and to preserve healthy, thriving lands.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:59 p.m. on October 29 at a private residence in Atlanta, GA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on Naming a Guided Missile Destroyer for Senator John H. Chafee

October 30, 1999

I am honored to announce today that the 40th ship of the *Arleigh Burke* class of guided missile destroyers will be named in honor of the late Senator John H. Chafee of Rhode Island. Senator Chafee distinguished himself throughout a life dedicated to serving our Nation as a United States Senator, as Secretary of the Navy, as Governor of Rhode Island, and as a United States Marine in World War II and the Korean war. Given Senator Chafee's long association with the sea—with the Marine Corps, the Navy, and the great maritime State of Rhode Island—I can think of no better way

to honor his many contributions than to name a warship in his honor.

The ship named in honor of Senator Chafee will be one of the most technologically advanced ships in the United States Navy. It will be capable of performing a wide range of missions in support of U.S. national security. Whether showing the flag in peacetime to build good will with other nations or employing its potent combat power in conflict, the ship will carry on Senator Chafee's legacy of honorable service to our Nation.

Remarks on the EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy and an Exchange With Reporters

October 31, 1999

The President. Like all Americans, Hillary and I are very saddened by the crash of the EgyptAir flight off the coast of Massachusetts. We are working on the recovery efforts. We know there has been an extensive loss of life, and we don't yet know what caused the accident. So I really think I can't say any more now, except——

Q. Have you talked with anyone, sir?

The President. Only our people. They've briefed me. But we don't know, we don't know what the cause of the accident is. We'll keep working until we find out.

Q. Concerns about foul play, sir?

The President. We don't know. We have no evidence of that at this time, and I think it's better if people draw no conclusions until we know something.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. outside Foundry United Methodist Church following church services. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Interview With Bryant Gumbel of CBS's "The Early Show"

October 31, 1999

Mr. Gumbel. Mr. President, first off, thank you very much for the time. I'm grateful.

The President. You're welcome. I'm glad to see you. Congratulations on your new program.

Mr. Gumbel. Thank you very much.

The President. It's going to ruin your golf game getting up at 4 o'clock every morning.

EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy

Mr. Gumbel. Well it's not bad, though; you're on the tee by noon, so it's okay. Let me turn serious for a moment.

We meet against the backdrop of the EgyptAir 990 crash. At this point in time, have you any reason to believe this was anything other than an accident?

The President. No. I don't. But I think it's important that we draw no conclusions about it and just let the investigation take its course.

Mr. Gumbel. Given history, given the volatile nature of Mideast relationships, do you see the absence of answers in any way impacting the Mideast talks in Oslo?

The President. Based on what I know now, I don't. I had a good talk with President Mubarak. I called him immediately when I got up this morning, and we talked about it a little bit. We're working together with the Egyptian

Government in every way we can on this crash. So, now, I don't. So, unless there is some question I don't know about that arises in the next day or 2, I don't think it will.

Mr. Gumbel. Would you say President Mubarak shares your view right now that there is no reason to believe this was anything other than an accident?

The President. Well, I think we agree that the evidence doesn't give us any indication that there was, now. But the evidence doesn't say anything one way or the other. We don't know. And I think the honest answer to people who ask is that they shouldn't have a prejudice about it one way or the other. We should just look and see.

Upcoming Middle East Peace Talks in Oslo, Norway

Mr. Gumbel. As you look to Oslo, what are your realistic expectations of what you can accomplish?

The President. Well, I hope that by getting together with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat in a setting designed to honor the memory and to evoke the memory of Yitzhak Rabin, we can give some new energy to this process. They've done really quite well with

their cooperation on security, with opening the safe passage from the West Bank to Gaza, with agreeing to a very disciplined timetable. But now they're getting into these issues which are all hard. And my strong conviction is that we've known what these issues are for a long time now; they're not going to get any easier. So whatever I and whatever the United States can do to facilitate a timely resolution of these issues I think will be positive. So I think this will have a positive impact on getting the process going along here.

Mr. Gumbel. Is it easier for you to feel a degree of optimism because it's Barak involved right now instead of Netanyahu?

The President. Well that may be part of it. But I think the main thing is that Barak and Arafat have now made an agreement and they're implementing it. And they're also cooperating on security issues. And Barak has made publicly clear that he had a timetable for resolving this, and he's received the support of the Israeli people. So that whole set of circumstances make me optimistic.

On the other hand, I want to say again, we're now down to the hard decisions. When Oslo was negotiated, the Oslo agreement, way back at the very end of '92, they knew what they were doing in saying, "Okay, here is what we're going to do now; here's what we're going to do in the next 4 or 5 years; here is what we're going to do at the end." And they left the hard stuff to the end. It was the right decision, but we're now down to the end, and we have to deal with the hard stuff.

President's Role in 2000 Elections

Mr. Gumbel. Let's move closer to home. Let's talk politics, close to your heart, of course. The two people who have been closest to you for 7 years are about to get out there on the campaign trail while you stay at home and deal with the issues. Is that terribly frustrating?

The President. No. Actually, I enjoy it. I knew when I started that it would come to an end. I was hoping I would be fortunate enough to serve two terms, and I have been. And I've loved every day of it. And now it's important that the work of the country go on and that the direction that we have taken continue and that the changes that still need to be made by the country be made. So I'm actually very—I'm proud of the Vice President, and I'm very

proud of my wife for being willing to stick their necks out and do this. And I wish them well.

Mr. Gumbel. What role do you see yourself playing in their campaigns?

The President. Well no official role, really. And I shouldn't. But I will do what I'm asked to do. I've helped the Vice President at a couple of fundraisers, and we talk with some frequency. And of course, I talk to Hillary all the time, every day. And it's so funny because our roles are almost completely reversed now. All the things that she did for me over more than 20 years, all the encouragement, reminders, helpful suggestions, everything, all the things, we've just kind of reversed roles. And I'm enjoying it. I'm trying to do a good job in my new role.

Mr. Gumbel. How do you view the polls that have suggested that if you're on the campaign trail with them, you may be more of a liability than a positive?

The President. Well, what I think people are saying is we want these people to sell themselves. And we don't want anyone to tell us how to vote. That's the point I tried to make in Philadelphia when I was campaigning for John Street, that I don't want to tell you how to vote. I would like to offer you some reasons about why you should vote.

And I think particularly in New York where Hillary—which has been wonderful to me; I got 58 percent of the vote; we won by 1.8 million votes in New York in 1996, but that doesn't mean that those New Yorkers believe I should tell them who should be their Senator. They want to see Hillary out there committed to them, their issues, their needs, their future. And the more she does that, the more everybody else will be able to make arguments about why she should be elected. But I think—and that's just the way the democratic process works. And it's good.

Mr. Gumbel. Would you welcome the chance to get out there and stump against Rudy Guiliani, or if the case calls for it, George W. Bush?

The President. Well, what I hope that I will be able to do is to remind the American people of where we were 7 years ago, where we are now, where we need to go in the future. I agree with the majority of people who say they still want change. The question is, what kind of change do we want? And the vote of the public in the year 2000—the American people will not decide whether we're going to change

or not; we are. You know, things are changing at a breathtaking pace, and we have to keep up. The question is, what kind of change will we embrace? And insofar as I can offer my observations, not only as the President but as a citizen, as someone who wants our grandchildren to live in the strongest possible country, I will do that.

But you have to be careful. I can't expect anybody to vote for anyone, not just the Vice President and Hillary, not anyone, just because I say they should do it. So the only thing I can do is hope that the position I have will get people to listen to whatever reasons I offer.

Vice President's Candidacy

Mr. Gumbel. Why do you think, turning to the Vice President's campaign for a second, if I might, why do you think the Vice President is having such a difficult time opening up ground between himself and Bill Bradley?

The President. Well, first I think he's doing a good job on his campaign right now. I thought he did a good job in the debate. I think he did a good thing to go home to Tennessee. And I think that if—by historical standards, he's doing quite well. I think Bill Bradley is an intelligent, a compelling man with a good life story and a lot of friends built up in professional basketball and 18 years in the Senate and all the other things he's done. And he's out there running a credible campaign.

But if you look at the last time this happened, when then-Vice President Bush was running against Bob Dole, at this time in that race Vice President Bush was only one point ahead of Bob Dole in the national polls.

People want to see the Vice President out there establishing his own identity with his own program for the future, making clear where he wants to go. If he does, I think he will be nominated. And I think he's doing a good job of that now.

Gov. George W. Bush of Texas

Mr. Gumbel. It would seem that at this point that whoever prevails will be going up against George W. Bush. In style and personality, Governor Bush has been characterized as the GOP's version of you. Flattering? Offensive?

The President. It's certainly not offensive. I think he's got—he's a very accomplished political leader, and he's got good instincts for where the political center is.

Mr. Gumbel. Flattering then?

The President. And I think—well, let me say, and I think he's made a deliberate decision to present his candidacy as sort of a new Republican, kind of a kinder, gentler Republican alternative. What I hope the American people will focus on when they get to the general election—and we're not there yet. Let me say, I don't think Senator McCain is out of this yet. I think he's a very credible alternative. And I think that the fact that he's been willing to participate in these debates, and Governor Bush hasn't, I think is a plus for McCain.

Assuming we get to that point, then I think the issue will be, what does the Republican nominee offer for the future? What does the Democratic nominee offer to the future? What would the combination of a Republican President and Republican Congress bring to our future? Will it bring back this tax cut I vetoed? Does it mean the NRA will continue to control the gun debate? Or will we have somebody trying to have sensible gun restraint mechanisms? Does it mean we'll never get a Patients' Bill of Rights because the health insurance companies don't want it? There are all these issues that I think will become quite clear maybe not even until next August, but in August, September, and October, you're going to see a very vigorous debate that will shape not only the next 4 years but maybe the next 10 or 15 years of America's new century.

Mr. Gumbel. Before I leave the subject of Governor Bush, what's your take on the demarcation line he's drawing on past drug use for his personal life?

The President. I'm going to leave that to—that's up to the public really. The people are in the driver's seat now. And the press will express their views and do what they think is right, and the politicians will express their views and do what they think is right. But in the end, the public has to be the judge of that.

Mr. Gumbel. Let me rephrase. In your opinion, do you believe previous cocaine use should disqualify someone from sitting in this office?

The President. My opinion is that the public will make a decision, that if—most people think they ought to know if there is some serious problem in someone's background, and if so, how that person has dealt with it. The American people tend to be forgiving about many things, but there are some things they want to know and then there are other things they don't want

to know. And they may change their mind from time to time. Maybe they think it depends upon how long ago it was. Maybe they think it depends upon how it was treated.

But I think that if I get in the middle of this debate, it will interfere with having a debate that's free of distraction; that is, my opinion would only be a distraction given the way—the kind of treatment I got from '91 forward from the Republicans and their allies. And I think I should stay out of it and let the people make the right decision.

Mr. Gumbel. New York Times Magazine cover, as I think you probably saw, had a cover a week and a half ago of “Slam, Bam, Sham,” suggesting that modern culture generates Presidential candidates whose lone qualifications are fame and a degree of celebrity. Do you see that as a disturbing trend?

The President. Well, I certainly didn't have any fame or celebrity when I ran. In President Bush's terms, I was the Governor of a small southern State.

Mr. Gumbel. I think the headline was aimed at those who are courting the Reform Party at this point.

The President. Oh, I know. But no, I don't. You know, Governor Bush is in part of the position he's in because his father was President. But in the end, the voters will judge him, I think, based on his own merits.

The Kennedys have spawned, now, two generations, and it won't be long before there will be a third generation, of young people who present themselves for public service. They're aided in the beginning because of their name, but in the end, they're judged on their own merits.

And I don't think someone should be disqualified for seeking public office because they've been in entertainment, or business, or athletics. But sooner or later, the voters look at them and they say, “Well, can this person perform?” So I don't see it as a bad thing. I basically trust the voters on this. As long as they've got time enough to make a good decision, I think they normally make it. That's why we're still around here after 200 years.

And the more—the bigger the country gets, the more people will have an advantage, who for some reason or another, are already known by a lot of people. On the other hand, if somebody really good and is known by no one has a chance to start, the same mass media can

make you famous in a hurry. So I'm not particularly worried about this.

Post-Presidential Plans

Mr. Gumbel. Are you going to miss being President?

The President. I think so, yes. I think I will because I love the job. You know, just today I got up—I do what I did Sunday afternoon, every Sunday afternoon. I went through all my work for the last week that I hadn't done, and all the plans for the next week. I love this job. I've worked at it, and I've loved it, and it's been an honor to serve. So yes, I will miss it.

On the other hand, I'm so focused, almost to the point of obsession, on what we can still get done here. And I'm genuinely looking forward to what I'm going to do when I'm not President anymore.

Mr. Gumbel. And that would be?

The President. Well, I'm going to set up my library and public policy center. And I'm going to try to be a very good citizen without getting in the way of the next President.

Mr. Gumbel. What kind of odds would you quote on you ever running for office again, any office?

The President. Oh, I think they would be pretty long. Although, you know, I used to joke that I might run for the school board someday. I don't know. I certainly have no plans to run for office. And I'm going to have to get out here and earn a little money and try to make sure that my wife and daughter are okay. Maybe something could happen someday and I would want to run. I just don't know.

President's Legacy

Mr. Gumbel. Presidents generally get one line in the history, if they get one line. JFK was shot. Nixon had Watergate. Reagan beat communism. Clinton?

The President. Turned the economy around and prepared America for a new century.

Mr. Gumbel. You would be satisfied if your legacy was erasing the Nation's red ink?

The President. I think that's one of my legacies. But I think the real legacy is America is genuinely transformed from where it was 7 years ago. Look at where we were in '92. We had economic distress. We had social divisions, as embodied in the riot in Los Angeles. We

were in political drift; government was completely discredited. And I said, "Look, give me a chance. I've got some new ideas to create opportunity, to increase responsibility among our citizens, to build a community of America." And we set about changing. Meanwhile, America was changing.

The day I took office as President there were only 50 websites on the Internet in the whole world, 50. That's how much we've changed. So yes, we've got the strongest economy in history. And yes, we're paying off the debt instead of being in debt. But we also have cut our welfare rolls in half. We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years. We've got the lowest poverty rate in 30 years. We've reversed this wage inequality. All groups are growing. A couple of million children have been moved out of poverty. The air is cleaner. The water is cleaner. We set aside more land to protect it than any other administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

So the whole Nation has been transformed. We literally have prepared the country for another century. If you compare it from now to then; instead of a distressed economy, you've got a booming economy. Instead of a divided society, you've got the social problems being solved. And instead of political drift and discrediting of government, we've got the smallest Government in 37 years, and it's actually doing things for people, empowering people.

So I think that I have been fortunate enough to serve as President at a time of dramatic trans-

formation, when we really have—in the metaphor I used in 1996—built a bridge to the future. And now the American people are going to have to decide how they want to walk over it.

President's New York Residence

Mr. Gumbel. Final note. If my research is correct, you sign papers next week, final papers, on the house in Chappaqua. Do you happen to know what's the closest golf course to your house in Chappaqua?

The President. I don't, no.

Mr. Gumbel. Whippoorwill Country Club in Armonk. Do you know who is a member there?

The President. Are you?

Mr. Gumbel. Yes, sir.

The President. I would be happy to be your guest any time. I'm easy about that.

Mr. Gumbel. Mr. President, safe travels.

The President. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 4:08 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast on November 1. In his remarks, the President referred to President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Philadelphia mayoral candidate John F. Street; and former Senators Bill Bradley and Bob Dole. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on the EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy and the Budget and an Exchange With Reporters

October 31, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Before I leave for Oslo, I would like to make a few comments. First, I want to say, as I did earlier today, how deeply saddened I am over the disappearance of EgyptAir flight 990 early this morning off the coast of Massachusetts.

We know there has been a loss of life. The Coast Guard, supported by the Navy, is conducting extensive search and rescue operations in the area. The effort will continue for as long as necessary. We are also working with Egyptian

authorities, and I spoke earlier with President Mubarak of Egypt today to express my condolences and to assure him that we would be working together closely until this matter is resolved.

We do not know what caused this tragedy, but we will devote every necessary resource so that we can understand exactly what happened. At this moment, the thoughts and prayers of all our people should be with the families of the passengers and crew of flight 990 from the

United States and other places throughout the world.

In a few minutes, I will leave for Norway, where leaders will gather to honor the memory of one of the great heroes of this century, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. We will honor him by not only remembering his life but by pursuing his vision of a peaceful Middle East.

I will meet with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat, who are moving forward on an ambitious agenda to reach a comprehensive peace agreement. There are tremendous challenges ahead. I will do everything I can to help, because peace in the Middle East is strongly in the interest of the American people. And we have been working on it on a bipartisan basis for several years now.

Now, before I leave, I also want to say just a few words about the budget debate here in Washington and how that debate may affect another matter of great interest to our people, the education of our children.

This is now the seventh budget season I have been through as President. Each and every time, the Vice President and I have insisted that Congress produce budgets that live within our means while living up to the values of the American people. There is no greater value than education, especially in this information age. So even as we have reduced the size of Government to its smallest size in 37 years, we have nearly doubled our investment in education and training.

We have turned deficits into surpluses. We have sparked an economic expansion because of it, that come February will be the longest in American history. But we have not stopped increasing our investment and targeting our investment to higher standards and higher quality education.

Last fall we took another very important step. We reached an agreement with Congress to help States and school districts begin to hire 100,000 new teachers, new high-quality teachers that were well trained, to reduce class size in the early grades. The need for this was obvious. School enrollments are exploding; they are already the largest in history. And record numbers of our teachers soon will be retiring. Moreover, the research is clear that students learn more in classes with smaller, quality teachers.

Today we've learned about a new report indicating that our class reduction initiative already is producing results. Moments ago, I was briefed

by the gentleman here to my left, Mike Casserly, the executive director of the Council of Great City Schools, on the council's just completed survey of 40 of the Nation's largest school districts.

The survey shows that our class size reduction initiative has so far done precisely what we said it would. It has put more teachers in the classroom and increased training for those already there, with a minimum of red-tape and bureaucracy. The report shows that these school districts have not only hired over 3,500 well-trained teachers, but they have hired them for hard to fill positions that add the greatest impact, including teaching reading, math, and special education.

I'm not surprised by these results. Every time I've visited a school in recent months, teachers, principals, parents, administrators all have complimented, even raved about our class size reduction initiative.

This report confirms that this targeted effort to hire more teachers is what local schools need and want. Last fall the congressional Republicans agreed to support this proposal. Many of them went home in the election seasons and enthusiastically shared the credit for it, which they were then entitled to do. I know that some of them even ran ads touting this idea as they embraced it.

Now, suddenly, the Republican majority has changed its mind. And this week Congress will consider a labor and education budget bill that doesn't commit to hiring 100,000 new quality teachers. In fact, it reverses the targeted funding for the first installment of 30,000 that we passed last time. Nor does it put a dime into our effort to demand accountability for results by helping States and school districts to turn around or shut down their lowest performing schools.

Moreover, it makes mindless across-the-board cuts in everything from education to health to safety. If that bill passes, I will veto it. I don't think the proper response to our education challenge is fewer teachers, no accountability, and across-the-board cuts in education.

I want to hire 100,000 more teachers, 50,000 more community police to build on the effort that has given us the lowest crime rate in 30 years. I want to protect the environment and invest in education strategies that work.

Let me also reemphasize something. Many of those who say they don't want to target this money for hiring more teachers, say the money

is needed to improve the quality of the existing teaching force. These 40 school districts I just mentioned not only hired over 3,500 new teachers; they gave professional development to over 22,000 teachers to improve their skills in the classroom.

Our bill provides that money can be used to train existing teachers, and money can be used for recruitment as well as for salaries. In other words, this fund is flexible where it needs to be flexible but targeted where it needs to be targeted. This report shows conclusively that what we did in 1998, as Republicans and Democrats alike, was right. It shows that the Members of Congress in the Republican Party who ran ads in 1998 complimenting themselves for the 100,000 teacher initiative were right then, and they shouldn't be changing their mind now.

So once again, I ask Congress to put partisanship aside, read this report, and work with me to reduce class size, increase quality in teaching, and increase performance in our schools. We should be funding education strategies that work.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Casserly.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, are you optimistic about Oslo?

The President. Well, yes I am, based on the work that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat have done already. You know, they've now opened the safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza. They're working very closely together on security arrangements.

But when the Oslo accords were made at the end—the very, very end of 1992, the people

who put them together and the leaders who ratified them were quite smart. They left certain issues to be decided at the end, the so-called final status issues. They left them to the end because they're the hardest.

And so now it's come time to make the hard decisions. This will be difficult for both sides. But I believe that they're well aware of what the options are, and I don't believe they'll get much easier with the passage of time. So I think it's very important that the United States do whatever we can to create the conditions and provide the support necessary for these people to come together and do what they genuinely want to do. And so yes, I'm hopeful. I don't expect that we'll announce the resolution of all the final status issues at Oslo, but I do think that we'll be moving the process right along.

Effect of EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy on Oslo Talks

Q. Mr. President, are you worried that the EgyptAir crash will overshadow the Oslo trip?

The President. Based on what I now know and my conversation with President Mubarak, based on what I now know, I do not believe that, no. I have no reason to believe that there is any element involved in this which would overshadow or shadow the work of peace.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:45 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to departure for Oslo, Norway. In his remarks, he referred to President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.

Exchange With Reporters in Oslo, Norway

November 1, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What is your hope for the peace process?

The President. Well, first of all, I would like to thank the Prime Minister, the Government, and the people of Norway for hosting this meeting. I think it's coming at a good time. I believe that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat want to continue the peace process. And we

are now to the point where the really difficult decisions lie ahead. So coming back to Oslo, where the Oslo accords were born, coming here to honor the memory of Yitzhak Rabin, who gave his life for this peace process, it's a good thing to do.

And so we're hopeful that we'll make some progress. And we'll see, and probably the less we say about it in public, the more likely we

are to get something done. But I'm hopeful. And I'm honored to be here in Norway. This is my first trip, as President, to Norway. I haven't been here in 30 years; 30 years ago next month was my first trip to Norway.

President's First Visit to Norway

Q. Do you remember it well?

The President. Very well, yes. It was wonderful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 7 a.m. at Oslo International Airport. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo *November 1, 1999*

Prime Minister Bondevik. Mr. President, dear journalists, it's a very special occasion for us in Norway. This is the very first visit from a sitting President of the United States to our country. So we are so glad to receive President Clinton here.

We have had fruitful discussions, where we could continue our talks from the White House in Washington, only 2 weeks ago. And of course, we have discussed the Middle East peace process. We think that the ceremonial commemoration tomorrow for the late Prime Minister Rabin and the talks in that framework can stimulate the peace process. And we are both committed to assist the two parties. The main responsibility for a final solution is, of course, upon the two parties.

Norway and the U.S. will seek ways to expand our common efforts in a number of areas for security, development, and for well-being. The President and I have today agreed on an initiative to follow up the Reykjavik Conference on Women and Democracy, where the First Lady, Hillary Clinton, participated. We are also agreed on a joint initiative on funding for support of disabled victims of the war in Sierra Leone.

Mr. President, I believe that you want to say a few words before we answer one or two questions. Mr. President.

President Clinton. Thank you. First, Prime Minister, let me say I am delighted to be here, honored by your invitation to come a few weeks ago, and then by the King's invitation to come to Norway. As you perhaps know, I traveled here alone as a young man some 30 years ago—

it was actually 30 years ago this December—and I fell in love with this country. I'd long wanted to come back. I was amazed to discover that I am the first sitting President ever to visit Norway. I can't imagine what the others were thinking about—[laughter]—but I am delighted to be here.

I also would like to thank you for the wonderful reception that my wife and my daughter received when they represented our Nation in Lillehammer at the Olympics, and for the support, Prime Minister, you have given to the women's conference and the women's issues that Hillary has tried to raise, most recently in Reykjavik with representatives of your country and the other countries in the region.

We have been friends for a long time. We have been allies for 50 years with NATO. Today the Prime Minister and I discussed building a Europe that is united, democratic, and free; and I am looking forward to seeing the Prime Minister again shortly in Turkey at the meeting of the OSCE. And I'm very grateful that Norway is now the leader of the OSCE, serving its term as chair.

We did discuss the Sierra Leone, and I would just like to say again, I am profoundly grateful that Norway has agreed to work with the United States to provide prosthetics, to provide artificial limbs to as many people as we possibly can, many of them children, whose limbs were deliberately amputated in the cruel civil war in Sierra Leone.

I also want to thank you, Prime Minister, for Norway's support for our common efforts

to end the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. And I want to say a special word of thanks to the Norwegian people, because I believe that when the 800,000-plus Kosovar Albanians were driven from their home, on a per capita basis, Norway took in more of the refugees from Kosovo than any other country in the world. And that is something that you can be very proud of and something for which your friends must be very grateful. So I want to thank you for that.

And finally, let me thank you for your continuing interest in the Middle East peace process and for having this wonderful occasion to honor the memory of my friend and partner, former Prime Minister Rabin. I think it will be very successful, indeed. Your country has a lot to be proud of. You have enormous influence for your size, and it is very much earned and deserved. Thank you.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, do you believe that the Middle East talks here in Oslo can move the peace process substantially forward?

President Clinton. Yes, I do. I don't think you should expect some sort of major announced breakthrough here, because, keep in mind, the parties have had—since, in the last couple of years, they had the Wye peace agreement under Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat. Then when Prime Minister Barak came in, they modified the Wye peace agreement and agreed to an even faster schedule of implementation.

Since then, Israel has released controversial political prisoners, agreed to establish safe passage between—and started it, actually, started the safe passage between the West Bank and Gaza, and agreed to open a port, which was a source of great tension between them before. Now they have to move into the final status talks, as conceived almost 7 years ago now here in Oslo, with the Oslo accords. So the important thing now is that the two leaders know that they have set themselves an ambitious timetable and that they agreed about how they're going to meet the timetable. This is the hard part, I mean the really hard part. And we all need to support them.

But do I believe that we can come out of this meeting and this solemn occasion with a renewed commitment to the peace process? Yes, I do.

EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy

Q. Mr. President, they're still combing the wreckage of EgyptAir flight 990. Do you know any more about the cause of the tragedy, whether it was a mechanical malfunction or has terrorism been ruled out? And have there been any threats recently against any carriers flying out of the United States?

President Clinton. We know nothing more than I said to you earlier today—it seems like half a lifetime ago—when I came out of church with Hillary. We are still searching. We have to find—as you know, to make a final determination about the cause of the crash will require the recovery of as much of the airplane as possible, as well as the equipment, which will give us some—if the usual case is present here, give us a pretty definitive idea of what happened.

But that has not been done yet, and therefore, I will say again, nothing has been ruled in, nothing has been ruled out. And I hope no one will draw any conclusions one way or the other until we finish the work.

President's Legacy

Q. Mr. President, how do you hope that people will remember you as the President of the United States? And is the peace process in the Middle East important in that regard? Would you like to be remembered as the President that created peace in the Middle East?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, that's a question I'd feel more comfortable answering if I weren't President anymore, because I hope I'm still piling up memories for them. But I can tell you what I tried to do.

What I tried to do is, first of all, take a country which I've found in economic distress and social division and turn it around toward greater prosperity and greater harmony, and convince people that, working together, we could solve our social problems. And then, I hope I will be remembered as someone who got our country to assume its responsibilities in the post-cold-war world, to make America a major force for peace and freedom, and against terrorism and racial and ethnic and religious hatreds. That is what I have worked to do and what I intend to continue working to do every day I have left to serve.

Threats to U.S. Air Carriers/Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, two things. Could you address Mr. Katz' question about whether there had been any threats to U.S.—to carriers, airline carriers flying out of the United States? And also, do you see any merit to the idea that's been floated about having a Camp David-style negotiation in January to help Israel and the Palestinians meet the rigorous deadlines that they've set for themselves on the toughest issues in the talks?

President Clinton. First, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], on the first question you ask—and I didn't mean to evade it—if there have been any such threats, I do not know about them. That is, I am not aware of any specific threats against American airlines or airplanes flying out of American airports with large numbers of American passengers. If there have been any such, I don't know about them.

Now, it is possible that there could have been some that I don't know about, so I don't want to—I can't tell you the things I don't know about didn't happen. But I can tell you that I'm not aware of any, and as you know, I work on my intelligence information every day.

As to the possibility of a Camp David-style meeting, I think it is premature to discuss that at this time. What we need now is an understanding of the parameters of where we're going and how we're going to get there. I wouldn't rule out anything, but there is, as you know, going all the way back to '93, there is nothing I would not do if I thought it would genuinely help to build a lasting peace in the Middle East. There is nothing I would not do, and I'm prepared to reaffirm that to Prime Minister Barak and to Chairman Arafat.

But one of the things we have also learned here is that, in the end, the hard decisions have to be made by the parties. The United States can help with financial support, with military support, with moral backup. The rest of the world can help in many ways. But we have to get a framework of going forward that is consistent with the timetable they, themselves, have adopted, because I don't think we want to slip the timetable. Even though these decisions are very hard, they've been looming out there for several years now, and they're not going to get any easier, in my judgment, by

letting them linger. So I will do what I can to get this thing going.

Prime Minister Bondevik. Last question.

Q. Yes, Mr. President, what do you regard as a real progress in the discussions with you and the Palestinians and the Israelis concerning the discussions about peace in Palestine and Israel?

President Clinton. The real problems?

Q. The real progress. What will you regard as the real progress?

President Clinton. Oh, I'm sorry. Well, I would feel that real progress has been made if they made agreements about the modalities under which they will proceed—the procedures, the process, how it's going to operate—so that we can move into and then through these decisions in a timely fashion.

There's no way in the world they can come here and agree in talks with me on the big issues. You know what all the big issues are. That's why they're final status issues. But if we can get everybody sort of focused on what it would take to get there within the time allotted, the time they have allotted themselves, then I think that that would be a very good thing, indeed.

Keep in mind, you have here leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to peace and demonstrated their willingness to take risks. And you also have leaders who have been supported by their people for taking those risks. So I don't think this is a time for handwringing. But when you have a lot of implementation, like you did recently with the Wye modified agreement, and then you have the prisoners release, you have the port decision going forward, you have the safe passage open, you have some settlements closed and not all settlements closed, what it does is it whets everyone's appetite, on the one hand, for more to be done; and it also builds in a little bit of a resistance to more being done. It's like, "I'm tired; I did this last week," you know? And what we've got to do is to create a renewed energy to make the process continuous, until you work all the way through to the end.

Prime Minister Bondevik. I'm sorry, I just have to end up by saying that I know that you have been informed that I could be to your disposal after the President has left this building. Unfortunately, because we are on overtime for the luncheon at the Royal Castle, I also have to leave now. But I can be to your disposal

at the Grand Hotel at 2:15, approximately, and tell you even more about our discussions.

We have, of course, also discussed the situation in Chechnya, our relations to Russia. We have found that we have very much in common regarding the priorities in foreign policy, combating poverty, promoting human rights, preventing conflicts. And I feel that our meeting has served to strengthen the already close ties between our two nations.

Thank you so much.

NOTE: Prime Minister Bondevik spoke at noon in the Prime Minister's Office. In his remarks, the President referred to King Harald V of Norway; former Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and current Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Joint Statement by President Clinton and Prime Minister Kjell Bondevik *November 1, 1999*

We share concern about the growing problem of trafficking in women for the purpose of placing them into slavery-like conditions. This is a problem worldwide, although trafficking in women within the OSCE area has come more into focus recently. The need to address this issue in the Nordic-Baltic region also arose as one of the recommendations of the Reykjavik conference on Women and Democracy. We attach great importance to cooperation between our two countries to focus on the need to combat this problem.

It is important to focus on the economic and social structures that give rise to prostitution

and sexual exploitation, and to find methods to empower the women involved.

Norway is proposing to host a conference next spring on trafficking in the OSCE area. The aim would be to (1) develop national and international policies to combat trafficking and (2) to design and put into practice joint action.

The issue should also be addressed at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul. Norway, in its capacity as OSCE Chairmanship, is actively considering the possibility of an event focusing on trafficking on the margins of the Summit.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks at a Luncheon Hosted by King Harald V of Norway in Oslo *November 1, 1999*

I must say, Your Majesty, that is a much more elegant fanfare than I normally get before I speak. [*Laughter*] Thank you for hosting me and all of our American company here. To both of you, we are honored to be in your presence. And I am deeply honored to be the first sitting American President to visit your wonderful country.

The United States and Norway are allies and friends. Our friendship is rooted, of course, in our common shared interests and our common shared values; also, a remarkable textured, shared history. Vikings from these shores were among the first Europeans to walk the shores

of North America. Since July 4th, 1825, when the first Norwegian ship sailed for the United States, millions of Norwegians seeking freedom and opportunity have, as His Majesty has noted, contributed immensely to our society.

I think it's worth noting a few of them, for their descendants include many luminaries from our past and present: national leaders from Congressman Sabo's home State, like Walter Mondale and Hubert Humphrey; great jurists like the late Chief Justice Earl Warren; great thinkers like Thorstein Veblen; giants of entertainment like Jimmy Cagney; sports heroes like

Knute Rockne; and, of course, Secretary Albright's predecessor, Warren Christopher.

Today, there are almost as many people, perhaps even more people of Norwegian descent in the United States than in Norway. So, most of all, I suppose I should be here, simply thanking you for the precious gift of your people.

Our two nations have also shared the history of some of the darkest days of this century when the royal family, as the King has said, spent the years of the war living in the United States, including several weeks in the White House. I must say one of the most interesting experiences I have had as President in my entire tenure was having the opportunity to welcome you back to the White House, where you were as a small boy. I hope someday someone will welcome me back in that fashion—[laughter]—but I won't have quite the memories you do.

President Roosevelt's last formal statement, just 3 days before his death, was a statement in praise of the people of Norway and the people of Denmark for their courage during the occupation. The King said that he remembered standing behind President Roosevelt during his fourth inauguration. At the time, the war was still going on. The President was not feeling well, and so, at the insistence of his advisers, he agreed to be inaugurated actually inside the White House. It is the only time in the entire history of our country that a President was inaugurated in the White House. Lucky enough for us, it enabled a young man to stand behind him, and to carry a memory for more than half a century.

In President Roosevelt's fourth inaugural address, he summed up the lessons learned from the war. He said this: "We have learned that we cannot live alone at peace; that our own well-being is dependent on the well-being of other nations far away. We have learned that, to be citizens of the world, we have learned

to be members of the human community. We have learned the simple truth, as Emerson said, the only way to have a friend is to be one."

Those words still ring true today, in the United States, in Norway, in the Middle East. Let us do all we can to remind all those in positions of influence, within our countries and beyond our borders, that we share a common destiny, and the only way to have a friend is to be one.

We also share an important history in the recent past, that I would be remiss if I did not comment upon briefly. In this decade, America and Norway have stood side by side as allies and friends to fight ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, to prevent the spread of dangerous weapons, to promote human rights, and of course, to build peace in the Middle East. That is our focus this week. And again I thank our Norwegian hosts for all they have done to make the talks that we will have today and tomorrow possible.

Once, Franklin Roosevelt said that any nation seeking to resist tyranny and build democracy need only, and I quote, "look to Norway." It remains just as true today. Free people still look to Norway and will always do so.

Your Majesty, I am grateful for all you have done to keep our friendship strong, to prepare our kindred nations for a new century and a new millennium, when we will have some more shared history based on our shared values.

I ask all of you now to join me in a toast to King Harald, to the Queen, to the people of Norway, and to our wonderful alliance.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:30 p.m. in the Banquet Room at the Royal Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Queen Sonja of Norway. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of King Harald V.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority in Oslo

November 1, 1999

EgyptAir Flight 990 Aircraft Tragedy

Q. Mr. President, is there anything new on the crash, sir? Has the Pentagon radar or satellite imagery been able to yield any clues as to what happened to EgyptAir 990?

President Clinton. Nothing that I've been briefed on.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Chairman, what would you like the President to do to be helpful to your aspirations, as you put it?

Chairman Arafat. Not to forget that first agreement which had been started here in Oslo had been signed under his supervision in the White House. We cannot forget it.

NOTE: The exchange began at 5:52 p.m. in the Gamlebyen Room at the SAS Radisson Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Death of Walter Payton

November 1, 1999

We were saddened to hear of the death of Walter Payton. In the long highlight reel of this life cut short, Walter Payton will always be a man in motion: breaking tackles, breaking records, clearing every obstacle in his path. From the first day he donned the uniform of the Chicago Bears in 1975, until his retirement 13 years later, Walter Payton missed only one game, and that was because the coach ordered him to rest his ankle. He followed a long line of great Bears running backs and became the greatest of them all. The record books confirm that. But individual triumphs would never mean as much to Walter Payton as a victory he could share with his teammates and with the fans who endured, season after season, the icy winds of Soldier Field. Walter Payton would not stop

running until his Bears were as great as the Bears of old, until they had again won the Super Bowl, which they did, in dramatic fashion, in 1985.

Walter Payton faced his illness with the same grit and determination that he showed every week on the football field. The people of Chicago and all Americans who love the game of football will miss him profoundly.

We would like to offer our condolences to Walter's wife, Connie, and to their two children, Jarrett and Brittney. Our hearts are with them today.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

Remarks at a Memorial Ceremony for Yitzhak Rabin in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Your Majesties, Prime Minister and Mrs. Bondevik, Mr. Mayor, President Ahtisaari, Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Barak, Chairman Arafat, Leah Rabin, ladies and gentlemen, today we bear witness to the wisdom of the Psalm

which says, "the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." We honor a righteous man whose memory is everlasting, because he devoted his life to the security of his country but gave his life to the promise of peace.

Yitzhak Rabin's life was a lesson, teaching us that old fears and suspicions and hatreds can, in fact, be overcome, for he would be the first to remind us that he felt all those things, too, but he let them go; teaching us that there could be no security without lasting peace and no peace without charity for all and malice toward none; teaching us that the only final answer to violence is reconciliation.

Almost 7 years ago, those principles brought Israelis and Palestinians to this city of peace to find common ground. And today our friend brings us back to Oslo. We can almost hear his kind, but stern voice telling us, "Well, this is all very nice, but if you really want to honor me, finish the job." He would be pleased to see Israel's cause represented by Prime Minister Barak, his friend, fellow soldier, and fervent ally for peace.

In his last hour, Yitzhak Rabin, who was a shy person in public, sang to a peace-loving throng of Israelis the *Shir Ha Shalom*, the "Song of Peace." Its words sing out to us today: Don't say the day will come; make it come. Today, in honor of our friend and leader, we must all say we will make it come, a new day of peace that is more than the absence of war; a new day of tolerance and respect, of trust and shared destiny, when the fears of the past are released so that the hands and heart are free to embrace the promise of the future.

The enemies of peace remain alive and active. Even in this day we see their dark work. But the Scripture reminds us that evil can be overcome by good, and only by good. So we pursue Yitzhak Rabin's vision not only because we loved and admired him—although we surely did—but because it is right and the only way.

We have now a chance, but only a chance, to bring real and lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors. If we let it slip away, all will bear the consequences: Israel still trapped within a circle of hostility; the Palestinians still saddled with poverty and frustration and pain; both and their Arab neighbors wrapped in an endless and pointless cycle of conflict.

So if Rabin were here with us today, he would say there is not a moment to spare; "All this honoring me and these nice words, they're very nice, but please finish the job."

The way ahead will be full of challenges for the Israelis, the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Lebanese, for the friends of peace here represented. President Mubarak and King Abdullah

will be important to our efforts. I am determined that the United States will do all we can, including living up to the commitments we made at Wye River. But the most important thing we can do today is to say to our friend, Rabin, we can still hear you; we are prepared to finish the job.

When President Kennedy was assassinated, Abba Eban said, "Tragedy is the difference between what is and what might have been." That is the way we felt in the months and years after Prime Minister Rabin was killed. Today let us say together we are done with tragedy. We will close the gap between what is and what might have been.

The other night my wife had to the White House one of the great scientists in our country, who is unlocking the mysteries of the human gene. And he said to us the most astonishing thing. He said all humanity, genetically, are 99.9 percent the same. And if you get any group, ethnic group, together—100 Norwegians—with another ethnic group—100 west Africans—you find that the genetic differences among individuals within each group are greater than the genetic profile of differences between the Norwegians and the Africans. Think of that.

Think of all the bodies that have been piled up, one after another, the young and the old, throughout human history in tribute to that one-tenth of one percent difference. Think about what brings us here today, that the greatest quality a human being can have is the ability to reach beyond that last one-tenth of one percent to unite in the common humanity of the other 99.9 percent.

Yitzhak Rabin led us in that great reach out, reaching across the last divide of one-tenth of one percent. It was his greatness. It is his lesson. It is his message to us today. Let us hear him, even as we loved him.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Main Hall at City Hall. In his remarks, he referred to King Harald V, Queen Sonja, and Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway; Prime Minister Bendevis's wife, Bjorg; Mayor Per Ditlev-Simonsen of Oslo; President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland; former Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Leah Rabin, widow of former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel; President

Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; King Abdullah II of Jordan; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Statement on the Cyclone in India *November 2, 1999*

On behalf of all Americans, Hillary and I offer our deepest condolences to the families who lost loved ones to the devastating cyclone that struck eastern India Friday and Saturday. It is gradually becoming clear just how much destruction was wrought along the seacoast and inland in those terrifying hours. There are reports that thousands of lives were lost and hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed. It is truly a national calamity.

Our hearts go out to the Indian people, and we are prepared to do what we can to help. The Government of India has an immense task ahead in providing assistance to the people who were affected by this tragedy. The United States Government is providing more than \$2 million worth of food and \$100,000 worth of tents and plastic sheeting to help alleviate the hunger and immediate suffering. I also encourage the American people to help through charities involved in international relief.

Statement on House Action on Proposed Legislation To Provide Assistance to African, Caribbean, and Central American Nations *November 2, 1999*

Today's vote is an important milestone in our effort to build a new economic relationship with sub-Saharan Africa and deepen ties with our Caribbean and Central American neighbors. This legislation will help increase trade, enhance

opportunity, and boost economic growth in America and nations in Africa, the Caribbean, and Central America. I urge the Senate to pass this bill as soon as possible.

Statement on Senate Action on Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia and Labor, Health, and Education Programs *November 2, 1999*

Today, by a narrow margin, Congress completed action on a deeply flawed spending bill that I will veto. This bill is a catalog of missed opportunities, misguided priorities, and mindless cuts. It forces America's schoolchildren to pay the price for Congress' failure to make responsible choices. I will not let it become law.

The bill, which includes the Labor/Health and Human Services/Education appropriations measure, makes a blind, across-the-board cut that will hurt everything from national defense to

veterans' programs, from education to the environment. It reneges on last year's bipartisan commitment to fund 100,000 teachers and reduce class size in the early grades, replacing this proven approach with a risky block grant that opens the door to private school vouchers. It fails to include a key accountability initiative to help turn around failing schools. And it shortchanges many other priorities, including efforts to enhance worker safety, expand child care,

detect emerging infectious diseases, and protect Americans from the threat of bioterrorism.

This debate is not just about how much we spend but also how wisely we spend. I sent Congress a budget, for education, health care, and other programs, that invests in results and

is fully paid for. But Congress continues to pursue an agenda of irresponsible cuts and ill-conceived allocations. The patience of the American public is wearing thin. It is time for Congress to put aside partisanship and make the targeted investments our Nation's future demands.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. I think I can speak for all of us when I say, first, we're very grateful to the Government of Norway for inviting us here for this important ceremony. And we now have to give some real energy to the framework talks, but I think even though the issues are difficult, the will is strong, and we're off to a good start.

Q. How do you see the strong focus, Mr. President, on the issue of the settlement?

The President. I think that the less we say now to the public and the more we work in private, the better off we'll be and the more likely we will be able to get an agreement.

Q. [Inaudible]—a summit in January or February in Washington, or maybe in Camp David?

The President. I wouldn't—I don't think we should rule it out or in. We ought to make sure—see how much progress we can make between now and then. You know, I would do anything I could to help them.

Q. What is the main issue you will discuss right now when you start negotiations?

The President. I think we just have to talk about—to get agreement on the ground rules, how we're going to proceed.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the U.S. Ambassador's residence. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and an Exchange With Reporters in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Middle East Framework Agreement

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, we have just completed a very good meeting. I feel that we have revitalized the peace process, and we've got these final status—the framework talks off to a very good start.

The two sides have not only named their teams; they have agreed that the leaders will personally continue to meet on a regular basis. They have agreed to work very hard to avoid public comments or actions which will cause

enormous difficulty for the other side in the next 100 days or so when they're trying to come to agreement on the framework. And they have agreed with me that we might well have a summit at the end of this process if enough progress has been made to make us all believe that, in good faith, we can actually get an agreement at a summit.

Q. Is that the framework process, Mr. President?

The President. The framework process, yes.

Q. When will you have that summit?

Q. [*Inaudible*—their intentions, though?

The President. Well, when and whether depends upon what we're doing. We have a very ambitious timetable here. I think the timetable is the middle of February that they've agreed to have the framework agreement. So you won't have to wait long for answers to the details. We'll all be in high gear between now and then.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, is this more than you expected to come out of Oslo? Are you surprised?

The President. I feel quite good about it. I feel very good about it. I'm very pleased by it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. at the U.S. Ambassador's residence. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Oslo

November 2, 1999

Thank you very much. Well, Mr. Ambassador, Doreen, Mr. DCM, Congressman Sabo, thank you for coming with us. And thank you so much, Secretary Albright, for all you've done to make this a safer, better world.

Now, Hermelin did not tell you the truth. [*Laughter*] He says, "Come to Norway. I guarantee you a standing ovation." That's why you don't have any chairs today. [*Laughter*] He did not even tell you the truth about how he got this job. This deal about, "Oh, I got to go to Norway, and I thought I hit the lottery," that's not what happened. [*Laughter*]

He called me, and he said—you said, "Name one person in America who has done more for you than I have"—[*laughter*—"just one." I said, "Hillary." [*Laughter*] He said, "You can't make her an Ambassador." So I said, "Well, what do you want?" He said, "I want to go to Norway." I said, "David, you can't even find Norway on a map." [*Laughter*] He said, "No, you have to appoint me to Norway." He said, "You know the Oslo accords and the role they have in the Middle East peace process?" I said, "Yeah, sure, of course, I do." He said, "I, David Hermelin, am the last remaining Norwegian Jew on the face of the Earth." [*Laughter*]

So even though it isn't true—[*laughter*]—hasn't he been good for the American Embassy? You know, one of the great joys of my life, because I've spent so much of it in public life, I'll be—when I leave on January 21st, 2001, I'll be moving out of public housing for the first time in 20 years. [*Laughter*] One of the great joys of my life is, I've gotten to meet

so many thousands of people from all over the world, all over our country, from all different walks of life with all different slants on things and all kinds of different talents. And this man and his wife, his children, and his family are truly among the most wonderful human beings I've ever met anywhere in the world. And I am so blessed that they have been with me.

I also want to say again to those of you who are Norwegian nationals, how profoundly grateful I am to His Majesty, the King, and to the Prime Minister and the Government and people of Norway for inviting me to come and for opening once again their hearts to the peace process in the Middle East and having this truly remarkable event today in honor of our friend Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

And for those of you who were there or who saw it on television, I'm sure you'll agree it was a very moving event. And I can tell you, I met just before I came here with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat, and I think that the event and the feeling of the people and the luncheon that followed really did help to put them in a good frame of mind as we kind of head for the last sprint toward getting a framework agreement on all these final status issues by next February. It will be very difficult to do.

The chances that we can do it now are dramatically increased in no small measure because we have had one more great gift from this small but remarkable and wonderful country. So I thank them very much for that.

I would like to thank all the people who are here, our career Foreign Service officers, beginning with you, Mr. Gundersen, and all the others who are here, people who have worked for the other departments of the Federal Government, the military people who are here. I'd like to thank the young musicians for providing our music today. Thank you very much. It was very good.

But I want to especially thank those of you who have given your life in service to our country. And I want to reiterate and reaffirm what Secretary Albright said. You know, in my lifetime, literally in my lifetime, which, unfortunately, is getting older by the minute, our country has never before been in quite this position where we had the strongest economy in our history, where our social fabric was coming together, not being driven apart, where we have a very high level of confidence that we can do things.

For those of you who are Americans, I can tell you, back home in America, if our economic expansion continues—it's already the longest peacetime expansion in history; if it continues until next February, it will be the longest one we ever had, including those that embraced the wars. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years. Our country is moving in the right direction.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the cold war, this is literally the first time in my lifetime that we have had both a very strong economy and a society coming together and the absence of an overarching threat from outside or from inside our country.

I would argue to all of you that that imposes upon us enormous responsibilities, greater than we have had in the past, even in the cold war, to try to build the Nation of our dreams for our children in the new millennium but also to try to bring the world to the point where the forces of peace and freedom are triumphing everywhere and the sense that humanity will continue to increase its sway against all the forces of darkness will be far more deeply embedded. And if we walk away from that, we will never be able to explain it to our children.

So, yes, I want to pass a good diplomatic budget; yes, I think the United States should lead the world toward forgiving the debt, much of the debt of the poorest countries in this world

for the millennium, just as the Pope and others have asked us to do. I think the United States should help to bring empowerment opportunities of education and health care and the economy to poor village people, particularly poor village women, and guarantee that their little girls, as well as their little boys, can go to school, on every continent. And I think that we ought to continue to lead the world's fight against the proliferation of dangerous weapons and against terrorists.

I know we didn't ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, but I think we will do that before it's all done. And I do not believe the United States will withdraw from the world. But to all of you who have stayed on the forefront of this important public service all these years, I just want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. And I want to urge you to do whatever you can to urge your friends, your relatives, and others back home to think about this moment in terms of what it means for our country.

Every advanced country has to deal with the aging of its population; most of them, like us, have to deal with the increasing diversity of its children. But no other country can do what we should be doing now to advance peace and freedom and to stand against terrorism and the proliferation of dangerous weapons. We cannot walk away from this. And you're a good example—you and what happened here these last 2 days—of why we don't need to and why we can be successful.

Let me say, in closing, it has been a very great honor for me to serve. I gave you all those numbers not because I think that I brought them about singlehandedly but because this is what I want America to be like at the close of the 20th century. But it only matters if now we do the right thing with our good fortune and our prosperity. And anything you can do to make sure that we do and to tell people back home about a country like Norway, the burdens they bear, the responsibilities they shoulder, the dreams that we share, will help.

So again, let me thank you all and urge you all on. And thanks for David Hermelin's guaranteed standing ovation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:30 p.m. in the foyer at the U.S. Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador David B. Hermelin

and his wife, Doreen; Jon Gundersen, U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission; King Harald V and Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser

Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Pope John Paul II. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on Returning Without Approval to the House of Representatives Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia and Labor, Health, and Education Programs and an Exchange With Reporters

November 3, 1999

Shootings in Honolulu and Seattle

The President. Good afternoon. Let me begin by saying that I join with all Americans in expressing shock and profound sorrow at the shootings which have occurred over the last 2 days in Honolulu and Seattle. I have been briefed on both situations. The Federal Government has offered all appropriate assistance to local officials. Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and with their families.

Veto of Appropriations Legislation

Yesterday I returned from Oslo, Norway, where, with American support, Israeli and Palestinian leaders entered a new critical phase in their efforts to resolve their ancient conflict. Tomorrow I will begin a journey to places here in America that are only just beginning to feel the benefits of our remarkable economic recovery, an expansion which, in February, will become the longest in the history of our country. I will highlight new ideas and efforts that can make these communities and those like them all across America new markets for American investment, entrepreneurship, and opportunity.

In the last 7 years, our country has gone from conditions of economic distress, social division, and political drift to a nation headed in the right direction for the 21st century. But to truly fulfill our promise, we must all continue to do our jobs. And Congress, in that vein, must produce the right kind of budget, a budget that reflects the values of our people, respects the need for Government to live within its means, and looks to our future.

Moments ago I vetoed a bill because it does not meet those criteria, a Labor, Health, and Education bill that Congress sent me yesterday. The bill is a catalog of missed opportunities, misguided priorities, and mindless cuts in every-

thing from education to national defense to the environment. It forces school children to pay for the failure of Congress to make responsible choices. And it fails to reflect our deepest values.

We value education. Yet this bill fails to invest the right way in education. It reneges on last year's bipartisan agreement to fund 100,000 new, highly trained teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. And at the same time, it opens the door for Federal funds to be used for private school vouchers. We need more teachers in smaller classes in our public schools, instead.

The bill fails to include my initiative to demand accountability by helping school districts to turn around failing schools or close them down. And it shortchanges other priorities, from enhancing worker safety to expanding child care to immunizing our children, at the moment when we have finally reached our goal of immunizing 90 percent of them, to protecting Americans from the threat of bioterrorism.

We value fiscal responsibility. But this bill abdicates that responsibility by imposing across-the-board cuts that clearly will damage vital priorities, even as the Republican majority has larded the budget with wasteful projects.

For example, Congress would spend hundreds of millions of dollars for projects the Pentagon did not ask for. Yet this bill would force the military to cut jobs for tens of thousands of soldiers and other military personnel. It would mean fewer FBI agents to fight crime, no food assistance to tens of thousands of low-income women, infants, and children, and less help to master the basics to over 100,000 children in our poorest school districts.

We value a clean environment. But the budget Congress has passed would roll back important environmental protections. We value the safety of our families and the fact that we now have the lowest crime rate in 30 years and the lowest murder rate in 32 years. But their budget fails to put 50,000 new community police officers in our neighborhoods where the crime rates are highest, to keep those rates coming down until we're the safest big country in the world. We value peace and freedom and security. But their budget would undermine our ability to lead the world in pursuit of these goals.

Some Members of Congress have said they're willing to restore funding for one critical effort they left out of the bill that was passed, our commitment to the Middle East peace process. That is very good but not good enough. We also need a budget that will enable America to advance our critical interests all around the world, including paying our U.N. dues, continuing America's work to reduce nuclear weapon threats in Russia, and doing our fair share of the world's efforts to reduce the debt of the poorest nations.

Now Congress is more than a month behind schedule. I know a lot of the Members want to leave town. But the American people want Congress to lead first and to do their work first. There are a lot of important matters that remain unfinished. Let me just mention a few of them.

Our Nation continues on this day to be reminded of the horrors of gun violence. We need to do more to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and children. Congress needs to send me commonsense legislation that closes the gun show loophole, bans the importation of large ammunition clips, and has child safety locks as a requirement of new gun sales.

To ensure that every American and every health plan has the protections they need, Congress should pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. To meet the challenge of an aging America, Congress should act on my plan to extend the life of Social Security to 2050 and to reform Medicare and add a prescription drug coverage.

To ensure the financial health of our hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care providers, Congress must moderate the cuts that resulted from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. To give millions of people with disabilities a chance to experience the dignity of work without losing health coverage, Congress must send me the work incentives improvement act. To give hard-

working families a chance to share in our growing prosperity, Congress should pass an increase in the minimum wage.

To keep our economy on the cutting edge of scientific and technological change, Congress must extend the research and development tax credit, and it should expend others, as well, such as our welfare-to-work tax credit, which has helped to give us welfare rolls that are about half what they were 7 years ago.

To provide our children the schools they need, Congress should pass tax credits to build or modernize 6,000 schools. To shine the light of prosperity on communities like those I will visit in the next couple of days, Congress must pass the new markets tax credits to give investors the same incentives to invest in new markets here we give them to invest around the world.

The budget I sent Congress shows that we can do all this in a way that is paid for, doesn't spend the Social Security surplus, allows us to pay down the debt over the next 15 years so that we can be debt-free for the first time since 1835. So I urge Congress to put partisanship aside and work with me to complete the work the American people sent us here to do.

Just before I came here, I had a very good talk with Speaker Hastert and Senator Lott. I have not given up and neither have they. We have agreed that we will continue to work, beginning this evening, as hard as we can to try to resolve the differences that remain between us. If we do that, if the Democrats and the Republicans in the House and the Senate work with the White House, we can still make this a very good legislative session for the American people and, again, set ourselves on our way to a new century of promise.

Thank you very much.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, it sounds like from what you say that there's really been very little progress. These are the same issues we've been talking about for a while. How would you rate the budget talks so far, and is there any chance that it's going to get done before your trip to Europe?

The President. Well, let me just say this: On several occasions I've had the feeling that we had an agreement and that some of the leaders in the Republican Party wanted to make an

agreement, and then they were, in effect, undercut. And so I think that if we were allowed to working with the chairs of the appropriations committees and the other appropriate committee chairs, I think we could reach agreement.

But we will never reach agreement unless there is honorable compromise. That is always found in the center. So I feel—I sympathize with their position because whenever we make an agreement, then there's an attempt by some in the Congress to pull them back to the right. But we have to find agreement in the center.

I will say again, I had a good talk with Senator Lott and Speaker Hastert, and I am committed to working with them. And I told them that I understood they wanted to leave town, and I was not trying to keep them here. But I was trying to finish the job the American people sent us here to do and that I and our people would be prepared to work virtually around the clock to get an agreement that is consistent with what I pledged to the American people and what I believe that they want.

World Trade Organization Talks With China

Q. Mr. President, what is the status of the WTO negotiations with China? Have you made a new offer to the Chinese, or do you still want the deal that you almost had back in April?

The President. Well, a lot of people have said we had an agreement in April, and we walked away from it because there was opposition from the American labor movement. I've read that a hundred times. That is absolutely not true. Number one, we didn't have an agreement, and number two, let me remind you of what the climate was at that time. It wasn't because of what the labor leaders were saying. Some of the very people now who want the WTO agreement with China, at that time were banging away at China on a whole wide range of issues, which all of you remember very well. So I don't want to go forward implying that we had an agreement before because we didn't. And the Chinese say we didn't.

Now, I have, as has been reported in the press, I have made an effort to restart these negotiations. I have told President Jiang that I think we ought to go forward. But I don't believe that I can facilitate a successful resolution of this by discussing the details in any way. I won't agree to anything I don't believe is in the interests of the American people. That's all I can tell you.

And I think that it is in the long-term interests of our people and in the interests of an open China—that is a responsible partner in a world in which China will be at some point in the 21st century, if it keeps growing, the biggest economy in the world—that they be part of the rule-based system of global trading and investment.

So I hope that we can work it out. And I'll do my best. I do want to say that if we could work it out, I am completely committed to trying to get passed in the Congress permanent normal trading status for China. And I do believe that we can prevail now. I think there's a sense in both parties that this is a very large issue that is important for our Nation's long-term security and economic well-being. And I will do what I can to achieve it.

Violence in American Life

Q. Mr. President, when you were briefed as you were today on yet another shooting, be it in a workplace or a schoolyard, do you believe that this has just become something fundamental and inevitable in American life, or is there something that can be done to alter the dynamic?

The President. Well, I think there are a lot of things that can be done. But let me say, if you go back over the last 20 years, we have had periodic outbursts of shootings where more than one person was killed. But let's not forget, 13 of our kids get shot every day, killed every day. And just because they die one and two at a time in distant places or tough neighborhoods, we don't—and I'm not criticizing you, we're almost enured to it. I don't think we understand fully just how much more violent the United States is than other countries. That's the point I'm trying to make.

And I don't want to diminish the agony of these two incidents that are truly awful or what happened at Columbine or all the other schools. But I think we have to acknowledge the fact that we have been willing to tolerate a much higher level of violence than we should have.

Now, the good news is, in spite of these terrible incidents, we have the lowest murder rate in 32 years, the lowest overall crime rate in 30 years. If you want it to be lower, you have to do more of what we have been doing. You have to put more community police on the street; you have to do more work in the schools to teach children to avoid violence; and you

have to do more to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

What we are doing—and I don't mean we, the Federal Government; I mean we, the American people, starting with the police on the street and the community leaders—is working. We should be not desperate here; we should be determined. But every time one of these things happens, all I can say is what we are doing is working, but we haven't done it enough, and we need more efforts in the directions that we're going. We do not have to tolerate this level of violence.

There will never be a time when any society can guarantee that no one will ever kill anybody else. And we have, as all of you know, well over 200 million guns in our society right now; nobody knows exactly how many. But we can do much, much more, without interfering with people's hunting and sporting rights, to keep guns out of the wrong hands. And we can do more to put more police on the street. We can do more to work with our children. And we have to do all of that.

But there is no silver bullet here. If people are really upset about it, they should ask us to do what has brought us to this point. If you compare it now with 7 years ago, we're in better shape. If you compare where we are now with where any other country in the world would find a tolerable level of violence, we are not in good shape, and we have to do more.

African and Caribbean Basin Trade

Q. Mr. President, now that the Senate has overcome the delaying tactics, do you expect the African trade bill and the enhancement of the Caribbean Basin initiative to be passed during this term?

The President. I certainly hope so. There is strong bipartisan support for both of those things. It's a way of our being good neighbors; it's a way of our being responsible partners; and it's very good economics for the United States over the long run.

I would just point out that, with regard to our neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America, they have actually suffered an unintended consequence of the agreement we made with Canada and Mexico because there were preferences given to Mexico that did not go to them. And so we ought to at least put them on equal footing.

We can do that without being unfair to our Mexican neighbors, but we've got to be good neighbors with the people in the Caribbean and Central America. We don't want to put them in the position where the only way they can make a living is to be transit points for the drugrunners of the world. And this is very important.

And the Africa trade bill, the potential that has to reward the Africans that have good government and are following market economies is enormous. Some of you went with me on my trip to Africa. And I would hope that you came out of it with the same feeling I did. You go to a place like Uganda, which has had the biggest drop in AIDS rates of any country in the world, I believe, over the last 5 years, showing you what competent, well-organized, well-directed countries can do because the people are intelligent, they're innovative, they can do all kinds of things. And we have a big future in Africa, and I think that we owe it to the American people, as well as to our world responsibilities, to pass both these things.

I hope they will pass. I was elated that the Senate voted to invoke cloture and to proceed to the bill, and I'll continue to push it.

1999 Elections

Q. Mr. President, if in the elections last night, the Democrats and Republicans each can claim a bit of a victory, how do you analyze those results?

The President. Well, of course, I feel very good about it because of what has happened; Mississippi was truly historic—and several other places. And I also feel good because in the places where the Republicans won, they won by running on education, on health care, on economic development, on progressive issues, and entering into a constructive contest of ideas to try to build a dynamic center in America. That was the analysis even across the river here in Virginia, where, basically, the Democrats did well in northern Virginia, the Republicans did well elsewhere.

But if you look at the—what is the debate about, and it seems to me that the real message coming out of this was that the people who offer positive programs that bring people together and move people forward are going to get a good hearing from the voters. I think that is the message. And that is the message that we ought to keep in mind here as we try

to bring these budget negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jiang Zemin of China.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval Appropriations Legislation for the District of Columbia and Labor, Health, and Education Programs

November 3, 1999

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 3064, the FY 2000 District of Columbia and Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

I am vetoing H.R. 3064 because the bill, including the offsets section, is deeply flawed. It includes a misguided 0.97 percent across-the-board reduction that will hurt everything from national defense to education and environmental programs. The legislation also contains crippling cuts in key education, labor, and health priorities and undermines our capacity to manage these programs effectively. The enrolled bill delays the availability of \$10.9 billion for the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, and other important health and social services programs, resulting in delays in important medical research and health services to low-income Americans. The bill is clearly unacceptable. I have submitted a budget that would fund these priorities without spending the Social Security surplus, and I am committed to working with the Congress to identify acceptable offsets for additional spending for programs that are important to all Americans.

The bill also fails to fulfill the bipartisan commitment to raise student achievement by authorizing and financing class size reduction. It does not guarantee any continued funding for the 29,000 teachers hired with FY 1999 funds, or the additional 8,000 teachers to be hired under my FY 2000 proposal. Moreover, the bill language turns the program into a virtual block grant that could be spent on vouchers and other unspecified activities. In addition, the bill fails to fund my proposed investments in teacher quality by not funding Troops to Teachers (\$18 million) and by cutting \$35 million from my request for Teacher Quality Enhancement

Grants. These programs would bring more highly qualified teachers into the schools, especially in high-poverty, high-need school districts.

The bill cuts \$189 million from my request for Title I Education for the Disadvantaged, resulting in 300,000 fewer children in low-income communities receiving needed services. The bill also fails to improve accountability or help States turn around the lowest-performing schools because it does not include my proposal to set aside 2.5 percent for these purposes. Additionally, the bill provides only \$300 million for 21st Century Community Learning Centers, only half my \$600 million request. At this level, the conference report would deny after-school services to more than 400,000 students.

The bill provides only \$180 million for GEAR UP, \$60 million below my request, to help disadvantaged students prepare for college beginning in the seventh grade. This level would serve nearly 131,000 fewer low-income students. In addition, the bill does not adequately fund my Hispanic Education Agenda. It provides no funds for the Adult Education English as a Second Language/Civics Initiative to help limited English proficient adults learn English and gain life skills necessary for successful citizenship and civil participation. The bill underfunds programs designed to improve educational outcomes for Hispanic and other minority students, including Bilingual Education, the High School Equivalency Program (HEP), the College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP), and the Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities program.

The bill underfunds Education Technology programs, including distance learning and community technology centers. In particular, the bill provides only \$10 million to community based

technology centers, \$55 million below my request. My request would provide access to technology in 300 additional low-income communities. The bill provides \$75 million for education research, \$34 million less than my request, and includes no funding for the Department of Education's share of large-scale joint research with the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health on early learning in reading and mathematics, teacher preparation, and technology applications.

The bill does not fund the \$53 million I requested to provide job finding assistance to 241,000 unemployment insurance claimants. This means that these claimants will remain unemployed longer, costing more in benefit payments. The bill also provides only \$140 million of my \$199 million request to expand services to job seekers at One-Stop centers as recently authorized in the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act. The bill funds \$120 million of the \$149 million requested for efforts to improve access to One-Stops as well as continued support for electronic labor exchange and labor market information. It funds only \$20 million of the \$50 million requested for work incentive grants to help integrate employment services for persons with disabilities into the mainstream One-Stop system.

The bill also does not provide funding for Right Track Partnerships (RTP). I requested \$75 million for this new competitive grant program. Designed to help address youth violence, RTP would become part of the multi-agency Safe Schools/Healthy Students initiative, expanding it to include a focus on out-of-school youth.

The bill provides \$33 million less than my request for labor law enforcement agencies, denying or reducing initiatives to ensure workplace safety, address domestic child labor abuses, encourage equal pay, implement new health law, and promote family leave. In particular, the bill provides an inadequate level of funding for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, cutting it by \$18 million, or 5 percent below my request.

The bill also fails to provide adequate funding for the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). The bill funds ILAB at \$50 million, \$26 million below my request. The bill would prevent ILAB from carrying out my proposal to work through the International Labor Organization to help developing countries establish

core labor standards, an essential step towards leveling the playing field for American workers.

The bill's funding level for the Bureau of Labor Statistics is \$11 million less than my request. The enrolled bill denies three important increases that would: (1) improve the Producer Price Index, which measures wholesale prices; (2) improve measures of labor productivity in the service sector; and, (3) improve the Employment Cost Index, used to help set wage levels and guide anti-inflation policy. It also denies funding for a study of racial discrimination in labor markets.

The bill denies my request for \$10 million to fund AgNet, even though the Senate included report language that supports AgNet in concept. AgNet, an Internet-based labor exchange, would facilitate the recruitment of agricultural workers by growers and the movement of agricultural workers to areas with employment needs.

The bill would cut the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) by \$209 million below FY 1999 and \$680 million below my request. The SSBG serves some of the most vulnerable families, providing child protection and child welfare services for millions of children. In addition, the failure to provide the Senate's level of \$2 billion in advance appropriations for the Child Care and Development Block Grant would mean 220,000 fewer children receiving child care assistance in FY 2001. The bill also fails to fund my National Family Caregiver Support program, which would provide urgently needed assistance to 250,000 families caring for older relatives.

By funding the Title X Family Planning program at last year's level, family planning clinics would be unable to extend comprehensive reproductive health care services to an additional 500,000 clients who are neither Medicaid-eligible nor insured. The bill also fails to fund the Health Care Access for the Uninsured Initiative, which would enable the development of integrated systems of care and address service gaps within these systems.

The bill fails to fully fund several of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) critical public health programs, including:

- *childhood immunizations* (- \$44 million), so that approximately 300,000 children may not receive the full complement of recommended childhood vaccinations;

- *infectious diseases* (- \$36 million), which will impair CDC's ability to investigate outbreaks of diseases such as the West Nile virus in New York;
- *domestic HIV prevention* (- \$4 million);
- *race and health demonstrations* (- \$5 million), which will impair better understanding of how to reduce racial disparities in health; and,
- *health statistics* (- \$10 million) for key data collection activities such as the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and health information on racial and ethnic population groups.

The Congress has failed to fund any of the \$59 million increase I requested for the Mental Health Block Grant, which would diminish States' capacity to serve the mentally ill.

In addition, the Congress has underfunded my request for the Substance Abuse Block Grant by \$30 million, and has underfunded other substance abuse treatment grants by a total of \$45 million. These reductions would widen the treatment gap in FY 2000 and jeopardize the Federal Government's ability to meet the National Drug Control Strategy performance target to reduce the drug treatment gap by 50 percent by FY 2007.

The bill provides only half of the \$40 million requested for graduate education at Children's Hospitals, which play an essential role in education the Nation's physicians, training 25 percent of pediatricians and over half of many pediatric subspecialists.

The bill underfunds the Congressional Black Caucus' AIDS Initiative in the Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund by \$15 million, thereby reducing current efforts to prevent the spread of HIV. By not fully funding this program, the scope of HIV/AIDS prevention, education, and outreach activities available to slow the spread of HIV/AIDS in minority communities will be more limited.

The bill fails to fund Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) program management adequately. These reductions would severely impede HCFA's ability to ensure the quality of nursing home care through the Nursing Home Initiative. The bill does not adequately fund the request for Medicare+Choice user fees. This decrease would force HCFA to scale back the National Medicare Education Campaign. The Congress has not passed the proposed user fees

totaling \$194.5 million that could free up resources under the discretionary caps for education and other priorities.

The bill includes a provision that would prevent funds from being used to administer the Medicare+Choice Competitive Pricing Demonstration Project in Kansas and Arizona. These demonstrations which are supported by MEDPAC and other independent health policy experts, were passed by the Congress as part of the Balanced Budget Act in order to provide valuable information regarding the use of competitive pricing methodologies in Medicare. The information that we could learn from these demonstrations is particularly relevant as we consider the important task of reforming Medicare.

The bill contains a highly objectionable provision that would delay the implementation of HHS' final Organ Procurement and Transplantation rule for 90 days. This rule, which was strongly validated by an Institute of Medicine report, provides a more equitable system of treatment for over 63,000 Americans waiting for an organ transplant; its implementation would likely prevent the deaths of hundreds of Americans. Since almost 5,000 people die each year waiting for an organ transplant, we must be allowed to move forward on this issue and implement the rule without further delay.

The bill does not provide any of the \$9.5 million I requested for HHS' Office of the General Counsel and Departmental Appeals Board to handle legal advice, regulations review, and litigation support, and to conduct hearings and issue decisions on nursing home enforcement cases as part of my Nursing Home Initiative. This would increase the backlog of nursing home appeals and impair Federal oversight of nursing home quality and safety standards. A reduction in funds for enforcement is inconsistent with the concerns that the GAO and the Congress have raised about this issue.

The bill cuts funds to counter bioterrorism. It funds less than half my request for CDC's stockpile, limiting the amount of vaccines, antibiotics, and other medical supplies that can be stockpiled to deploy in the event of a chemical or biological attack. In addition, the bill does not include \$13.4 million for critical FDA expedited regulatory review/approval of pharmaceuticals to combat chemical and biological agent weapons.

The bill provides full funding of \$350 million in FY 2002 for the Corporation for Public

Broadcasting. However, the bill provides only \$10 million of the \$20 million requested for the digital transition initiative in FY 2000. This funding is required to help the public broadcasting system meet the Federal deadline to establish digital broadcasting capability by May 1, 2003.

The enrolled bill delays the availability of \$10.9 billion of funding until September 29, 2000. While modest levels of delayed obligations could potentially be sustained without hurting the affected programs, the levels in the enrolled bill are excessive, resulting in delays in NIH research grants, delays in CDC immunizations for children, and delays in the delivery of health services to low income Americans through community health centers and rural health clinics.

The bill also seriously underfunds critical Departmental management activities in the Departments of Labor and Education and the Social Security Administration (SSA). For Education, these reductions would hamstring efforts to replace the Department's accounting system and undermine the new Performance-Based Organization's plans to streamline and modernize student aid computer systems. Reductions to the Department of Labor (DOL) would undercut the agency's ability to comply with the requirements of the Clinger-Cohen and Computer Security Acts, adjudicate contested claims in several of its benefits programs, and examine and update the 1996 study on Family and Medical leave policies. For SSA, the reductions would result in significantly longer waiting times for disability applicants and millions of individuals who visit SSA field offices.

In adopting an across-the-board reduction, the Congress has abdicated its responsibility to make tough choices. Governing is about making choices and selecting priorities that will serve the national interest. By choosing an across-the-board cut, the Congress has failed to meet that responsibility.

This across-the-board cut would result in indiscriminate reductions in important areas such as education, the environment, and law enforcement. In addition, this cut would have an adverse impact on certain national security programs. The indiscriminate nature of the cut would require a reduction of over \$700 million for military personnel, which would require the military services to make cuts in recruiting and lose up to 48,000 military personnel.

In adopting this cost-saving technique, the Congress is asserting that it will not have to dip into the Social Security surplus. However, this cut does not eliminate the need to dip into the Social Security surplus.

For these reasons, this across-the-board cut is not acceptable.

In addition to the specific program cuts and the 0.97 percent across-the-board reduction, the bill contains a \$121 million reduction in salaries and expenses for the agencies funded by this bill, exacerbating the problems caused by the bill's underfunding of critical Departmental management activities. If, for example, the \$121 million reduction were allocated proportionately across all agencies funded in the Labor/HHS/Education bill, HHS would have to absorb an approximately \$55 million reduction to its salaries and expenses accounts, Labor would be cut by about \$14 million, Education by about \$5 million, and SSA by some \$45 million. This would dramatically affect the delivery of essential human services and education programs and the protection of employees in the workplace.

With respect to the District of Columbia component of the bill, I am pleased that the majority and minority in the Congress were able to come together to pass a version of the District of Columbia Appropriations Bill that I would sign if presented to me separately and as it is currently constructed. While I continue to object to remaining riders, some of the highly objectionable provisions that would have intruded upon local citizens' right to make decisions about local matters have been modified from previous versions of the bill. That is a fair compromise. We will continue to strenuously urge the Congress to keep such riders off of the FY 2001 D.C. Appropriations Bill.

I commend the Congress for providing the Federal funds I requested for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and provides requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. The bill also includes funding to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs. However, I continue to

object to remaining riders that violate the principles of home rule.

I look forward to working with the Congress to craft an appropriations bill that I can support,

and to passage of one that will facilitate our shared objectives.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 3, 1999.

Statement on Proposed Appropriations for the District of Columbia *November 3, 1999*

After bipartisan negotiations to resolve the District of Columbia appropriations bill, Congress and my administration agreed to provide essential funding for the District while modifying some of the most objectionable provisions infringing on the rights of local citizens to make decisions about local matters, the principle of home rule.

I would have signed this legislation, but the House attached to it highly objectionable legislation that would have failed to fund important priorities in education, health, and other areas and would have resulted in an across-the-board cut in funding for important programs from defense and veterans' programs to education, law enforcement, and the environment.

Unfortunately, the House voted today on a replacement DC bill that runs contrary to the earlier bipartisan agreement and undercuts the progress that has been made for the benefit of the people of the District of Columbia. The consensus bill on the District passed by both Houses remains acceptable to me, and I would sign it if it were presented as a stand-alone bill or unattached to objectionable legislation. I urge Congress to act for the benefit of the citizens of the District and our Nation's Capital by sending me the agreed-upon legislation, unencumbered by objectionable legislation or provisions.

Statement on the Verdict in the Matthew Shepard Murder Trial *November 3, 1999*

Today's verdict closes a chapter in the tragic story of the killing of Matthew Shepard. Although the verdict cannot bring Matthew back, perhaps it will bring some sense of closure to Dennis and Judy Shepard, as well as other family and friends of Matthew. The First Lady and I offer our prayers for them and our hope that their memories of Matthew's life will sustain them in the difficult time ahead.

The verdict is a dramatic statement that we are determined to have a tolerant, law-abiding

nation that celebrates our differences rather than despising them. Our Nation must unite in outrage against hate-based violence. We cannot surrender to those on the fringe of our society who lash out at those who are different. Their crimes impose a particular cost on society by tearing at the social fabric. It is my continued hope that together, as a nation, we will work to repair that fabric.

Statement on Proposed Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

November 3, 1999

Today's overwhelming vote in the House is an encouraging step toward passage of a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. Unfortunately, the House Republican leadership is seeking to defeat the will of the House—now expressed clearly for a second time—by refusing to appoint conferees who support this legisla-

tion. Despite the leadership's action, the message of the House vote to the conference could not be more clear: Reject the false promise of the Senate-passed bill and send me the bipartisan measure that delivers the real protections that patients deserve.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Australia-United States Peaceful Nuclear Technology Transfer Agreement

November 3, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress, pursuant to sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2153(b), (d)), the text of a proposed Agreement for Cooperation Between the United States of America and Australia Concerning Technology for the Separation of Isotopes of Uranium by Laser Excitation, with accompanying annexes and agreed minute. I am also pleased to transmit my written approval, authorization, and determination concerning the Agreement, and an unclassified Nuclear Proliferation Assessment Statement (NPAS) concerning the Agreement. (In accordance with section 123 of the Act, as amended by title XII of the Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-277), a classified annex to the NPAS, prepared by the Secretary of State in consultation with the Director of Central Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information, will be submitted to the Congress separately.) The joint memorandum submitted to me by the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Energy, which includes a summary of the provisions of the Agreement and the views of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, is also enclosed.

A U.S. company and an Australian company have entered into a contract jointly to develop and evaluate the commercial potential of a particular uranium enrichment process (known as the "SILEX" process) invented by the Australian company. If the commercial viability of the

process is demonstrated, the U.S. company may adopt it to enrich uranium for sale to U.S. and foreign utilities for use as reactor fuel.

Research on and development of the new enrichment process may require transfer from the United States to Australia of technology controlled by the United States as sensitive nuclear technology or Restricted Data. Australia exercises similar controls on the transfer of such technology outside Australia. There is currently in force an Agreement Between the United States of America and Australia Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, signed at Canberra July 5, 1979 (the "1979 Agreement"). However, the 1979 Agreement does not permit transfers of sensitive nuclear technology and Restricted Data between the parties unless specifically provided for by an amendment or by a separate agreement.

Accordingly, the United States and Australia have negotiated, as a complement to the 1979 Agreement, a specialized agreement for peaceful nuclear cooperation to provide the necessary legal basis for transfer of the relevant technology between the two countries for peaceful purposes.

The proposed Agreement provides for cooperation between the parties and authorized persons within their respective jurisdictions in research on and development of the SILEX process (the particular process for the separation of isotopes of uranium by laser excitation). The Agreement permits the transfer for peaceful purposes from Australia to the United States

and from the United States to Australia, subject to the nonproliferation conditions and controls set forth in the Agreement, of Restricted Data, sensitive nuclear technology, sensitive nuclear facilities, and major critical components of such facilities, to the extent that these relate to the SILEX technology.

The nonproliferation conditions and controls required by the Agreement are the standard conditions and controls required by section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act, as amended by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 (NNPA), for all new U.S. agreements for peaceful nuclear cooperation. These include safeguards, a guarantee of no explosive or military use, a guarantee of adequate physical protection, and rights to approve re-transfers, enrichment, reprocessing, other alterations in form or content, and storage. The Agreement contains additional detailed provisions for the protection of sensitive nuclear technology, Restricted Data, sensitive nuclear facilities, and major critical components of such facilities transferred pursuant to it.

Material, facilities, and technology subject to the Agreement may not be used to produce highly enriched uranium without further agreement of the parties.

The Agreement also provides that cooperation under it within the territory of Australia will be limited to research on and development of SILEX technology, and will not be for the purpose of constructing a uranium enrichment facility in Australia unless provided for by an amendment to the Agreement. The United States would treat any such amendment as a new agreement pursuant to section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act, including the requirement for congressional review.

Australia is in the forefront of nations supporting international efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to additional countries. It is a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and has an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the application of full-scope safeguards to its nuclear program. It subscribes to the Nuclear Supplier Group (NSG) Guidelines, which set forth standards for the responsible export of nuclear commodities for peaceful use, and to the Zangger (NPT Exporters) Committee Guidelines, which oblige members to require the application of IAEA safeguards on nuclear exports to nonnuclear weapons states. In addition, Australia is a party to

the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, whereby it has agreed to apply international standards of physical protection to the storage and transport of nuclear material under its jurisdiction or control.

The proposed Agreement with Australia has been negotiated in accordance with the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, and other applicable law. In my judgment, it meets all statutory requirements and will advance the nonproliferation, foreign policy, and commercial interests of the United States.

A consideration in interagency deliberations on the Agreement was the potential consequences of the Agreement for U.S. military needs. If SILEX technology is successfully developed and becomes operational, then all material produced by and through this technology would be precluded from use in the U.S. nuclear weapons and naval nuclear propulsion programs. Furthermore, all other military uses of this material, such as tritium production and material testing, would also not be possible because of the assurances given to the Government of Australia. Yet, to ensure the enduring ability of the United States to meet its common defense and security needs, the United States must maintain its military nuclear capabilities. Recognizing this requirement and the restrictions being placed on the SILEX technology, the Department of Energy will monitor closely the development of SILEX but ensure that alternative uranium enrichment technologies are available to meet the requirements for national security.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested agencies in reviewing the proposed Agreement and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Agreement and authorized its execution and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

Because this Agreement meets all applicable requirements of the Atomic Energy Act, as amended, for agreements for peaceful nuclear cooperation, I am transmitting it to the Congress without exempting it from any requirement contained in section 123 a. of that Act. This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123 b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the

Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House International Relations Committee as provided in section 123 b. Upon completion of the 30-day continuous session period provided for in section 123 b., the 60-day continuous session

period provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 3, 1999.

Remarks in a Discussion With Project GRAD Students in Newark, New Jersey

November 4, 1999

The President. You know Senator Lautenberg, Congressman Payne, your Mayor James. Jayson, don't you think you ought to introduce Mr. Katz to these people?

[At this point, NBA New Jersey Nets player Jayson Williams made brief remarks and introduced Nets co-owner Lewis Katz who also made brief remarks.]

The President. Tell us about this Project GRAD program. Anybody want to tell me about it? Go ahead.

Student. Project GRAD is a scholarship program that guarantees you a \$6,000 scholarship.

The President. If you do what?

Student. If you maintain a 2.5 grade point average, and you have to take two summer institute college preps for two summers. And you have to go to Malcolm X Shabazz for 4 years and graduate within that 4 years. You can't do it in 5 years but 4 years. You have to take college preparatory courses.

The President. So harder courses and two summer schools?

Student. Not harder courses, it's like college prep.

Student. We also have to take 40 hours of community service in our 4 years. We can take 10 hours a year. We can do how many hours that we can do in our 4 years.

The President. What community service are you doing?

Student. Me, I'm a freshman, so—

The President. You haven't started yet. Do you think the community service requirement is a good thing?

Students. Yes, yes.

The President. In the State of Maryland—Maryland is the only State in America where

you have to do community service as a requirement. It's like taking American history or English or whatever. It's like a requirement for getting your high school diploma. And it's a requirement to be in this program.

Are you in the band?

Student. Yes.

The President. What's your instrument?

Student. Trumpet.

The President. Good. How long have you been playing?

Student. Six years.

The President. That's great. It's not quite as big a thrill as Jayson Williams, maybe, but I also got to—I spent a lot of time with Wynton Marsalis. He's the only musician, I think, in the world who is both the greatest jazz musician and the greatest classical musician on his instrument. Good guy.

What else do you want to tell me about this program?

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Is there a limit to the number of young people who can be in the program in this high school?

Student. No. You just have to meet all the requirements.

The President. So anybody who meets the requirements can be in the program?

Student. Yes.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. How long has this program been going on? Do you know?

Student. This is the third year. This will be the third year.

The President. Are there three groups of people who have already graduated from high school?

Students. No.

The President. You're the first. Just juniors. And how many juniors are in the program? Most of them? And do you think 100 percent of the juniors in the program will go to college?

Student. Yes.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Is Bob Milliken here? Mr. Milliken started the communities in schools program—how long ago now? He's been working at this for 25 years, and over 15 years ago, when I was Governor of Arkansas, he came to Arkansas, and he put some of—the program started off in big cities like Newark, and then he put them in small towns and rural areas, too. It's a wonderful thing. People that commit their lives to this are real heroes in my opinion.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. What you're doing is better, I think, it's more comprehensive. We couldn't afford nationally to put it in everywhere. What we're doing I think can be used also by you. This GEAR UP program is one that Congress adopted last year that was developed based on a model that colleges in Philadelphia had pioneered, and the Congressman from Philadelphia, Chaka Fattah, got Mr. Payne and Senator Lautenberg and others to help, and we passed a program that basically provides funds to help college students go in with junior high school kids, middle school kids, and say, "Look, you've got a guarantee of going to college if you make your grades, and we'll help you." And then the colleges come in and tutor and mentor the kids and work with them wherever we have this.

This is better because it works from the beginning of school all the way up. But anything we can do, it seems to me, to make every young person know that college is a real possibility if they stay in school and do the work and learn the subjects I think are very important.

How does the scholarship program work? Where does the money come from? Do you put up the \$6,000 for all the kids?

William M. Freeman. It's not just Lucent Technologies, Mr. President. It's a combination of a lot of things together. And we give \$1,000 the first year, \$1,000 the second, \$2,000 the third, and \$2,000 the fourth year. And that's reserved for each child from when you start out. And we committed over 12 years, so that

the first kindergarten class is guaranteed when they graduate, from that year through 12.

The President. And you can calculate based on your family income whether you can also get a Pell grant. And they get it over and above, don't they?

Mr. Freeman. Yes, no matter what, they get that.

The President. And whether you're eligible for college loans and all that. Those of you who have families who can help, they're also entitled to a \$1,500 tax credit for what they pay towards your college education. So if you get the scholarship and the Pell grant and your family puts up \$1,500, they can get the money back from their taxes.

So if you put it all together now, we pretty much open the doors of college to everybody.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. I was out in Los Angeles the other day, the first one of these tours we took called the new market tour, trying to get more investment into our cities. And I went to this program where young people like you who were interested in automotive engineering were designing their own cars by computer. And they had this software program where they could manage—the program would allow them to drive their cars and see how their design worked when they took sharp curves at high speeds, how they handled crashes, how they did everything. It was an amazing thing.

By the time you go to school on this, you could do the whole thing on a computer with a software program to figure out how to build the cars of the future. They're already building automobiles with—experimental cars, for example, with composite materials, that is, not all steel. And I went to the Detroit Auto Show, and they can build cars now that weigh 500 to 1,000 pounds less than the normal car, but that don't get hurt anymore in crashes.

They've always been able to make real light cars to get high mileage and be efficient, but they've been more dangerous. And now the materials are being developed so that we can make very light cars which are much more energy-efficient, pollute the atmosphere a lot better, and which don't get—if anything, they're safer in collisions and crashes.

So it will be very exciting. By the time you get into that, we'll be doing things with transportation we can't even imagine now. And to

avoid traffic jams, you'll be able to put a little computer program in your car and just program it, and your car will take you wherever it's necessary to avoid the traffic, which, for people that live in highly congested areas will be a welcome development. You may be the most popular person in your class. [Laughter]

[The discussion continued.]

The President. I'll tell you, one great thing about our country is that, of all the countries in the world, we have the best system of undergraduate college education. And so, the good news for you is that we have—there are literally probably 300 schools in America, maybe more, where you can get a world-class undergraduate education in a whole lot of different areas, which means that it's a good thing to have it in your mind where you want to go to school, but you also should remember that you've got a lot of options, and you can't lose. So it's not like—if you think you want to go one place, and it doesn't work out there, and you get a better deal somewhere else, you really should know that America has—we're so blessed. We've

got this wonderful, wonderful system of undergraduate education and colleges where there are literally hundreds of good choices. So you'll all do well.

And I just want to thank you for what you're doing with your lives and what an example you're setting for other young people in this community. I hope my coming here will give this program and you some nationwide publicity so more schools will set up things like this, because this is really wonderful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the library at Malcolm X Shabazz High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Sharpe James; jazz musician Wynton Marsalis; and former Gov. William E. Milliken, of Michigan, founder and president, Communities In Schools, Inc. William M. Freeman is president and chief executive officer, Bell Atlantic-New Jersey. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Williams and Mr. Katz. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Community in Newark November 4, 1999

Thank you. Let me begin by saying that, as an old school musician, I appreciate the band being here today and playing for us. Thank you very much.

Secretary Herman, thank you very much for your introduction, and my good friend Mayor Sharpe James. I told Jayson, when Mayor James was talking, I said, "You know, I really like Sharpe. He never loses his enthusiasm. He's always out there pumping, and you need that for leadership, to make something go."

I thank Secretary Herman for her leadership. Secretary Slater, thank you for being here. Your principal, Lanni Paschall, better? The third time I'll get it perfect. Your superintendent, Marion Bolden, thank you for being here. Senator Lautenberg, Congressman Payne, who used to—Don Payne used to teach and coach at this school, and we thank him for being here.

I am also joined by Congressmen John Larson from Connecticut and Paul Kanjorski from

Pennsylvania. We thank them for being here. And I'm especially honored by the presence here today of a man who believes passionately in this cause and has worked on trying to give all of our children a better future, your former Governor and my former colleague, Governor Tom Kean, now the president for a university. Thank you for being here, sir.

I want to thank Lew Katz, who will speak in a moment; and Ray Chambers, the owners of the Nets and partners in the Yankees. Ray Chambers has been a real guardian angel of this city. He's never forgotten where he came from, and I thank Ray and Lew, and I'll have more to say about that in a minute. I thank Jayson Williams and the New Jersey Nets for being here today.

You know, I thought I was a reasonably tall person until—[laughter]—Bob Lanier of the NBA met me at the airport. And Paul Tagliabue, the NFL Commissioner, is here. He used to

actually play basketball, and he feels short on this stage today. Wendy Lewis, from major league baseball, is here. Bill Milliken, from Communities In Schools, which has been active here.

And we have some business leaders here: the CEO of Prudential, Art Ryan; COSTCO co-founder, Bob Craves; AT&T Network Services president, Frank Ianna; Bell Atlantic New Jersey president, Bill Freeman; Lucent general counsel, Richard Rawson. I thank all them for being here.

And I'd like to introduce some of the other people who came here with me. First of all, a man who has believed in bringing economic opportunity to the poor communities of our country for many, many years and has worked for it, Reverend Jesse Jackson. Make him feel welcome here. [Applause] I'd like to thank Al From, from the Democratic Leadership Council; Hugh Price, from the Urban League; and Maria Echaveste, my Deputy Chief of Staff; and Gene Sperling, my national economic counselor. All of them have played a role in this day.

Now, I want to be brief here because I want you to hear from all the people who really came to tell you what they're going to do to give more of our children a better future. But let me say, I am honored to be here, at Malcolm X Shabazz High School. I am honored to be a part of this day.

We got the day off to a great start because I just met with a number of the Project GRAD scholars. And let me say that this is an unbelievable program. For those of you who are here who don't know what it stands for, it means "graduation really achieves dreams." And thanks to all the companies that have worked on it and the communities in schools program and the people here in the school, all these young people will have the guarantee that they can go on to college if they make their grades, they do community service, they take the right courses, and they make the right life choices. That's the kind of opportunity we need for every single child in the United States of America, and I thank you for giving it to these young people.

Last July, I went around America to a lot of places that haven't participated yet in our economic recovery, the hills of Appalachia, the rural Mississippi Delta, the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the inner cities of East St. Louis and Phoenix and Watts.

The whole idea was to say to the rest of America, "Look, we've got the lowest unemployment in 30 years, over 19 million new jobs, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, a 20-year low in poverty, a 30-year low in the welfare rolls, a 30-year low in the crime rates. If we can't now face the fact that in spite of all this prosperity there are neighborhoods, there are people, there are places that our economic recovery has still not touched and left behind, we will never get around to dealing with this.

Now is the time to say the rest of America should be part of our prosperity, and they're our next great economic opportunity, the new markets of the 21st century. That was the purpose of the July trip. This is the second new markets tour. This time, we're focusing not only where to find potential but how to turn that potential in our inner cities and our rural areas into long-term economic partnerships. And there is no better place for America to look than right here in Newark.

Newark went through a terrible period of economic decline and along with it, a lot of the social problems that inevitably occur when people can't get up and make a decent living every day to support their families. But look what's going on now: the young people being helped in Project GRAD; the unbelievable performing arts center that I visited last March here; Ray Chambers and Lewis Katz, the commitment to have the Nets here in Newark and to dedicate nearly 40 percent of the profits of the enterprise to reinvesting in this community, its children, and its future. We can see it in the Newark Alliance and the New Community Corporation.

Of course, there's still a lot of things that need to be done here. You need more jobs and new businesses and more opportunity and hope and more reconstruction. But wow, what a start you have made.

And I can see it, most importantly, in the lives of those young people that I met with this morning from the Project GRAD group. And I went around and asked them all, where are you going to go to college? What are you going to study? What are you going to do with your life? And they all had an answer. And they're young; maybe they'll change their minds along the way. But the point is, they know. They know—because of those of you who've been involved in this effort—that they can go

to college and they can live their dreams, that they can have a chance in America.

That's all any of these great athletes were given, a chance. There are a lot of guys this tall that aren't playing basketball. They got a chance, and they made the most of it. And that's what we ought to offer to every child and to every adult and to every community and every neighborhood in this entire country. And I will say again, if we cannot do this now, at the time of our greatest prosperity, we will never get around to it. Now is the time to create new markets in every place that has not yet been in the strong sunshine of this economic recovery.

You know, we can do part of it with the Government, and I'll say more about that in a minute. But I think that people can make the most difference, visionaries like Ray Chambers and Lew Katz, who have seen that a sports team can not only thrill people while the game is going on but actually share the rewards of their popular support with the communities in which they live. This is an astonishing thing that they have done. I want all of you to hear me: This is an astonishing thing that they have done.

And if every franchise in America would follow that lead, and some of the other things you're going to hear about in a minute, America would be a very different place. I have seen Jayson Williams dedicate so much of his time to being a role model for our young people and helping our young people, and more and more of our athletes are doing this.

But the Nets have found a way to do it on a systematic and widespread basis that can change the lives of hundreds of people, maybe thousands of people, maybe the whole future of this community. And this is an amazing thing. Because what we want to do in America is to find a way for people to do well and to do good. And we always find that the more good we do, the more those of us who are fortunate do well. But they are living it, and they are living it with a plan, with a system. They worked the plan, and they have good people who believe in it. And we need to do that everywhere.

Sports teams everywhere can make a difference. They can site their stadiums in urban areas as part of a comprehensive community economic development plan. They can set up mentoring partnerships with their suppliers to help small and minority-owned businesses get

in the game of doing business. They can reach out to young people and lead them on a path to college and a better life.

So today we are here, as much as anything else, to challenge all the sports teams in America to listen to and match the pathbreaking commitment of Lewis Katz, of Ray Chambers, of Paul Tagliabue, of the others from other athletic organizations who will speak to you in a few minutes.

Think about the obligations owed to people in your city. Go beyond making appearances for good causes to change the cause for everyone in your community. Make investment in your community second only in your priorities to bringing home the championship trophy. That way, every single sports team in America can be a true champion for the children and the future of our country.

I also want to briefly thank some of the other businesses represented here today for what they're doing. But let me just mention it, because if every business in America copied them, this would be a very different and better country. Prudential, one of the oldest and most generous corporate citizens in Newark, has just approved a \$2½ million grant to help young people gain vital management skills. Yes, give them a hand. *[Applause]* Bell Atlantic and Ford Motor are going to build on an existing \$5 million commitment to add a new distance learning laboratory to their youth automotive training center. AT&T is launching a new corporate mentoring program and a new information technology academy for young people. And the Mills Corporation, a major developer of shopping malls, has pledged to hire 1,000 local residents and invest \$1 million to provide training, transportation, and child care for these and their other new workers.

What are we going to do in Washington? Well, we're doing our best, the Members of Congress who are here from New Jersey and other States and me and our administration, to try to give American companies and individuals more incentives to invest in the people and the places that are still not full partners in our recovery. We have asked Congress for bipartisan legislation to create tax incentives and loan guarantees to spur \$15 billion in new investment. Congress has already taken the first step and passed initial funding for the plan. And I've worked very hard to make this a bipartisan, non-political effort, because what I want to do in

passing this program is nothing more or less than to give American business people and other investors the same incentives to invest in the poorer communities of America we give them today to invest in the poorer communities of South America or Africa or Asia or any other place.

And let me say, I support giving Americans incentives to invest in other countries. I want us to be partners with people around the world who are trying to live their dreams. But we have a heavy obligation to take care of people at home who haven't been part of this recovery yet.

One last thing I'd like to mention. I want to thank Reverend Jackson and others who are here for supporting community banks and a strong Community Reinvestment Act. That law helps to pump over \$80 billion in investment into our communities last year. And there was a serious attempt to weaken it, even as we gave banks new powers. So we said, "If you're going to expand the powers of banks, we want to expand the reach of the Community Reinvestment Act." People who have banks in communities ought to loan money in the communities where their depositors are and help to build their future there. And I want to say I thank them for that.

Let me say one last word about Newark, because I hope the story coming out of this today will be, if they can do it in Newark, why can't we do it in our community. That's what I want the story to be. When people see pictures of those young people that I met from Project GRAD on the news tonight, I want people to say, "If those kids are being given the help they need and the guarantee they can go on to college, I want our kids and our community to have the same guarantee to go on to college and the help they need to learn what they need to know."

A few years ago, a lot of people were ready to give up on Newark. Some people could only remember riots. But the people of Newark represented more than 300 years of remarkable contributions to our Nation, from the building of the Conestoga wagons that helped us settle the frontier, to supplying the equipment that helped us win two World Wars. Where some people saw an abandoned downtown, the visionaries of Newark dreamed of a performing arts center. Where some saw empty lots, the visionaries saw community centers. Where some saw a city in trouble, the people who bought the Nets saw a place of the future.

And everybody here who believed in the children of this community, who believed that every child can learn and has a gift to give, not only to his or her own life but to all the rest of us as well, I want to tell you that I am profoundly grateful. And I just want the rest of America to see it. I want to help you succeed, and I want us to make these opportunities available to every single child in the United States.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. in the gymnasium at Malcolm X Shabazz High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Sharpe James of Newark; Jayson Williams, player, and Ray Chambers and Lewis Katz, co-owners, NBA New Jersey Nets; Newark Public School District Superintendent Marion A. Bolden; former Gov. Thomas H. Kean of New Jersey, president, Drew University; Mayor Bob Lanier of Houston, member, Basketball Hall of Fame; Wendy Lewis, human resources director, Major League Baseball; former Gov. William E. Milliken of Michigan, founder and president, Communities In Schools; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Al From, president, Democratic Leadership Council; and Hugh B. Price, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League.

Interview With Neil Cavuto of Fox News in Newark November 4, 1999

Mr. Cavuto. Welcome, Mr. President. It's a real honor to have you.

The President. Thank you.

New Markets Initiative

Mr. Cavuto. This is an interesting initiative because, on the one hand, you're compelling companies to do something good, but you also

have to get them to respond to that message. How do you do that?

The President. Well, I find that a lot of them want to do it. I think there is a real awareness in America today, that we're going through the best economy we've ever had, and yet, for whatever reason, there are people and places that are left behind.

I argue, number one, that it's our obligation to try to help, those of us that have done better; and number two, that it actually makes good economic sense, because one of the big questions on every business person's, every economist's mind, everybody that plays the market is, "Well, how long can this economic expansion go on? How much more growth do we have? How many more jobs can we create before either it runs out of steam or inflation takes over, and it has to be broken?" And my argument is that the best opportunity we have to continue this expansion without inflation is to invest in new markets. And the closest new markets are those here at home and the people and places that have been left behind.

Mr. Cavuto. Can you guilt them into doing that, though?

The President. No, I don't think that it's a matter of guilt. I have a positive approach that I think we do have an obligation to do it, but I think we'll feel better if we do. But I also believe it is in the economic self-interest of those who are doing well now.

I think there are real opportunities here, and I think that's what people like Lew Katz and Ray Chambers think. These guys, they're doing this, dedicating a big percentage of their profits to reinvestment in downtown Newark partly because they feel a sense of obligation. They think it's the morally right thing to do. They think it's important for our country's long-term strength and coherence. But they also know there are real opportunities here. I mean, we can create a lot of jobs here, create a lot of businesses here. I just think it's a real opportunity.

Now, I'm also attempting to work out a bipartisan agreement with the Congress to pass a series of tax credits and loan guarantees which would, in effect, give investors the same incentives to invest in the poor areas in America we give them to invest in the poor areas in South America or Africa or Asia. And I think that will help a lot, too.

Independent Presidential Candidate Pat Buchanan

Mr. Cavuto. You know, when you mentioned that in your remarks earlier today, you almost sounded like Pat Buchanan, because that's his pitch.

The President. But the difference between me and Pat Buchanan is I think we ought to invest abroad, too. That is, I'm not an "America only," but I don't want to leave behind the people who are hurt in America.

Mr. Cavuto. But isn't his point that we have left behind some of the unfortunate in America?

The President. But he's right about that. He's right about that. But I don't think that the way to stop leaving them behind is to put up a lot of trade barriers because we've gotten 30 percent of our growth, until the Asian financial crisis, came from the expansion of American markets abroad. We only have 4 percent of the world's people; we have 22 percent of the world's wealth. We obviously have got to sell something to the other 96 percent of the folks out there.

So while I don't agree with him that we should put up barriers and, in effect, shrink the volume of world trade, I do agree that we have to do more to reinvest in our own country, in our own people, and create markets here. And if we can't do this now, when the economy is perhaps the strongest it's ever been, when will we ever get around to doing it?

Vice President Gore/Empowerment Zones

Mr. Cavuto. The Senate could read into that, sir, that, you know, here your Vice President is in the fight of his life. There are many, for example, in the labor movement who, while ostensibly supporting him, fear that this administration, with support of international treaties, has somehow abandoned them, rightly or not. And I wonder whether your remarks today and these initiatives over the last few months are an effort to help Mr. Gore?

The President. Well, I think they should help him because he's been a part of it, but that's not why I proposed them. Keep in mind—look at the record. In January of 1993, my first month in office, I proposed the empowerment zones to try to get extra incentives in the inner cities and the economically distressed areas, even when the whole country was in economic trouble. And we set out this empowerment zone

enterprise community program under the leadership of Vice President Gore way back in '93.

So this is something that we have done all along. And I have tried to—I've increased the number of empowerment zones. Now it's twice as many. We fought for funding for them in this budget cycle. Actually, what led to this proposal is that I was asking myself two questions. One is, how can I get beyond the empowerment zone? They help the areas where they are, but we can't put them everywhere; we don't have enough money to invest everywhere in the empowerment zones, everywhere there is a need.

And then the second question I was asking myself is, how do we keep the economic growth going without inflation? You know, I'm not all that surprised that we've been as fortunate as we have been because I believed always that if we could get a good economic policy—that is if we could get rid of the deficit, get interest rates down, keep expanding trade, and make the right kind of long-term investments—that technology and open markets would give us higher growth with less inflation than most economists had estimated. I made this argument in December of '92 when we started all this.

But I have been very frustrated that we have not been able to bring jobs and businesses and the general entrepreneurial spirit to some of the tougher neighborhoods and more isolated places in the country. So that's how we came around to this new markets idea. We were trying to figure out a way to keep the economy going and to get opportunity in the places where the empowerment zones wouldn't reach.

Administration's Relations With Corporate America

Mr. Cavuto. But you have to compel them to follow, right? I mean, you have to provide an inspirational lead for that. And I guess some of the companies that I noticed, Mr. President, who are involved with this—Aetna, for example—seem to get mixed reads from your administration: Yes, participate in these type of programs; at the same time, the Government is bashing HMO's.

There seems to be a disconnect among many in corporate America, I guess, with you personally and with the administration generally. Yes, it talks the talk and wants help and incentives and that sort of thing, but there's almost like an anticorporate environment, whether it's investigating Microsoft or looking down at Intel or

now going after seven utilities and whether they are violating environmental laws—that this is an anticorporate White House.

The President. Well, first of all, you have to deal with these things one at a time. But as a matter of law and practice, the White House had nothing to do with the Justice Department—

Mr. Cavuto. Absolutely. Absolutely. But you can see the theme—

The President. —or the EPA decisions. Although, I would point out there are an awful lot of businesses, a huge number who agree with the Microsoft action.

Mr. Cavuto. Do you think, by the way, that Microsoft is a bully?

The President. I think that I should not comment on an antitrust action. But I will say this. I've had more businesspeople spontaneously say to me they agree with it, than I have say they disagree. So I don't think you can view that pro- or anti-business.

Secondly, if you look at the work we have done from the beginning, from the first day I was here, I think this is the most pro-business Democratic administration we've had in decades and decades. And I think the results show that. If I were antibusiness, I've done a poor job of demonstrating it, given the—we've had a record number of new small businesses start every year; we've done a lot to reduce the regulatory burdens and specific tax burdens on small businesses, to give businesses incentives to hire people that were difficult to place, and a whole range of things we've done that we've been asked to do.

Now, on the HMO front, I would also like to say that there were 43 HMO's that endorsed all the principal elements of the Patients' Bill of Rights and asked for Federal legislation because they said they could not afford to extend these rights to their patients if their competitors didn't have to. So even there, there is some difference of opinion.

I just simply—I've never wanted to put them out of business. Remember in '93—when we had the health care debate in '94, I repeatedly said that I thought managed care on balance had been good for America, that before the managed care came along, health care costs were increasing at 3 times the rate of inflation. And that was unsustainable.

Democratic Presidential Candidate Bill Bradley's Health Plan

Mr. Cavuto. But the irony is now that it's Bill Bradley who's trumpeting that initial cause of yours and not your own Vice President.

The President. Well, if you look at the difference—there's a difference in how much their plans cost, but I think the Vice President's plan, even though it's a lot less costly, covers almost as many people. What Senator Bradley has proposed is quite different from what I've proposed, but it's designed to achieve the same goal. I think the American people can evaluate the two plans without my help, and I'm sure the candidates would be able to help. But the Vice President's plan, even though it's much less expensive, covers I think only 2 million fewer people than the Bradley plan does.

Budget Negotiations

Mr. Cavuto. Could I talk to you a little bit about the budget negotiations, sir? Last night I had an opportunity to speak with Senate budget chief Pete Domenici, and he knew I was speaking to you today, and he had a message that was not so polite. But essentially he was saying, "When you talk to the President, tell him to stop grandstanding. There aren't big differences between us. The money issues are rather incremental." What do you say to that?

The President. Well, there aren't big spending differences although there would be if there are across-the-board spending cutbacks. The main difference is—you know, Senator Domenici, to be fair to him, has not been guilty of grandstanding, but his party has. Let's look at the main difference. The main difference is I sent them a budget that was paid for. They didn't want to pay for it. They had us spending the Social Security surplus. So instead of owning up to it, they ran ads accusing the Democrats of spending the Social Security surplus which is just false.

Mr. Cavuto. They say they're not.

The President. Well, they say they're not, and they may not be if they have a big enough across-the-board cut. But until their across-the-board cut they were, number one. Number two, if I could deal with Senator Domenici and with the House appropriators, there would be no problem.

Mr. Cavuto. Where's the problem?

The President. The problem is every time the Republicans make a deal, they go off, and they go back to their caucuses, and their rightwing says, "No, you can't do this." So they have to come back—and they have to come back and say, "Oh, I'm sorry. We can't do this." So we've had a lot of trouble here. So they say, "Well, they want me to put all our cards on the table."

I've made—keep in mind, since this Republican majority has been in there, we had one bad year, in '95, when they shut the Government down; '96, '97, '98, we reached agreement on budgets where we had their priorities and ours, where we compromised, where there were victories on all sides, where everybody would walk away and say, "We've done something good for America." That's not happening this time because this process is being driven for political reasons by their illogical extremists.

Mr. Cavuto. Do you put Senator Trent Lott in that camp, sir?

The President. That's something you do to try to force me into a fight. I had a good fight with Senator Lott and Mr. Hastert—had a good talk with them yesterday or the day before, and I hope we can work it out. I have a good relationship, personal relationship with Senator Lott and with Speaker Hastert. But they, in effect, are the prisoners of how their caucuses go.

But I think that this is a strategy that Mr. DeLay and others have embraced and announced, that in the last couple days it appeared that Senator McConnell had embraced, for reasons that I don't quite understand, except I think it probably has something to do with campaigning and how they attract support.

Look, we made agreements. Look, I've got a record of this. I've made principled agreements with the Republicans on welfare reform and on budgets in '97—'96, '97, and '98. And the only reason we're having trouble now is that the rightwing in the Republican Party is taking over the process. And if they'll give it back to the appropriations chairman and leaders, the responsible people, we'll make our principled compromises, and we'll get out of there.

Post-Presidential Plans

Mr. Cavuto. Finally, sir, I'd be remiss; you have 14 months left in office, and you've obviously indicated you want an aggressive last 14 months. You certainly don't want the "lame duck" label, and you've fought very hard to avoid that. But I am tempted to ask you, since

I talk to a lot of CEO's and what they do when they step down, what are you going to do when you step down?

The President. Well, I haven't made a final decision just yet. And there are some decisions I can't make, particularly ones that related to financial matters I simply can't make until I leave. But what I want to do is to build my library and my public policy center and——

Mr. Cavuto. Would that require you being still an Arkansas resident? There is talk that you don't want to be a New York resident until that's resolved.

The President. Well, there's no requirement one way or the other. I'll be there a lot, regardless. It will require me to be there often.

Mr. Cavuto. So do you become a New York resident first, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I don't even know, I haven't thought that through. All I'm saying is I'm going to be—I'm going to build my library, and I'm going to do a lot of work. I'm going to have it be, instead of some mausoleum to the past, the natural sort of continuation of the work I did as President. That is, I want to be a useful citizen of our country, and I want to have some constructive role around the world and help people that would like me to help them in however way I can.

Mr. Cavuto. Sort of like the Carter Center?

The President. Yes. I'll do different things but sort of like that. But it's very important to me not to get in the way of the next President,

whoever the next President turns out to be. And so I don't want to do anything inappropriate. But I would like to have a very vigorous public-service-oriented career when I leave here and do something useful.

Mr. Cavuto. What about corporate boards?

The President. I've given no thought to that.

Mr. Cavuto. Really?

The President. No. You know,——

Mr. Cavuto. Two million dollar speeches?

The President. I've got to make some money for my family and take care of them, and I want to do what I can as quickly as I can to do that. But I haven't given a lot of thought to how to do it, because I've got to wait until I'm out of office to make a lot of those agreements.

The main thing I want to do is to have some constructive role in public life that is not in any way inconsistent with the fact that someone else will be President of the United States and has to do that job. But I think there are a lot of useful things I can do, and I'm looking forward to it.

Mr. Cavuto. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:27 p.m. at Malcolm X Shabazz High School. In his remarks, the President referred to NBA New Jersey Nets co-owners Lewis Katz and Ray Chambers.

Interview With Dan Patrick of ESPN Radio

November 4, 1999

Mr. Patrick. Mr. President?

The President. Yes?

Mr. Patrick. It's Dan Patrick with Rob Dibble.

The President. Hey, Dan. How are you?

Mr. Patrick. I'm great. I appreciate you calling in. I've been dancing a little bit, ad-libbing for an hour and a half, but I know you're a busy man. I just want you to know, I've been sweating. [Laughter]

The President. I'm sorry. I owe you one.

Mr. Patrick. You know what I could use, a hug right now is what I could use. [Laughter]

The President. If I could give you one of those, I'd do that, too.

Mr. Patrick. I asked the callers to give me some suggestions for you. And do I have to call you Mr. President? In all respect, it's a very personable show. Can I call you something that——

The President. Call me whatever you want.

Mr. Patrick. No, you tell me what to call you. I want it to be comfortable here, because, Mr. President, that puts me at a disadvantage, asking you sports questions. [Laughter]

The President. You don't have to call me anything. Just ask the question.

Mr. Patrick. All right. Could I call you Bill?

The President. You can call me whatever you want. It's fine with me.

Team Jerseys

Mr. Patrick. Okay. What are you doing with all those jerseys that you get when teams come to the White House?

The President. Believe it or not, I save them all because I'm such a big sports fan. And when I get out of here, I'm going to put them all together and decide whether to either display them or take turns wearing them. But I actually save them all.

Mr. Patrick. Have you put one on in the White House and maybe, you know, tossed a football or played basketball in them?

The President. Yes, I played—I shot a few baskets with a Kentucky jersey they gave me the other day, not very long ago.

President's Favorite Athletic Events

Mr. Patrick. Now, what's the one event you would want to go to that you haven't been to, sporting-wise?

The President. That I have never been to? I'd like to go to a Super Bowl, and I'd like to go to a college championship, now that the new football system is in.

Mr. Patrick. You haven't been to the Super Bowl?

The President. Never. I've watched a lot of them, but I've never been to one.

Mr. Patrick. You know what? You can come with ESPN this year; it's in Atlanta. I'd be more than happy—

The President. I've never been. You know, I have seen some great events. I went to the NCAA championship game in Arkansas, one in '94, and that's the only time I've ever been to that. And then I went to—I saw the women's World Cup finals this year when we beat China with the overtime, with the kickoff at the end, which was stunning. It was one of the most exciting athletic events I've ever seen in my life.

SportsCenter

Mr. Patrick. Set the scene in the White House when you're watching SportsCenter.

The President. When I'm watching it?

Mr. Patrick. Yes, like where are you and—

The President. Oh, all right. Well, I watch it all the time, you know. I'm either in the kitchen, where Hillary and I and Chelsea, when she's home, we have our meals in a very informal atmosphere in the kitchen when there's no one else there, or I'm upstairs in what's called the Solarium; it's up on the third floor, and it's a big kind of sunny room. And I watch TV there at night, especially when my brother-in-law or someone else is staying with us.

Normally, I'm watching SportsCenter either around dinnertime when I come in or late at night when I come in from an event and I'm sitting, visiting with other people.

Mr. Patrick. Have I said anything stupid on SportsCenter that maybe you wanted to criticize or critique me? Because you can—you get critiqued all the time. Feel free; you can take a shot at me.

The President. No, I don't think so. I think as long as I'm in office, I should be criticized but not return the favor. [Laughter] Everybody in America gets to criticize the President. That's part of the privilege of being a citizen.

Athletic Organizations' Community Involvement

Mr. Patrick. The President of the United States, joining us on the Dan Patrick Show here on ESPN Radio. You're a part of this new markets incentives. I know you're in New Jersey. The Nets are donating to the city of Newark, which I think is great. Do you see teams that don't give back to the community enough? The taxpayers build these stadiums, and maybe they don't get something in return for promoting and supporting their teams.

The President. Well, let me put it in more positive terms with regard to the Nets. I think that taxpayers finance these things because they enjoy having professional teams in their communities, because they believe it brings their communities some prestige, and because they think it generates a lot of other economic activity. But I think that the opportunity for a professional sports team to give something back to the community on a scale far greater than anything that's happened so far is embodied by what the Nets are doing.

I mean, this is a stunning thing that Lew Katz and Ray Chambers are doing with the Nets. And now, you know, they're partners with the Yankees, and so they've got a smaller percentage of the overall joint operations are going into community operations not only in Newark,

New Jersey, but also in the Bronx, where the Yankees are.

I just think it's amazing. Here are these two guys that have made a lot of money, and they're going to dedicate almost 40 percent of the profits of this sports franchise to redeveloping the economy and developing the lives of the children of Newark. I think that is an amazing thing.

Mr. Patrick. I think it's great. I think it's great, but I'm worried. We finance these stadiums. Should taxpayers finance the stadiums if we don't have any say on when those teams can leave?

The President. The practical answer to that is that stadiums cannot be financed unless the political leaders support it. And so the political leaders should decide on the front end, I guess, what they expect out of the teams in return for financing the stadium.

You know, it was interesting when Bob Lanier was mayor of Houston—one of the most popular mayors Houston ever had and a very able man—he let the football team go to Tennessee because he didn't want to finance a new stadium. So it's not like—nobody makes these communities do these things. They make their decisions. And I think if they think there ought to be some conditions or some requirements, that ought to be discussed with the owners in advance.

PGA Golfer Casey Martin

Mr. Patrick. We are going to have Casey Martin on in a little bit.

The President. Good for you.

Mr. Patrick. But you being the avid golfer that you are, do you think that having a golf cart is that much of an advantage in—I mean, the outcry over Casey Martin using a golf cart, did it surprise you? And where do you stand on that issue?

The President. I'm for him. I'm solidly behind him. I think he ought to be able to play. The only way it would be an advantage to him, in my view, is if he really didn't have the debilitating condition in his legs that he has. So I think that to me, this is like the golf version of the Americans with Disabilities Act, you know, where we try to make the workplace accessible with people with disabilities who are otherwise just as good at work as all the rest of us.

Well, Casey is just as good at golf and better than most of the rest of us, and he's got this condition, which will probably shorten his career, anyway. And so I think that the proper course is to say, "Look, we can't let everybody start running around the golf course. We don't want to change the nature of the game, but this man has a unique disability which prohibits his walking around but doesn't prevent him from being a terrific golfer, and for however many years he can be competitive, we think we ought to give him a chance." That's what I think the rule ought to be.

Mr. Patrick. I agree with you, and I just thought that it was interesting, the outcry from everybody.

The President. What they're worried about, I think, is all the people who have to be the keepers of the tradition of any game or any club or anything else, they're always afraid that when they change any rules, it's a slippery slope, and pretty soon the whole character of a contest will be altered in ways that aren't good. But I just don't think that that objection holds water here.

I don't know Casey Martin. I've had some limited contact with him, but he seems like a terrific young man. He's bound to be a courageous young man. He could have folded his tent in the face of his physical disability. He could have sat around feeling sorry for himself. And instead, he shows up every day, and he's obviously got a lot of courage. And I think that we ought to support that. I think that's in the finest tradition of the sport.

So to me, it's not a difficult question. But I sympathize with the people who have the responsibility of preserving the traditions and the heritage of the game. I sympathize with them, but I just think all this resistance has been wrong. I think it's the right thing to do to let him get out there.

Greatest Athlete of the 20th Century

Mr. Patrick. Can I ask you one final question, aside from the question I just asked you?

The President. Sure.

Mr. Patrick. Who is the number one athlete of all time, in your mind? The Sports Century countdown of the top 50 athletes—who would you vote for number one?

The President. Ooh.

Mr. Patrick. Now, I know you released kind of a top 10; maybe it was a top 5. But if you

were going to single out one athlete, who would it be?

The President. I believe the athlete in the 20th century that made the most important contribution was Jesse Owens, because he won the multiple Olympic gold medals in the face of Nazi Germany and against Hitler's racial theories. So I think he was both a great athlete who had to show an extraordinary amount of personal courage, and he did something that was of profound significance at the time.

I think the most talented—physically talented athlete that I ever saw play, I think it would be a toss-up for me between Michael Jordan and Willie Mays.

Mr. Patrick. See, it's hard to go wrong. Once you get up to that stratosphere, then if you pick out somebody and—I always thought Jackie Robinson, to me, signified greatness as an athlete and what he overcame.

The President. Yes. Well, let me say, if you asked me who I thought made the greatest contribution to baseball, I'd have to say Jackie Robinson because he broke the color line and because he did it in a way—because he was a great player who was also a great human being. There's almost no way to go wrong here, but if you asked me who I think was the most—had the most stunning athletic attributes in my lifetime, I would have to say Jordan and Mays are the ones that I've physically witnessed. If you ask me—and I think Jackie Robinson, what he did was important. But I guess I would have to say the reason I picked Jesse Owens is because he did it up against Hitler.

Mr. Patrick. Mr. President, thank you for taking time out of your busy day. And you know, you're always welcome to talk sports on here.

The President. I love it. I loved talking to you, and I hope that more of our sports teams will follow the lead of the New Jersey Nets. What they have done is a great thing, and they're giving a lot of kids a chance at a better future.

Jayson Williams

Mr. Patrick. Well, we have the Nets' Jayson Williams. He's on hold. I think you met him today, but Jayson will—

The President. Oh, I know him. He is a terrific young man, and he's going to be well enough to play soon. But it's not going to stop him from spending some of his time trying to give these kids a better future, and I hope more people will follow his lead, too.

Mr. Patrick. Mr. President, thank you, and we'll see you. Even when you're out of office, you want to talk sports, you're always welcome, okay?

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Patrick. I don't want you to feel like, that you're being neglected once you're out. You're still welcome here.

The President. You've got a deal.

Mr. Patrick. All right. Thank you.

The President. Bye.

NOTE: The President spoke by telephone at approximately 2:23 p.m. from Malcolm X Shabazz High School in Newark, NJ. In his remarks, he referred to NBA New Jersey Nets co-owners Lewis Katz and Ray Chambers; former NBA Chicago Bulls player Michael Jordan; Baseball Hall of Famer Willie Mays; and NBA New Jersey Nets player Jayson Williams. Rob Dibble is Mr. Patrick's co-anchor.

Remarks to the North End Community in Hartford, Connecticut November 4, 1999

Thank you very much, first, to you Dick Huber, for being such a faithful member of our new markets team. You started out with us in Atlanta; you made the trip to Appalachia and to the Delta and other places; and you led me home to Hartford today for you. You know, the first time we were talking about this—I should say this about Dick; he talks

about how cynical he is. That's a front. I'm a politician; I recognize a front when I see one. [Laughter]

He said, "You know, I'm not sure I'm happy about you taking all these other businessmen on this new markets tour. It looks to me like there's a great business opportunity here, and I hate for everybody else to find it before I

do.” And I want to come back to that, but I thank you.

I thank my longtime friend the president of Trinity College, Evan Dobelle, and Heidi Miller from the Citigroup. And thank you, Robert Fiondella and all the other business leaders that are here. Thank you, Governor. Thank you, Congressman, and also Congressman Kanjorski, who has been a faithful member of all of our tours. I thank Speaker Lyons and Senator Sullivan and all the other leaders who are here.

I want to say another word. I’m particularly glad to be in Hartford with Congressman Larson, because he’s been after me to come here as well. And Secretary Slater, thank you for making all these trips. And Reverend Jackson, thank you for being such an inspiration for all of these efforts.

I want to thank the Collective founders, Jackie and Dollie McLean. I thought of giving up my speaking time and letting Jackie play. [Laughter] And I appreciate the “Hail To The Chief” with the saxophone. And I just heard the jazz band upstairs; they played an old Sonny Stipp tune that I knew back when I was a young man. I don’t believe I’m good enough to play it anymore, but I was astonished at the musical quality of the people here. And it’s a great gift to your community.

Today you’re hearing in words rather than music, another sort of serenade for the people of this city. The corporate leaders together are pledging—listen to this—well over \$200 million to the future of Hartford. That’s one of the most impressive commitments in any city to developing the market potential of people who have not been part of our prosperity anywhere in the United States of America. And you should applaud them, support them, and be very proud of them. [Applause]

They’re all saying, “Hartford is our home; Hartford is worth working for, worth fighting for, worth believing in.” And we are committed to working with you to succeed.

Today’s announcements are just the latest sign of the renaissance of this city. Before I came here to the Artists Collective, I had a chance to meet some of the vendors at El Mercado, the Latino marketplace on Park Street. I actually had visited there in 1992, and I remarked, first of all, how excited I was to go back. I had a wonderful time there in ’92. At the time I was battling with my weight, and they made it worse. [Laughter] I never wanted to leave

any of the places. And I loved being back there today. And as far as I could see, everything was better than it was in ’92, except for one thing. There was this picture of me when I was there in ’92, and I look worse. But they look better. Everything else is better. [Laughter] So I want to thank the people there for all the work that they have done.

Mr. Mayor, I want to compliment you on falling crime rates, dramatically falling crime rates. We have the lowest crime rate in America in 30 years, lowest murder rate in 32 years. No single person can take credit for this, but every person who has supported community policing, responsible law enforcement policies, and working together can take a lot of credit for it. So I thank you.

I also want to compliment everybody here who is responsible for the improvements we see in the schools here. I thank you for your commitment to the MetroHartford Millennium and Adriaen’s Landing projects. I thank Trinity College, working with HUD, for Frog Holler, where they are turning a once devastated brownfield into a remarkable 16-acre learning corridor. I’m pleased to announce that Citigroup has just committed to build on the success of the learning corridor by offering more than \$7.4 million in equity and debt capital to help rehabilitate 70 single-family homes in the neighborhood, and I appreciate that.

Let me just say this. One of the biggest problems we have in America right now is the product of our prosperity. There is not enough affordable housing for all the people who have jobs and have incomes, but because of the economy being so strong, they’re still being priced out of the housing market. Therefore, there is an enormous opportunity, if we can get the capital to the right place, to create more jobs for people who still need them in rehabilitating existing structures in a way that will make them affordable for working people. So this is very good thing, and I hope it will be built on, because you can, Governor, help people not only in Hartford but in Bridgeport, in New Haven, and all the other places that still need help in Connecticut.

And I want to say, if I might, I appreciate your being here, because I don’t believe that this issue should be a partisan issue. I think all Americans want every American to have a chance to work, and I thank you.

I guess my message here is this: Number one, this is great; number two, let's build on it; number three, every other city in America should follow your lead. If we have now the lowest unemployment rate in 29 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest minority unemployment rates ever recorded since we have been trying for about 30 years to separate them out, if we have all this in the longest peacetime expansion in history, which come February, will be the longest economic expansion in the history of America, if we can't take this opportunity to bring real hope to the people in places who have not been touched by this recovery, we will never get around to doing it.

So the first thing I want to say is, because we care about one another, it is the right thing to do, and possible. The second thing I want to say is, it's the smart thing to do. That's what Dick said the first time he talked about it. You would be amazed how much time I spend as your President trying to figure out how to keep this economic expansion going, you know, because if you read in the paper, about once every month or so there will be somebody saying the sky is finally going to fall, we can't keep this thing going anymore, inflation's around the corner or it's going to run out of steam.

But the truth is, I always felt if we could get rid of this terrible deficit and start bringing down our debt, if we could still have enough money to invest in our people and new technologies, and if we could keep our borders open so we'd have to be competitive and keep inflation down, we could really grow this economy for a long time. I gave that speech back in '92, and I didn't know if I was right or not, but you all proved that that was right.

Now, we have to say, how can we keep it going? How can we have growth without inflation? The answer is, invest in the people in places who still haven't felt the opportunity. They need the jobs. They need the businesses. They need the capital. They need the work. And they will be new customers. It is an inflation-free strategy to continue the growth of America, to find the people in places still not touched.

So what I want to say to you is, yes, we have a lot of people in the clergy here. You can say, and you'd be right, that it is the morally responsible thing to do for the business leaders of this community and this State and this Nation

to invest in these places. But you also should say, it is the economically smart thing to do, because it's one of the clearest ways we can continue to have this economic expansion with no inflation. It is a magic moment, and we dare not let it pass us by.

Now, what I'm trying to do at the Federal level is to build a bipartisan coalition for giving the kind of tools you need to maximize the number of businesspeople and investors who can participate. The Congress has already, on a bipartisan basis, passed a bill which appropriates some of the money we need to start our national effort. And now, I'm trying to secure agreement to pass a set of tax incentives and loan guarantees, basically tax credits and loan guarantees, which would, for example, give—let's just take Aetna or any other business—the same financial incentives to invest in the inner city in Hartford, in a developing market in Hartford, or any other place in Connecticut, that they can get already to invest in a developing market in Central America, in South America, in Asia, in Africa.

Now, I don't want to stop investing in those countries, but I do think that people in America with money ought to get the same tax breaks to invest in poor communities, in poor people in America, we give them to invest around the world.

So I say to you, I am very grateful to Hartford for setting an example. I'm grateful for this vast and broad-based crowd of people for being here. But this is good business, as well as good social policy. We can be good citizens and actually improve the economy. And if enough of us believe that, then we can pass the laws we need to pass in Congress and get more people to follow the lead of the business investments we've seen here today. This is the right thing to do.

One hundred and thirty years ago, Mark Twain came here for the first time. I like Mark Twain; we ought to all laugh, and besides, he was the first guy who said that reports of his death had been greatly exaggerated, something I came to appreciate more and more as I stayed in this business. [Laughter] Here's what he said about Hartford, "Of all the beautiful towns it has been my fortune to see, this is the chief. You do not know what beauty is if you have not been here."

Thanks to your commitment, your pride, your faith in your city, the beauty is shining through again in new and different ways, with all kinds

of different people, from all different countries, and all different cultural backgrounds, contributing to a 21st century beauty for Hartford. You can see it in the beautiful children I saw dancing upstairs and all the work done here in the Artists Collective new home. You can see it in the pride of El Mercado and all those beautiful stores I saw up and down the avenue. You can see it in the brownfields transformed and the boarded homes make habitable again. This is what it means to develop America's new markets, and we ought to give the same chance to every hard-working American in every community in this country.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

I want to bring up here a man who was making this speech to me years ago and whose Wall Street project pioneered the partnerships

we want everywhere in America between business and Government, to give people a chance and keep hope alive. Reverend Jesse Jackson. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the performance studio at the Artists Collective. In his remarks, he referred to Richard L. Huber, chairman and chief executive officer, Aetna, Inc., who introduced the President; Heidi Miller, chief financial officer, Citigroup, Inc.; Robert W. Fiondella, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Phoenix Home Life Mutual Insurance Company; Gov. John G. Rowland of Connecticut; State Representative Moira K. Lyons; State Senator Kevin B. Sullivan; and Mayor Michael P. Peters of Hartford.

Statement on Additional Assistance for Victims of Hurricane Floyd

November 4, 1999

Today I will seek congressional approval for \$429 million in additional assistance for the victims of Hurricane Floyd in North Carolina, New Jersey, and all the States affected by this disaster. These are existing funds that will be reallocated within the Federal Emergency Management Agency. They will assist in the buyout and relocation of homes located in floodplains that remain vulnerable to future floods.

Additionally, I continue to urge Congress to fully fund my request for SBA's disaster loan

program that can help families and small businesses rebuild in the wake of hurricanes and other natural disasters. I have already asked Congress to provide \$500 million that will help farmers in New Jersey and other States who have suffered severe crop losses due to drought and flooding. I urge Congress to meet my requests to help alleviate the suffering of those affected by Hurricane Floyd.

Statement on the Death of Daisy Bates

November 4, 1999

Hillary and I were very saddened to hear of Daisy Bates' death this morning. She was a dear friend and a heroine. She was known chiefly as a leader during the crisis of Central High School in 1957 and a mentor to the Little Rock Nine. But she was so much more.

President Kennedy so admired her for her civil rights work that he hired her to work in his administration. During her 84 years, she received over 200 awards for her civil rights work,

including the NAACP's esteemed Spingarn Award. In 1957, the Associated Press named her one of the top nine news personalities in the world.

We were blessed to have Daisy as a citizen of Arkansas, where she and her husband, L.C., published the award-winning Arkansas State Press newspaper. For over 30 years, it was the only African-American newspaper in the State. Her death will leave a vacuum in the civil rights

community, the State of Arkansas, and our country. Her legacy will live on through the work

she did, the friends she made, and the people she touched.

Statement on Senate Action on Financial System Reform Legislation

November 4, 1999

I am pleased by the overwhelming, bipartisan passage of historic financial services legislation by the Senate today. I hope the House will do the same shortly and send it to me for my signature.

This legislation will help the American financial services system play a leading role in propelling our economy into the 21st century, continuing the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history. Eliminating barriers to financial services competition will allow American companies to better compete in the global econ-

omy. And consumers will benefit from greater choice of services at lower costs.

By preserving the Community Reinvestment Act and protecting consumer privacy, we have ensured that all Americans will benefit from this historic legislation.

Even after enactment, our work in the financial services area, particularly with respect to financial privacy and consumer protection, will continue. But today's action by the Senate is a historic step forward for our economy.

Statement on Signing the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000

November 4, 1999

I have signed into law H.R. 2561, the "Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2000." The bill approves funds to cover the Department's most critical needs, consistent with my request that reflected my strong commitment to our Nation's security.

The bill provides funding for all critical Defense activities—pay and other quality of life programs, readiness, and weapons modernization. In particular, the bill fully funds the key elements of the compensation initiatives I proposed and that were enacted in the FY 2000 Defense Authorization Act, including military retirement reform, pay table reform, and a significant pay increase. It also fully funds my request for training, spare parts, equipment maintenance, and base operations—all items essential to military readiness. I am pleased that the bill restores partial funding for the F-22 fighter aircraft, which is essential to guaranteeing early air dominance in any future conflict.

Regrettably, the bill goes beyond what is necessary, providing funding for a host of unrequested programs at the expense of other core government activities. It provides \$267.4

billion in discretionary budget authority, a funding level that is \$4.5 billion above my request. As testified to by our military chiefs, my budget request correctly addressed our most important FY 2000 military needs. Unfortunately, H.R. 2561 resorts to a number of funding techniques and gimmicks to meet the Appropriations Subcommittee allocation. These include: designating \$7.2 billion of standard operation and maintenance funding as a contingent emergency; deferring payments to contractors until FY 2001; and incrementally funding a Navy ship (LHD-8).

Furthermore, the bill contains several objectionable language provisions. I am concerned about section 8074, which contains certain reporting requirements that could materially interfere with or impede this country's ability to provide necessary support to another nation or international organization in connection with peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance activities otherwise authorized by law. I will interpret this provision consistent with my constitutional authority to conduct the foreign relations of the United States and my responsibilities as Commander in Chief.

While I am troubled by a provision requiring the Department of Defense to seek specific authorization for the payment of fines or penalties for environmental violations, I will direct the Department to seek such authorization on any fine or penalty it receives, ensuring full accountability for all such violations.

Furthermore, while the provision in section 8174 of the bill prohibits the Department from contributing funds to the American Heritage Rivers initiative, I will direct the Department, within existing laws and authorities, to continue to support and undertake community-oriented service or environmental projects on rivers I have recognized as part of the initiative.

Finally, the bill provides only about one-quarter of the funding level requested for construction of Forward Operating Locations that would

reestablish regional drug interdiction capabilities in Latin America. This amount will not adequately support our vital drug interdiction efforts in the Western Hemisphere.

I have signed this bill because, on balance, it demonstrates our commitment to the military, meets our obligations to the troops, maintains readiness, and funds modernization efforts that will ensure our technological edge into the 21st century.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 4, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2561, approved November 4, was assigned Public Law No. 106-79.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Minimum Wage Legislation November 4, 1999

Dear _____:

I am writing this letter to encourage you to pass a straightforward minimum wage bill that gives working Americans the pay raise they deserve. If we value work and family, we should raise the value of the minimum wage.

In 1996, the Congress and I worked together to raise the minimum wage by 90 cents over 2 years. Since then, the American economy has created nearly 9 million new jobs—with more than 1 million of them in the retail sector where many minimum-wage workers are employed. The unemployment rate has fallen from the already low rate of 5.2 percent to 4.2 percent—the lowest in 29 years. We have enjoyed larger real wage increases for more consecutive years than at any time in more than two decades, while inflation is the lowest it has been in more than three decades. The minimum wage increase has contributed to the 39 percent decline in the welfare caseload since the last minimum wage increase—bringing the welfare rolls down to their lowest level in three decades. And the minimum wage increase has been a crucial factor in reversing the wage stagnation and declines of the previous decade, contributing to rising wages for even the lowest income groups. Our recent experience clearly demonstrates that what

is good for America's working families is good for America's economy.

But as our economy continues to break records, we must do more to ensure that all Americans continue to benefit from it. It is time to build on the steps we have taken to honor the dignity of work. The expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit in 1993 and the increase in the minimum wage have ensured that no full-time working parent with two children has to raise his or her family in poverty. It is important that we take steps to achieve this goal in the future. That is why I have proposed to raise the minimum wage by \$1 an hour over the next two years—from \$5.15 to \$6.15. This modest increase would simply restore the real value of the minimum wage to what it was in 1982. More than 11 million workers would benefit under this proposal. A full-time, year-round worker at the minimum wage would get a \$2,000 raise—enough for a typical family of four to buy groceries for 7 months or pay rent for 5 months.

All Americans should share in our historic prosperity. This is why Congress should not let politics get in the way of raising the minimum wage. If you send me a clean bill that increases

the minimum wage by \$1 over the next two years, I will sign it.

Unfortunately, some in Congress have proposed a more gradual increase in the minimum wage that would cost a full-time, year-round worker roughly \$1,500 over three years compared with my proposal. They have added provisions that would repeal important overtime protections for American workers. And they have been playing politics with the minimum wage bill, using it as a vehicle for costly and unnecessary tax cuts that would threaten our fiscal discipline. As I have stated repeatedly, before we consider using projected surpluses to provide for a tax cut, we must put forth things first and address the solvency of Social Security and Medicare. If Congress sends me a bill that threatens our fiscal discipline, I will veto it.

If paid-for tax cuts are attached to the minimum wage bill, they should reflect our priorities and address urgent national needs like deteriorating schools and the communities that have

been left behind during this time of prosperity. In contrast, the bulk of the provisions attached to the minimum wage bill in the House are directed away from working families. Some of these provisions could even *reduce* the retirement benefits enjoyed by millions of working Americans.

America's workers show up to work every day and get the job done. Congress should do the same this year. I urge Congress to pass a minimum wage bill that does not at the same time add poison pills that bypass the priorities of working families.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives on Proposed Managed Care Improvement Legislation

November 4, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I am writing to underscore my deep disappointment with the unusual procedure employed in naming participants to the joint House-Senate conference on H.R. 2723, the Bipartisan Consensus Managed Care Improvement Act of 1999. The decision to appoint members that fail to reflect the overwhelming vote of 275 to 151 on the Norwood-Dingell bill sends the wrong message to the American people, and the wrong messengers to the conference committee.

The Norwood-Dingell Patients' Bill of Rights legislation is the only patient protections bill in this Congress that has received strong bipartisan support. Yet, out of the 13 Republican members appointed as conferees, only one voted for this legislation, and only one voted in favor of yesterday's successful motion in the House that instructed conferees to insist on including the provisions of the Norwood-Dingell bill.

It is clear that the public longs for us to reach across party lines to address issues of national concern. There are few matters that are more important than enacting a strong Patients Bill of Rights. In this regard, I am asking you to use your authority under the House rules to expand the conference committee to include members who accurately reflect the will of the House.

We need to make certain that the results of this conference will be in the public interest; as currently constituted, this committee is weighted heavily in favor of the special interests that oppose this bill. Over the years, we have worked together on drafting and passing bipartisan health care legislation, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. I hope we can build on that record so that this Congress can respond to the public's need for patients' protections as our nation's health care delivery system undergoes change.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks to the Community of Bradley County in Hermitage, Arkansas November 5, 1999

Thank you very much. Well, good morning. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank all the folks who are here with me, but especially Secretary Glickman and Secretary Slater and our Small Business Administrator Aida Alvarez for the work they have done on some of the projects we're talking about today.

I want to thank Congressman Dickey for being here and Congressman Kanjorski for coming all the way from Pennsylvania to make this tour with me. I want to thank Randy Clanton. Randy gave a good speech, didn't he? [*Applause*] You know, if tomatoes go in the tank again, Randy could go into politics. It's amazing; I think he's really got it. [*Laughter*]

And I want to thank Jimmie Sue Wade and James Carter, because they went on the tour with me today with Randy and all the other co-op members. I want to thank all the folks from the Department of Agriculture and all the people from Arkansas who work in Washington who came home with me and all of the local officials. I look out, and I see friends of mine not only from Bradley County, including all the people who came down from Warren, but from Calhoun County and Ashley County and Desha County and Chicot County and Drew County and Columbia County. There's a lot of people here who have been my friends a long time. I thank you for coming.

And Mr. Mayor, I know you've been in office 5 months, and I'm sorry it took me so long to get here. But I thought we ought to give you a little time to get organized. [*Laughter*] And I'm glad to be back in Hermitage. You know, I know there has been some publicity about how I first became associated with your community. But the first thing I want to tell you is we came here today not because of my long association with this community but because of the success of this co-op and because we want every rural community in America to know what you have done and to know that they can have a better future. That's the truth.

Gene Sperling, my National Economic Adviser who has organized all these new markets tours to places we're trying to get more investment in, he came to see me, and he said we were going to Newark, New Jersey, and Hartford, Connecticut. And I said, "Well, we've got to go someplace in rural America." "Oh," he said, "Mr. President, we've got a great place. We're going to take you home. We want you to go to someplace called Hermitage. Do you know where that is?" [*Laughter*] And so then I regaled my whole White House staff with the story of how I first came to Hermitage over 22 years ago as attorney general. Some of you remember that. You were having a labor problem because the people who came here to work didn't have adequate housing, and nobody would pay any attention to you, and you couldn't get any help from anyplace. I just came down here one night and sat and listened for 3 or 4 hours and learned more about tomato farming than I had ever known in my life and than I've ever heard since.

And then President Carter was elected, and we got some help, and we built the facilities. So a couple years later, I ran for Governor. And you've got to understand; I was 32 years old, and I was scared to death. But I knew people in Hermitage, so I came down here. And the rest of the State didn't know all that much about me. But the day I came down here, because of what I had done to help with the housing, the school was shut down, the school band played for me, we had a parade down the main street. Everybody showed up in the whole town, and I thought it was the damdest thing I'd ever seen. And so I'm driving out—it was amazing. I went crazy. I called back to Little Rock. I was just euphoric. I still—I'm still excited about it 22 years later.

So then, I'm driving to some other campaign stop, and I'm doing an interview—a dumb thing to do, right? I'm doing an interview. And so the reporter asked me a pretty good question,

and I gave a fairly careless answer over something, and it wound up being somewhat controversial. So the only thing that was on the news that night, the only thing that was in the paper the next day was this rather careless answer I'd given to this question. And I kept going around—I was going up to total strangers saying, "But you should have seen the crowd in Hermitage." There was no press out there. [Laughter] And finally, my staff got so sick of hearing me saying it—that's a true story, 1978—they gave me a T-shirt which said on it, "You should have seen the crowd in Hermitage." Over 21 years later, I still have that T-shirt, and they made me wear it around, so I wouldn't have to keep talking about it.

But I tell you what. I asked the mayor. There's 639 people who live in this community. There are more people than that today. So again I say to an unbelieving media: You should see the crowd in Hermitage today. It is amazing.

Let me say one other thing. You know, I used to come to Warren to the Pink Tomato Festival every year, and I learned a valuable lesson. I'd rather come here and go through and watch you package these tomatoes than enter the tomato-eating contest. [Laughter] It was not a good year for me. That's the year I got beat for Governor and I lost the tomato-eating contest—[laughter]—and I was sick for 3 days. It took me a whole week before I wanted to eat tomatoes again. But I got over it, and I'm glad to be here.

Let me tell you why we're here today, and let me just ask you to let me be serious for a minute, because this is very important. When we say, well, you did great with this co-op, when we say we thank Burger King and now Kroger and others for buying your tomatoes, when we say in 2 years you went from 3,400 to 61,000 cases sold, that's something that makes you proud. But remember what Randy said about the quality of rural life and the importance of people being able to make a living on the land.

You know, one of the things that bothers me is that in spite of all the prosperity we've had, there are still people and places that are untouched by it. I am very proud of the fact that I've had a chance to serve as President and to bring some commonsense ideas about how to build a 21st century economy on the old-fashioned values that Secretary Slater mentioned. And we've worked hard at it. And I'm grateful that I've had the chance to serve.

When I look at all these little children here who are going to spend most of their life in a new century and a new millennium, when people in the smallest American communities can be in touch with people all over the world, thanks to the Internet, I am grateful for the fact that in the last 7 years, we have, as we learned today from the latest unemployment figures, we now have had, in the last 7 years, 19.8 million new jobs in America and a 4.1 percent unemployment rate. That's the lowest it's been in 30 years. We've got the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years; the lowest poverty rates in 20 years; over 5 million men, women, and children lifted out of poverty by the dignity of work. We have the highest homeownership in history, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the first back-to-back surpluses in the Federal budget in 42 years. I am proud we'll have the chance to do that.

You know, when I went up there, a lot of people deridingly referred to me as "the Governor of a small southern State" and thought that nobody who came from the backwater of America had enough sense to do that job. But one thing that I didn't forget, coming from Arkansas, was basic arithmetic, and I figured out pretty quick that we couldn't keep spending more than we were taking in without continuing to have high interest rates, high unemployment, lower incomes, and deep trouble. And we turned the country around. And we did it and still continue to invest more in education, in rural America, in technology, in the environment. It was hard to do, but we did it. We also have the smallest Federal Government in 37 years, because we had to stop doing a lot of things to keep investing in what matters.

So the first thing I want to say to you is thank you for giving me the chance to be Governor for 12 years, thank you for giving me the chance to steer through all the tough economic times we had in the eighties, thank you for staying with me as we have turned this country around, and it's moving in the right direction. But now, for the first time in my lifetime—literally, for the first time in my lifetime, we have a chance as a nation—and I would argue, we have the responsibility as a nation—to deal with the large, long-term challenges this country faces. In my lifetime, the only time the economy has been remotely this good was in the 1960's, but we had to deal with the civil rights crisis

at home and the Vietnam war abroad, and eventually we lost our economic prosperity. These things don't last forever. But now we have a chance to deal with those challenges.

What are they? I'll just mention a few: The aging of America. We're going to have twice as many people over 65 in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] But there will only be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. So I have asked the Congress to adopt my plan to lengthen the life of Social Security to 2050, so it takes into account all the baby boomers and doesn't bankrupt their children and grandchildren, and to lengthen the life of Medicare and add prescription drug coverage for all these seniors who can't afford to buy their medicine anymore. I think that's important.

Challenge number two: to deal with the education of the children of America. Finally we have a number of schoolchildren in our schools larger than the baby boom generation and, by far, the most ethnically and racially and culturally diverse group of kids in our history. Look at all the Hispanic kids that are in Arkansas today, all the Hispanics in this crowd today. When I came down here last time as Governor, these folks weren't here. I'm glad they're here. They're adding to our State; they're strengthening our communities; they're making life more interesting. But it's more challenging. The school district across the river from where I live now, in Arlington, Virginia, has children from—listen to this—180 different national and ethnic groups, speaking—their parents speak over 100 different languages, in one school district. And I tell you, in a global economy, that's a good deal, not a bad deal. But we've got to give every child a world-class education, whether they live in a rural area or an urban area, whether they're poor or rich or middle class. And we've got a chance to do it now.

The third thing I think we ought to do to keep our prosperity going is to keep paying down the debt. Do you know, in 15 years, this country could be out of debt for the first time since 1835, when Andrew Jackson was President? That's a good thing to do. We ought to do that. We ought to do that, because it means lower interest rates, more jobs, higher incomes, a more stable future.

There are many other challenges. We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years; we can make America the safest big country in the world if

we keep doing what works. We've got cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. We've protected more land in this 7 years than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We've got some big environmental challenges, and we've got to prove we can do it and grow the economy, not shut the economy down. It's a big challenge, but we can do it.

But let me tell you what I came here to talk about, because to me it is a huge challenge. It bothers me that we've got 4.1 percent unemployment and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, and there are still whole communities that have been completely left behind by this recovery. You know it, and I know it. There are people in places whose lives have not been positively changed. They're in the Mississippi Delta; they're in Appalachia; they're in the inner cities; they're on the Indian reservations. Reverend Jackson and I went to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. People are dying to go to work. They're good people, just like you are. You know what the unemployment rate is there? Seventy-three percent. There are people and places that are left behind. And there are small towns and rural areas, in places you wouldn't imagine. When I was in upstate New York recently and all these little towns there that look a lot like rural Arkansas or rural Pennsylvania, I discovered that if you just had the upper part of New York as a separate State, it would be 49th in job growth since I've become President. This is a problem everywhere; in every region of our country, there are small towns and rural areas where agriculture can't sustain the economy anymore under the old rules where the economy is in trouble.

And that's what we're doing here, because you have done this co-op, because the government made a contribution, because the bankers made a contribution, because the business people buying the tomatoes made a contribution, and because now you can have a life here in this part of our State, and you can prove that people can make a living in rural America and do something good. And I believe that we need more of these kinds of co-ops throughout our country.

You know, when Congress passed the farm bill back in '95, I had to sign it; otherwise, we'd have gone back to one that was 40 years old. And I said then I thought the row crop farmers were going to be in terrible trouble the first time crop prices dropped, because it

wasn't a good system, because there was no safety net. So now, we spent the last 2 years appropriating huge sums of money because we didn't build a safety net in '95. And I think it was a mistake, and I hope we will.

But we also need to look to the people that are growing our vegetables, growing our fruits. All over the country there's people like this who are having the same problems you've had who haven't organized themselves as you have. So let me say, I want to help you do more, but the main thing I want America to do today is, every little old rural community where people are about to give up and they think their kids are going to have to leave home to find work, I want them to see this on television tonight and say, if we get our act together, if we work together, if we have a partnership between the local community, the people who are producing food, the people who can buy it and the government and the bankers, we can make it. We can turn our community around. We can create a new market.

Now, we're trying to do our part. And I know all you ever read about in the papers is when the Republicans and Democrats are fighting in Washington, but we don't really fight over everything. And one of the things that we're working on is to try to get a common approach to bringing economic opportunity to poor communities. And the Congress has already adopted a part of what I asked for in this so-called new markets initiative.

Let me explain what I mean by that. Randy did a good job of talking about how you made a new market here. But we came to this new markets term because we were trying to answer two questions. One is the one I've been talking about. Don't we have a moral obligation to give the people who haven't participated in this recovery who are dying to work a chance to succeed? That's the first question.

But let me tell you. There's another question which you may hold the answer to, which is a far more complicated one. If we've got the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, and we keep growing, in February we'll have the longest expansion in American history, including those that occurred in the world wars—the longest economic expansion in history. How do we keep it going? How do we continue to find new jobs and new opportunities with no inflation? The answer is new markets. So the same people that we ought to be helping

morally, because they haven't participated in our recovery, we also ought to help because it's in the self-interest of everybody else in America, whether they're in the inner cities or the Mississippi Delta or South Arkansas or Appalachia or on an Indian reservation.

So what we're trying to do here is to highlight what we can do with existing government programs, like the ones we've celebrated here. We also are asking Congress to pass a package of tax incentives and loan guarantees that quite simply will give investors who want to invest in south Bradley County or any other place that's got a high unemployment rate the same incentives to invest in developing markets in America that they get today to invest in developing markets in Latin America or Asia or Africa or anyplace else. We ought to take care of the American needs and give people those same incentives right here at home, and that's what we're trying to do.

Now, meanwhile, there's more practical things we can do here. And I want to just mention a couple. Farmer's Bank is just finalizing a loan of almost \$5 million, that will be guaranteed by Secretary Glickman's Department of Agriculture, for this co-op, which will enable the farmers to do even more to boost the value of their crop and do business year round. Now you can build that repackaging facility and farm supply store you've been talking about and spend more of Bradley County dollars here.

Second thing I want you to know is you're already being copied, and I want—by your neighbors. We are building on the success of this co-op by strengthening others. RSI, which buys supplies for Burger King, has committed to purchase up to 200 acres of cucumbers in the Mississippi Delta. I don't know how many pickle slices that is, but it's 3.2 million pounds of cucumbers. That's a lot of pickles, and it's a lot of new business for the Mississippi Association of Co-operatives, a group of co-ops of farmers not far from here.

I also want to compliment something that was done by the Small Business Administration, in working with the Heartland Community Bank in southeast Arkansas with Georgia Pacific and International Paper, to work with small minority-owned businesses who will help to hire 60 more people to work in the woods there, to help during the harvesting season and pruning season. These are the kind of cooperative efforts that I think offer the best promise to turn

around the situation in rural America, over and above what we've got to do to fix the farming bill.

So again I say, I remember the first time I came to Hermitage. I'll remember the parade all my life. But I think in many ways I'll remember this best of all. In many ways, the people here got me started. In 1978, I think I got over 90 percent of the vote in Hermitage the first time I ran, and I'm grateful for that. It's been a long time since then, and it's been 92 years since the Rock Island Railroad built a depot here, on the old road between Tinsman and Crossett. But now, thanks to you, thanks to what you've done, you've made a new beginning for the 21st century.

And what I want to come out of this, let me say again, for farmers everywhere, for people

in rural America and small towns everywhere, when they look at your face, when they see your pride, when they hear your results, they need to know we can make a new beginning everywhere, and the rest of us need to be committed to making a new market everywhere in this country people haven't had their fair chance at the American dream.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the courtyard at the Hermitage Tomato Cooperative. In his remarks, he referred to Randy Clanton, director, Hermitage Tomato Cooperative Association; farmers Jimmie Sue Wade and James Carter; Mayor Mike Colvin of Hermitage; and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson.

Radio Remarks on Expanding a Wildlife Refuge To Protect the Salmon Habitat in the Columbia River

November 5, 1999

Today I announced the expansion of a wildlife refuge to protect the prime salmon habitat along the Columbia River. This supports our treaty with Canada to protect Pacific Coast salmon.

My budget proposes increases for salmon restoration, but Congress has provided only a fraction of the resources necessary to do the job. So, again, I call on Congress to provide the necessary resources to support this treaty and

to work with me on a budget process that observes our obligations and protects and preserves our environment.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 12:15 p.m. at the Hermitage Tomato Cooperative Association. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Remarks in a Teleconference on Agricultural Issues With Rural Radio Stations in Hermitage

November 5, 1999

The President. How are you doing?

Stewart Doan. Fine, sir. Welcome back down to Arkansas.

The President. Nice to hear your voice, Stewart.

[Mr. Doan of the Arkansas Radio Network began the conference by listing American farmers' problems, including low commodity prices, high production costs, reduction in exports juxtaposed

with a rise in imports, and the growing number of farmers exiting the business. He asked what incentives existed for crop growers to stay in farming for the next century.]

The President. Well, let me say first of all, I think we've got to change the '95 farm bill. When the Republican Congress passed it at the end of the session, they did it in such a way that I had to sign it, because otherwise we

would have been left with the 1948 law, which was even worse. But the problem is, it has no safety net that's adjustable to the conditions. And I think that's very important to change.

And while it is true that we have put a ton of money into emergency payments to farmers the last 2 years, it's basically given out under the distribution system of the existing law, which means some really big farmers get it even if they don't plant and don't need the money, and they get a windfall; and then some of the family farmers that are actually out there really killing themselves every year, in spite of all the money we're spending, are not adequately compensated.

So I think—you know, I think it's a mistake. And I think that it's because—I frankly believe that the majority in Congress is not as sensitive as they should be to the existence of family farmers and individual farmers, and less concerned if we have more of a corporate structure. I think that's a mistake. I think, on the concentration issues, I think they all ought to be looked at. And if they're not legal, I think they ought to be moved against. But under our system, I have to be very careful as President, legally, not to comment on specific potential violations of the antitrust laws.

And the reason we had a decline in markets is because the American economy was booming and the Asian economy collapsed, and the Russian economy collapsed. I believe the markets will pick up now, as Asia's economy picks up and as Europe's picks up. But we're going to have this World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle, Washington, next month. And I think it's very important that we start a new trade round, and that agriculture be at the center of it, because we've always known if we got a fair shot to sell our products around the world, we could outcompete anybody.

And I think in the short run, we've got to fix the farm bill to deal with emergencies. In the longer run, we've got to have more markets. And that's what I'm going to be working on.

Mr. Doan. Thank you sir.

[National Association of Farm Broadcasters president Mike Adams noted that many farmers preferred to see markets in Cuba opened. He asked if the President was in favor of lifting the embargo on Cuba.]

The President. Well, I'm not in favor of a total lift of the embargo, because I think that

we should continue to try to put pressure on the Castro regime to move more toward democracy and respect for human rights. And it's the only nondemocracy in our whole hemisphere.

And let me say, I have bent over backwards to try to reach out to them, and to try to provide more opportunities for person-to-person contacts, to get better transfer of medicine into Cuba, and all kinds of other things. And every time we do something, Castro shoots planes down and kills people illegally, or puts people in jail because they say something he doesn't like. And I almost think he doesn't want us to lift the embargo, because it provides him an excuse for the failures, the economic failures of his administration.

Now, on the other hand, there is consideration being given in the Congress to broad legislation which would permit us to, in effect, not apply sanctions and embargoes to food or medicine. And under the right circumstances, I could support that. And it had broad bipartisan support. My understanding is that it has been held up in the Congress because Senator Helms and others don't want us to sell any food to Cuba. But under the right circumstances, a general policy which permitted me to—which basically said it is the general policy of the United States not to include food and medicine in embargoes, but under emergencies they could be—I could support that kind of legislation. And I think that would provide a lot of relief to the farmers.

But it would have to be written in the proper way. And I have worked with both Republicans and Democrats on that. But it's my understanding that Cuba is the very issue that's preventing it from being passed in the Congress today.

Mr. Adams. Thank you, sir.

The President. Let me—if I could just follow up on the question. We supported lifting sanctions against Pakistan and India and reforming the sanctions law. And we have sold a great deal of corn to Iran, for example. And before the Ayatollah took over, in my State sometimes we sold as much as 25 percent of our rice crop over there. So it's a big issue with me, and I'll do what I can to help. We're for sanctions reform in the right kind of way, to basically exempt food and medicine from sanctions.

[Price Allan of Kentucky Ag Net described the effect of the President's proposed 55 cent tobacco tax on rural communities in Kentucky and the

Southeast and asked the President to discuss his plans to compensate tobacco growers.]

The President Well, first of all, the last increase, pursuant to the settlement that the tobacco companies made with the States, didn't have any protections for tobacco farmers at all. And I thought it was wrong. And that's because we couldn't get Congress to ratify and participate in the settlement.

Let me remind you, when I became President, I said I would keep the tobacco support program. I said—I did what I could to increase the domestic content, to protect American tobacco sales in the American market. And I always said that the tobacco farmers had to be taken care of in any tobacco settlement.

So we had, in our proposal—you said you had losses of \$300 million. We had, I think, \$5 billion in support to tobacco farmers and tobacco communities, to help to deal with the adverse impact of any increase in the price. And, you know, it sounds funny—since I've been so strong for increasing the price, because I want to reduce teen smoking, and I want funds to pay for health programs related to cigarette-related illnesses and to discourage young people from smoking—but I never would sanction a price increase of the kind that you have already experienced under the settlement between the States and the tobacco companies, without a huge increase in the investment in tobacco farmers and families and tobacco communities. I think that it's wrong to do that.

The tobacco farmers didn't do anything wrong. We ought to be paying for major transition assistance and other kinds of economic development and support to the tobacco farmers and to the communities in which they live. So under my plan, you'd get something like \$5 billion, which would be much more than the short-term economic damage, to create a whole different future and to actually compensate for the actual out-of-pocket losses.

Mr. Allan. Thank you, sir.

Bill Ray. Mr. President, Bill Ray here at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina.

The President. Hi, Bill.

[*Mr. Ray of the Agrinet Farm Radio Network asked the President for suggestions on giving American food producers better access to Japanese and European markets.*]

The President. Well, I think there are two things we have to do. I think the most important thing we can do is to get the Europeans and the Japanese to agree to include broad agricultural talks in a new trade round to be completed within 3 years. That is, we need a global opening of markets. And as the economy recovers in Asia and in Europe and elsewhere, we will see an increase in food consumption and an increase in the capacity to buy American food. So I think the most important thing is that we've got to have a real broad trade round.

Then the second thing I think is quite important is that we bargain very tough with the Europeans and the Japanese in our bilateral relations. You know, they're always wanting to sell things to the United States, and they're always wanting to close their markets to our food products.

Mr. Ray. Exactly.

The President. Now, we've had some real success in opening Japan to specific food products, particularly. But the biggest problem, frankly, is the trade barriers and, specifically, tariffs on farm products. Worldwide, the average tariff on farm products is 50 percent. In the United States, the average is less than 10 percent. So I think we just have to tell people, "Look, we've tried to give you access to our markets, but you've got to give us access to yours." We have to have better parity here. And if we can get it, then we can do fine.

Now, in a lot of places—you know, a lot of these other countries, their farmers are just as strong politically as our farmers are. And they're not as strong agriculturally. But there is a way for them to get the benefits of being able to sell their products in our markets, which the Japanese plainly do and the Europeans do. And they ought to give us a chance to sell into theirs.

And that's why I wanted to host this meeting at the World Trade Organization, and why we want to kick off this trade deal, because I think that the biggest advantage, not just for farmers but for all of America, out of new trade talks is the advantage we'd have in greater agricultural sales.

Mr. Ray. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Allan. Mr. President, may I follow up with a question to that?

The President. Sure.

Mr. Allan. Looking to the WTO talks in Seattle, there are reports that Charlene Barshefsky is prepared to offer up the program crops, such

as peanuts, sugar, and tobacco, and their support quotas, in return for foreign countries removing their tariffs and subsidies. Is that currently the game plan? And if so, what suggestions do you have for farmers that will be affected if that happens?

The President. To the best of my knowledge, there has been no pre-existing offer like that put on the table. If there was one, they'd have to discuss it with me first, and I—then I'd be glad to answer that question.

But I—to the best of my knowledge, there has been no decision to do that yet, because neither the Secretary of Agriculture nor I have been consulted on that. And I just don't believe some position of that magnitude would be taken without prior consultation with us. And it wouldn't hold water if we didn't agree.

Mr. Allan. Thank you, sir.

[*Mr. Doan asked if the issues of genetically modified organisms (GMO's) and overly hormone-treated beef were discussed when the President met with the European Commission President Romano Prodi.*]

The President. Yes. Yes, and let me tell you where we are on that.

Let's talk about the GMO's first. We told—we have repeatedly told the Europeans, and the whole world, that the United States has prided itself on having not only the cheapest but the safest food supply in the world, and that we never want to sell anything to our people, much less to anybody else, that isn't safe; that we have confidence in the finding of our Food and Drug Administration that these foods are safe. And if we didn't believe that, we wouldn't be selling them, and we certainly wouldn't be eating them.

And one of the big problems is—and the Europeans recognize this, by the way—one of the big problems they have is that there is no equivalent organization to the American Food and Drug Administration, certainly in the European Union as a whole and, frankly, in individual European countries. So what we tried to do is get them not necessarily to agree with us on everything, but not to panic, and to make a commitment that this ought to be a decision made based on the science and the evidence, not on politics and fear; that, you know, the United States is not about to sell other people, or feed its own people, food that we think is dangerous. We would never, ever do that.

And all these things have been reviewed by the appropriate authorities that we have reason to have confidence in. And they say that it cuts the cost of production and is perfectly safe. So what—our goal with the Europeans is to get them to commit unambiguously to making decisions with GMO's based on science.

Now, with the beef, it's a different issue. We have a decision there, by the governing body of the WTO. We won, and they lost. They were all panicked, as you might understand, over their so-called mad cow problem. And as a result, it became an occasion to discriminate against our beef. It's just wrong.

We've won two important agricultural cases, one involving beef, the other involving bananas, which are not produced in America but are owned by American companies. And the Europeans have to give us satisfaction. Once you play by the rules, you know—if we lose a case in the WTO to them, they expect us to honor the ruling. We have won not once, not twice, but three times, and they keep ignoring the rulings.

And so all I can tell you is I've already imposed some sanctions and will impose more until we get satisfaction. We won the beef case, and we're entitled to the results of our victory. And you know, if they take us in here and they beat us fair and square, we've got to let them win.

So we're in a real serious confrontation with the Europeans over the beef and banana issues. I think we'll prevail, and I think we'll prevail in fairly short order. Romano Prodi is a very able man, the new head of the European Union. He's a very serious person, and he has great potential for long-term leadership and partnership with the United States. And the other—he's got a whole crowd of immensely talented people in there. So I'm very hopeful we're finally going to get some good results.

But anyway—the GMO's, we've got to give the Europeans a chance to look at it. But it's got to be done on a science basis, because you know yourself that I would never permit an American child to eat anything that I thought was unsafe. If we had any reason, based on our own scientific reviews, to question this, we would question it. So all we want the Europeans to do is to have the same kind of scientific approach. If we get there, we'll work through this GMO thing, and it'll all come out just fine.

Mr. Doan. Thank you, sir.

[Mr. Adams asked the President if the lack of fast-track trading authority placed American negotiators at a disadvantage in the World Trade Organization talks in Seattle, WA, and if he would try again to obtain it before leaving office.]

The President. The short answers are yes and yes, but we're not at too much of a disadvantage. That is, we can still negotiate, actually, because we have the WTO framework. We can still start a new trade round and bring it back to Congress. And it's 3 years down the road anyway.

So to the extent that we're at any disadvantage, it's more psychological than anything else, because other countries traditionally have been far more protectionist than America, because we have a stronger economy, and we just tend to be more competitive, and we understand the benefits we get from open markets. So when we refuse to adopt fast track, it makes it easier for other countries to refuse to reduce their tariffs on farm products and to otherwise be more protectionist. So it's like a psychological advantage.

But in the way the WTO system works, we'd launch this new trade round. It wouldn't have to be ratified for 3 years, or completed for 3 years. So the fact that we don't have the fast-track authority right now is not a big problem there. It's a bigger problem in our efforts to develop a Free Trade Area of the Americas and get our own neighbors to keep buying more and more of our products. And our trade has grown more with Latin America than with any other part of the world in the short run.

So that's the real answer to that. We could still get a very good WTO deal without fast track, because we can't ratify for 3 years anyway.

[Mr. Allan asked the President how he would like farmers to remember his Presidency.]

The President. Well, I want them to remember first of all that I turned the American economy around, and that until the collapse of the Asian economy, we had very, very good agricul-

tural years, in the beginning of my administration. We had record exports, record farm income.

I want them to remember that I had a special emphasis on rural development. I'm down in south Arkansas today at a tomato cooperative to try to emphasize the importance of having very, very strong co-ops of individual farmers, so that little guys can have a better chance to make a living; and that I've worked to try to find nonfarm sources of income to support farmers in small communities.

I want them to remember that we did a really good job on increasing food safety and that that was good for marketing, because safe food sells, and that the food is safer now than it was when I took office.

And I want them to remember that—I don't know yet if I'm going to succeed, but that I opposed the so-called freedom-to-farm concept without an adequate safety net for family farmers. I am—I think it does matter whether family farmers can make a living on the land. I don't think that America would be the same kind of country, and that rural America would have the same kind of character, if all the farmers of any size were corporate farms and individual family farms couldn't make it.

So I hope I'll be remembered for the prosperity of the years before the Asian financial collapse, which I hope will return before I leave office; for a real emphasis on rural development; for an emphasis on food safety; and for a genuine concern for the family farmer.

Secretary of Agriculture Daniel Glickman. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:07 p.m. by telephone from the Hermitage Tomato Cooperative. In his remarks, he referred to President Fidel Castro of Cuba. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Stewart Doan, Mike Adams, Price Allan, and Bill Ray.

Remarks to the Englewood Community in Chicago, Illinois November 5, 1999

Thank you very, very much. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for coming and for being so full of enthusiasm and making me feel so welcome. Mr. Speaker, thank you for coming. We are honored by your presence and your alliance.

I want to also thank my good friend Congressman Bobby Rush. We've been friends a long time, and he has worked in these last weeks through his own personal sadness still on your business and to bring us all here today. And I thank him for that.

I thank this great array of Members of the House of Representatives who are here, Congressman Danny Davis—we're the Arkansas contingent on the platform, Danny and I are—[laughter]—Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., and Congressman Paul Kanjorski who has made this whole tour with us twice, coming all the way from Pennsylvania—a good man.

I thank the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the State treasurer of the State of Illinois, all of them, for being here. I thank Secretary Slater and Small Business Administrator Alvarez for their strong support for our new markets initiative and their involvement. I want to thank Samuel Williams, your principal here, for welcoming us.

You know, this is the second biggest hand he's gotten here. [laughter] Bobby, I hope you have made sure he's not interested in running for Congress. [laughter] This is amazing. When he got his first big hand, the Speaker leaned over to me and said, "You know, when a school principal gets that kind of hand, something must be going right there." [laughter]

I want to thank Paul Vallas, the CEO of the Chicago public schools, for being here and for the great job that Chicago is making in turning around its schools. This school, I was just told by the principal—when I walked in, the first thing he said was, "Thank you for Goals 2000." The second thing he said was, "We are hooked up to the Internet in this school; we are ready for the 21st century."

I want to thank David Shryock for his leadership and all the other CEO's who are here, Jack Greenberg from McDonald's and all the

others from the banks and the other companies. Thank you all for being here.

And let me say, this has acquired a greater significance here because the Speaker's come in, and in honor of this bipartisan event, we had the Speaker of the House, and out of respect, Reverend Jackson has dressed up like a Republican today. [laughter] So this is a whole new day. [laughter]

I am glad to be back here in Chicago. I have been interested in this city for a long time. And as you know, the First Lady is a native of Chicago, and we spent lots of years here. And I was interested in all these neighborhoods long before I even thought I'd have a chance to be President. And I worked with the South Shore Bank and set up a parallel bank in Arkansas, where we just were today.

There's one other thing I would like to say before I go further, both as President and as a citizen of this country. I am very grateful for the life and the example of Walter Payton. I know that this is the day of his service, and tomorrow there will be a great memorial service, and there will be sadness and sorrow. But what a magnificent life. And what gifts he gave us, not just on the playing field but on the playing field of life. And right to the very end, he showed us a lot of lessons about how we should all conduct ourselves and what kind of legacy we should leave to our children. And I think we should remember that today, for this is a day about our children.

Let me tell you—we use this word "new markets," and Bobby issued all these announcements, and I want to make a few more. But let me try to put this into some context for you. Compared to the day I became President, this is a different country, economically and socially. We have nearly 20 million new jobs; a 4.1 percent unemployment rate, the lowest in 30 years. We have the lowest female unemployment in 46 years; the lowest minority unemployment ever recorded. We have the lowest welfare rolls, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, over 5 million men, women, and children lifted out of poverty. We have the highest homeownership, including

the highest minority homeownership, in the history of our country, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

Now, we are here because we know there are people and places, in spite of all these wonderful numbers, that have still not been touched by this prosperity. In spite of the fact that this is the longest economic recovery in peacetime in our history—and in February will become the longest recovery of any kind in our history—there are people and places untouched by our prosperity. We know that we have an opportunity now, with all this good fortune, to deal with our obligation to bring the American dream to those people and places.

And I believe that the only way we can keep this economic recovery going is to find new customers, new jobs, and new businesses. There's a huge debate—I say this because this is, yes, about discharging our responsibility to our fellow citizens, but it's also very much in the self-interest of everybody from Wall Street to Silicon Valley. You can't imagine how many hours we spend in the White House talking about how in the world we can keep this economic expansion going.

You know, every time in the past, things either get so hot there's a lot of inflation and then you have to break the inflation and that brings on a recession, or the economic expansion just runs out of gas. So we have to find a way not to run out of gas and to keep going without inflation.

Obviously, if you bring opportunity to people and places that haven't had it, if there are new businesses, new workers, new consumers, you can have growth without inflation. So we are here today—what this new markets name means is that if Englewood still has a poverty rate more than 2½ times the rate of Chicago, if the median household income in this community is barely more than half of Chicago, if there are still boarded-up brownstones and shutup storefronts, that means this is not just a problem; this is an opportunity. This is a new market, and everybody in America ought to care about it and be committed to it and do what can be done to advance it.

You have proved, by these announcements here and more, that there is more than poverty here; there is enormous promise. Look at these kids. Look at this school. Get the idea, the feeling, the pride, the accomplishment here. This is a place of promise. Later I will meet with

some of the members of the women's self-employment project, which has given—listen to this—more than 7,000 women the tools to create their own businesses and shape their own futures. I'm going to go visit Franz Print Shop, which is a small business making large strides in your community. You have more partnerships to build, more success stories to write with government and business working together. That's what we're here to celebrate.

We have seen it here in Englewood, thanks to the announcements that Congressman Rush made and all the work he did to lay the foundation for our business here today; thanks to the work of the mayor, who has committed over \$250 million in public and private investment for this neighborhood in the next 4 years; thanks to the efforts of Reverend Jackson, who launched not only a Wall Street project but a LaSalle Street project to bring private capital to our poorest neighborhoods.

This can work. It can work here; it can work all across America. It is already working in many places across America in the empowerment zones, in the enterprise communities we have been establishing since 1993 under the strong leadership of Vice President Gore. But Government can't do it alone.

One of the most important things that we have to do is to make sure we have genuine partnerships. And this ought to be an American idea. I mean, when you go into the bank and you deposit money or borrow money, your party doesn't make any difference. When you go into the restaurant and you spend money, nobody asks you before they take the money or the credit card whether you're a Republican or a Democrat. Nobody has a vested interest in anybody who wants to work staying unemployed. No one in America has a vested interest in anybody with a good idea for a new business not being able to act on that idea and bring their creative genius and their hard work to the arena of enterprise that has given our country all these blessings we enjoy today.

And I said in January, when I proposed this new markets effort, that I wanted it to be a bipartisan effort, indeed an American effort, above politics, because we all have a stake in this. I want to compliment Danny Davis for recognizing this and working with two Republican Members of the House of Representatives, Congressman Watts and Congressman Talent,

to come up with an American community renewal act, which has a lot of the same goals of our empowerment zone effort and our new markets initiative.

Now, this is something we ought to do together. I'm amazed we got any press about this at all today. Mr. Hastert got a lot of press coming all the way from Washington to be with us, and I think it's because they're used to writing in Washington about how we all fight about everything. So we had two choices here. We can say, well, they've got an idea; we've got an idea; let's have a fight. Or we can do what the Speaker and I and the others here have decided to do. In Reverend Jackson's famous words, we have decided to seek common ground and higher ground because it's the right ground for these children's futures to stand on.

Today the Speaker and I—I'll let him speak for himself, but basically we're here to commit to you and to the American people to work in good faith, to merge our proposals into a historic bipartisan effort to renew our communities, to open new markets and new doors of opportunity. If we work together in this way, Mr. Speaker, we can ensure that every hard-working family has a share of the prosperity and a stake in the future that our country plainly has before it.

We have a lot that we can do. We just worked together on a historic bill to modernize and broaden the reach of the financial institutions of this country. But we did it by keeping and broadening the reach of the Community Reinvestment Act, which has been responsible for about \$88 billion in investment into our communities in the last year alone. This is the kind of thing we can do together.

And we know that all we can do, really, is to set up a framework. My new markets idea is that we ought to give Americans with money to invest the same incentives to invest in poor areas of America we give them to invest in poor areas of Latin America or Africa or Asia. And I think all of you know that, for me, that's not an either/or choice. I'm glad when we have Americans try to help people in Africa or Latin America or Asia have a better future, because I think as they do, they make more responsible citizens and they make war less likely and they make cooperation and shared prosperity more likely. But we clearly have the highest obligations to our own people and we cannot, in good conscience, not give people the same incentives

to Americans a chance to make a living, to start a business, and to build a future.

I also want to reiterate, nothing we do will work without the commitment of the private business sector. You've already heard about the vital commitments that SB Partners has made today. I'm also pleased to note that Allstate Insurance will invest \$5 million in the Illinois Facilities Fund to go toward education and child care here in Englewood. That's very important. If you want to have jobs, you've got to have the child care support for parents. And I thank Ed Liddy* for joining us today. The Community Investment Corporation will expand its efforts here into Englewood and into the enterprise zone that is nearby.

And as part of the welfare-to-work partnership, Alliance Relocation Services is teaming up with Allied and DePaul University to launch a new job training program. McDonald's, represented here by its CEO, Jack Greenberg, which has a huge, long history of investing in America's untapped potential, is working to encourage mentoring relationships between large companies and small ones, through our BusinessLINC initiative. The idea is that big, successful companies can help small, emerging ones in neighborhoods like this succeed if they just know more about the basic things they have to do to get started and to keep going in the early periods of the business. This is a huge deal, pioneered by business leaders and the Vice President. And I want to thank you, sir, for doing this.

Well, I want to make room now for the Speaker and for Reverend Jackson, but I just want to close with this observation. For a long time, we were so used to some people being down and out that we acted like we believed it had to be that way. This is a big issue, because all the money in the world and all the good government action in the world can't overcome your lack of faith in yourselves. And for a long time, we just acted like it had to be that way.

The other night, Hillary sponsored a dinner at the White House, or an evening at the White House, to talk about the relationship of the revolution in computer technology to the revolution in the study of the human gene and the whole gene structure that's called the genome. And what the scientist and the computer genius said

* White House correction.

was, we could never unlock the mysteries of the human gene unless we had this remarkable revolution in computers, which can literally allow us to map these microscopic things that make up our body.

Here's the point I want to make to all of you here in Englewood—the most important thing that was said all night long. This big professor from Harvard who understands things about the human gene structure that I couldn't even describe said something I'll remember for the rest of my life. He said all human beings, genetically—all human beings—are 99.9 percent the same. And then he said, if you took any given racial or ethnic group—let's say you took 100 people from west Africa and 100 Chinese and 100 people from Mexico and 100 people from India and 100 people from Ireland, the genetic differences of the individuals within each group would be significantly greater than the genetic differences from group to group—that is, between any group of Irish and group of Chinese or group of Africans or group of Mexicans. You remember that.

You've got to believe. Just look at this high school. Look at the alumni of this high school. This high school's produced poets, Cabinet secretaries, the first African-American astronaut;

Lorraine Hansberry, the playwright of the wonderful play "A Raisin in the Sun."

Now—you're going to hear from a young man later who will do this better than me, but one of the greatest lines in "A Raisin in the Sun"—you ought to go back and read it—is, a character says, "All God's children got wings." That's another way of saying, genetically, we're 99.9 percent the same.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that all God's children got wings? Then you have to believe that all God's children can fly.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in the gymnasium at Englewood High School. In his remarks, he referred to Illinois State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka; Samuel Williams, principal, Englewood High School; David Shryock, partner, SB Partners LP; Jack Greenberg, chief executive officer, McDonald's Corp.; civil rights leader Jesse Jackson; Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago; Edward M. Liddy, chief executive officer, Allstate Insurance Co.; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Statement on Foreign Operations Appropriations Legislation

November 5, 1999

I am pleased that we have reached an agreement with congressional leaders on a budget that will permit America to advance its most critical priorities around the world. This agreement meets our commitments to the Middle East peace process, funds our efforts to safeguard nuclear weapons and expertise in the former Soviet Union, makes an initial investment

in debt relief for impoverished countries, including in Africa and Latin America, and allows us to do our part in bringing stability and democracy to southeast Europe. I hope this marks the start of a bipartisan effort to ensure that America has not only the will but the resources to lead.

Statement on Senate Ratification of the Child Labor Convention

November 5, 1999

I am pleased that the Senate has given its consent to ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

In June I traveled to Geneva for the annual meeting of the International Labor Organization

(ILO), where the business, labor, and government representatives to the ILO from countries around the world unanimously adopted this historic convention.

With this action, the Senate has declared on behalf of the American people that we simply will not tolerate the worst forms of child labor: child slavery, the sale or trafficking of children, child prostitution or pornography, forced or compulsory child labor, and hazardous work that harms the health, safety, and morals of children. With this action, the United States continues as world leader in the fight to eliminate exploitative and abusive child labor. This also is another important step forward in our continuing efforts to put a human face on the global economy.

I am particularly gratified by the bipartisan unanimity that carried this convention through

the Senate from introduction to final approval. For this, I offer my sincere thanks to Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, Ranking Member Joe Biden, and especially Senator Tom Harkin, who has been America's leading advocate for the world's laboring children. I also want to make note of the special efforts of the U.S. representatives to the ILO: John Sweeney of the AFL-CIO, Thomas Niles of the United States Council for International Business, and Labor Secretary Alexis Herman. They worked as a superb team in negotiating a convention that should be widely ratified throughout the world. Such bipartisan support and the coordinated efforts of labor, business, and government are key to building a new consensus on our approach to international economic policy.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Disaster Assistance and Relocation Funding for States Struck by Hurricane Floyd

November 5, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)

When Hurricane Floyd swept through the Mid-Atlantic region, it left in its wake a wide path of destruction and despair. Since that time, my Administration has been working closely with all of the affected States to ensure that Federal disaster assistance programs are used to the maximum extent possible to support residents as they repair and rebuild their communities and their lives.

An important element in this rebuilding process will be mitigating against a repetition of such widespread destruction. An unprecedented number of the homes destroyed—11,000 in North Carolina alone—were in flood plains and therefore remain vulnerable to future floods. To address this most pressing need, I am asking the Congress to approve the use of \$429 million of the contingent disaster relief funds recently appropriated to the Federal Emergency Management Agency to buy out many of these homes and relocate them to safer, higher ground.

During my visit to eastern North Carolina after Hurricane Floyd, I was profoundly moved by the resolve of the citizens of the region to recover from this incredible devastation. To sup-

port the long-term efforts of people in every affected community to reconstruct their homes, businesses, and infrastructure, assistance from the Federal Government must be responsive and prompt. Federal disaster relief programs already have provided more than \$600 million to help individuals and communities recover from the effect of Hurricane Floyd. Among other things, Federal assistance has provided temporary housing and shelter, disaster unemployment benefits, debris removal, funds to repair and reconstruct public infrastructure, and loans to rebuild homes and businesses. My Administration will continue to work with the States and with the Congress to assess remaining needs and provide further assistance.

The recent appropriation of \$2.5 billion for FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund will allow those working on the ground to continue to respond quickly and effectively. I urge the Congress now to provide both the funding that I have requested for the Small Business Administration's disaster loan program, and the additional \$500 million that I have requested, and for which my Administration will provide budgetary offsets, to provide for the unmet needs of farmers and ranchers. Together, these funds will ensure

that the Federal Government continues to provide needed disaster assistance in a timely manner.

I know the rebuilding process will not be easy, but as I saw on my trip to North Carolina, the true spirit of America remains evident, with people from all backgrounds coming together when times are tough. Let us do our part and authorize the necessary funding to support the hard work being done to rebuild all of the States affected by recent disasters.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives; Richard A. Gephardt, House minority leader; Trent Lott, Senate majority leader; and Thomas A. Daschle, Senate minority leader. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Interview With Maria Elvira Salazar of Telemundo Noticiero in Hartford, Connecticut

November 5, 1999

Enforcement of Gun Control Laws

Ms. Salazar. Before we talk about your visit here to Hartford, the head of the NRA, Charlton Heston, said that the White House and the Justice Department lack the spine to enforce the existing gun control laws. How do you respond to this?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say what the substance of his claim is. They say that we are bringing fewer criminal prosecutions in the Federal courts for violations of the gun laws than were being brought a few years ago. The truth is that prosecutions for violations of the gun laws are increasing in America. But we have a partnership between the Federal prosecutors and the State prosecutors. And more of the minor cases are being brought at the State level now, and the major multistate cases are being brought at the Federal level. So it is simply not true that the gun laws are not being enforced.

But let me say, the more important thing is—why is Charlton Heston saying this? Because he doesn't want us to do background checks when people buy guns at gun shows or at urban flea markets. He didn't want us to do background checks when people bought handguns in gun stores, and they said it wouldn't do any good. But we know that 400,000 people, because of a criminal background, couldn't buy guns under the Brady bill. We know we've got the lowest crime rate and the lowest murder rate in 30 years. So he's just wrong about it.

We also know that America is still a country that's too dangerous, because we're the only country in the world that still doesn't have enough sensible restraints on keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and children. So I disagree.

New Markets Initiative

Ms. Salazar. Okay. Let's talk about, now, your visit to Hartford. Tell us why this new markets initiative is so important to you.

The President. It's important to me because even though we have the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, over 19 million new jobs, highest homeownership ever, lowest unemployment rate in 29 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest Hispanic- and African-American unemployment rates we have ever recorded. In spite of all that, there are still all these people and places that have not felt this recovery, that need investments and businesses and jobs and hope. And I believe that we need to convince the American business community that these are markets to invest in. And I think we ought to give them the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia. That's the whole deal, and I think it will work.

Ms. Salazar. And what incentives can you offer them that are not in place right now?

The President. We can offer them tax credits, and we can offer them loan guarantees. And

we can offer them modest expenditures of public funds to support these kinds of investments. They will make a big difference.

For example, if—let's just take a poor neighborhood in Houston or San Antonio or even here in Hartford, where there's a very large Hispanic population. Let's suppose that we wanted to have a \$150 million investment. Under this proposal, if my bills were to become law, they could put \$50 million in equity, and they would get a 25 percent tax credit. They could borrow \$100 million and have it under a Federal loan guarantee, which would dramatically lower the interest rate. So you would say, okay, you're taking a little bit of a risk investing in a poor area, but we will cut the risk way, way down.

Plight of Hispanic-Americans

Ms. Salazar. Beautiful. There are 30 million Hispanics in the United States and counting. Yet a disproportionate number live in poverty, do not have health care, and can't get a job. Why has the American dream eluded them?

The President. Well, let me start with the positives. We also have more successful Hispanics in America than ever before, more people like you and the people that work for Telemundo. We have the lowest unemployment rate we have ever recorded, and we started keeping separate Latino unemployment rates in the early seventies.

Now, why is it still a problem? Number one, a lot of the Hispanic population of America are recent immigrants. Recent immigrants always have more problems with health insurance and with employment. They haven't very often mastered English; they often don't have the right contacts. So part of that's inevitable.

But there are some other things that I'd like to point out. Because of the family traditions that have been so strong in Hispanic families, very often the children would leave school early to go to work. And that worked for generation upon generation of Hispanic families, the people that had been here for 50, 60, 80 years. It doesn't work anymore because if you drop out of high school, your chances of getting a good job with a growing income are very, very small.

And the biggest separate social problem we have with Hispanics in America today is the dropout rate from school is way too high. Last year, for the first time ever, the graduation rates of non-Hispanic whites and African-Americans

was almost identical. So the black—you know, the message is there. Hispanics are still dropping out at a very rapid rate.

So we have started this Hispanic education initiative to try to overcome that. But a lot of it is culture. We must get the message out that this doesn't work anymore. It worked a long time; it won't work anymore. You can't do it. You've got to stay in school. And we have to try to get more Hispanic young people to go on to college.

So I think that's very, very important. I think that is—there are a lot of other things, but that's—the single most significant thing that we can do something about is getting people to stay in high school. The fact that we have so many immigrants, they'll always have more problems in the beginning, and we just have to integrate them as quickly as we can.

Ms. Salazar. I think you have answered my next question, but I want to ask you anyway, and it has to do with youth. In the barrio in New York City, or in any barrio in the United States, there is a 12-year-old boy whose name is Juan Gonzalez, let's say. His parents struggle to make a living and provide him with a decent education. What message do you have for him, a kid that was born in the United States?

The President. My message to him is, if you stay in school and you learn your lessons, no matter how difficult your economic circumstances, you can now go on to college in America.

We have changed the rules in the last 6 years. If your parents come up with some money, they can get a tax credit back for it. We have more generous scholarships. We have more other funds for you to go. You must stay in school. You can go to college if you stay in school. And if you do, you can make the life that you dream of.

Cuba

Ms. Salazar. Let's talk a little bit about Cuba. The democratically elected leaders of 17 Spanish-speaking nations will gather in Havana in the next couple of weeks. Are you concerned that they are legitimizing Castro's government?

The President. I'm a little concerned about it. I think the important thing is, when they go there, I hope that they will reaffirm their support for democracy and for human rights and for a transition to democracy and to an open economy in Cuba.

As you know, most countries don't agree with our policy on Cuba. They think that it hurts the Cuban people, that it hurts the American business community, and that it doesn't speed the transition away from Castro because they think we give him an excuse for the failures of the Cuban society, that he can blame everything on us instead of having to take responsibility for himself. And you know, this argument is now occurring more and more among Cuban-Americans of all age groups. And so it's a debate we ought to continue to have.

The most important thing for me, though, is I have—every time I have reached out to Cuba, and I have tried to increase contacts, to make it easier for people in America to send money home, to have direct telephone service, to have more trips to Cuba more accessible for people, and you know, something happens. He put journalists in jail, or shot the Brothers to the Rescue people out of the air. And they were—those people were murdered. It was illegal for them to be shot. I don't care—even if they had been inside the territorial waters of Cuba, which they weren't, there is a convention which binds the United States and Cuba which would not have permitted them to be shot down, because they did not present a threat. So all my efforts to change things have been met with a rebuff. And it makes me wonder whether he really wants this to change, because he can always use us as an excuse.

But if the countries want to go there and meet, I understand that. If they differ with us on their policy, I respect their right to differ. But I hope when they're in Cuba, they will make it clear that they're for democracy and human rights.

Ms. Salazar. Have you expressed this to any of the Presidents?

The President. Absolutely. Yes, I have. I have said that to every one of them that I have seen since they made the decision to go down there.

Ms. Salazar. And do you ever foresee normalized relations with Castro and the United States?

The President. I think it would be difficult for relations to be completely normal. I think we could certainly do a lot more for food, for medicine, in other ways, if the circumstances were right. And I think that if there were a clear commitment to a transition to democracy and human rights, which were clear and verifiable, I think that you could see some really

dramatic changes. I think—you know, if we could just have a commitment to have no more shootings, like the shootings of the airplanes, and to have no more clear oppressings of human rights, it would be easier.

I think the American people would like to be reconciled with the Cuban people. And I think we are—it is painful. It's painful most of all, I think, for the Cuban-Americans.

Ms. Salazar. Definitely. I come from that group. They tell me two more questions. I need to do Colombia, and I need to do Vieques. I need to do two more.

The President. Yes, you do them. You do need to do those.

Colombia

Ms. Salazar. Okay. Yes, I do. Colombia—Washington is debating billions of dollars in aid to that country. Serious problem. Do you foresee, or could the United States be dragged into the civil war that they are living?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say we already give a lot of aid to Colombia. They are—after Israel and Egypt, Colombia is the third-biggest recipient of American aid.

I am very concerned about the combination of the narcotraffickers and the people that have been engaged in the civil war down there totally destabilizing Colombia. They've already hurt the economy. They've divided the society. They've weakened the country and its government. And it is a big, big country with enormous significance for all of Latin America. If you look at the Venezuelan border, the trouble we've seen there, if you look at all the problems that could be presented with Panama, with the canal going back there, and if you look at all the countries to the south, if you look at Bolivia, Peru, the problems they've had there, the future of Colombia is very, very important. And Colombia borders Amazonia, and all the problems that could be created there. So we should be working with them, and we should help them.

But, you know, if you look at the whole of the history of America's involvement in Latin America, if we were to become directly involved, I think it would ensure a disastrous result for the Colombian Government, and people would accuse us of being imperialists in some way. I have worked very hard to reach out to Latin America in a way that no other American President has, at least since President Kennedy, to be a friend, to be a partner, to be supportive,

and not to be a dictator, not to be an imperialist, not to be abusive in our relationship.

So I'm going to keep trying to help Colombia. But I don't think we should be drawn directly into their conflict, because I think it would boomerang. I don't think it would work, and I think it would actually hurt the cause of freedom and the integrity of governments in Latin America.

Vieques Island

Ms. Salazar. Vieques, sir. The U.S.S. *Eisenhower* is scheduled to begin exercises December 1st off the coast of Puerto Rico in Vieques. Will you approve the use of live fire?

The President. Before that happens, I hope and believe there's a chance that we will reach an accommodation between the Navy and the Government and the representatives of Puerto Rico.

Let me say, as I've said before, I think the fact that there was an agreement made back in 1983, that then the Navy and the Defense Department regularly and flagrantly ignored, treating Puerto Rico as if it were still a colony, is really at the root of all this.

I think that, as you know, that the Pentagon has a point, in the sense that if you look at what we had to do in Kosovo, for example, or what we had to do earlier in Bosnia, they need to be able to train. They have to be able to do live-fire training somewhere. They need to be able to fly over water. We also have to do landings. You know, when we restored the democratically elected government of Haiti, thank God there was no violence, but there could have been. And we have to practice, you know, how do we approach on the shore?

On the other hand, we don't want to be in a position of jamming down the throat of Puerto Rico, and the people and the elected officials of Puerto Rico, one bad memory after another of a longstanding relationship where we didn't honor our commitments.

So what Secretary Cohen has tried to do is take the security report he got saying, you know, we need to use Vieques for 5 more years and the reality of the feelings of the people of Puerto Rico and the positions of the leaders, and we're trying hard to work through both of those in a way that there can be an agreement.

I think the most important thing is we get out of this treating Puerto Rico as if it were literally, for these purposes, a colony of the United States. It is not a colony. And if—you

know, I think the Congress should give them an authoritative vote on whether they want to be a State or continue commonwealth status. I mean, the last vote they had was very close, narrowly for commonwealth, but it wasn't a sanctioned vote by the Congress.

So I have done as much as I could to try to restore the integrity of the relationship between the people and the Government of Puerto Rico and the United States. And so for me, because I'm the Commander in Chief and I also have heavy responsibilities to ensure the preparedness and the integrity of our Armed Forces—there's a reason we lost no pilots on Kosovo. It's because they train hard, and they're careful. And we try to save lives.

So this is a very difficult decision. But I believe there is an agreement which can be made here, which respects the legitimate interests both of the people of Puerto Rico, particularly those that live on Vieques, and the national security interests of the Navy. And so they're trying to get there. And before I answer the specific questions, I'm going to give them a chance to get there. We've got about a month, and we're going to work hard at it.

Immigration Policy

Ms. Salazar. Two weeks, sir. One more, on immigration. Immigration laws have disrupted the lives, or many people think that they have disrupted the lives of thousands of Hispanic families, or they consider that's the way. Will the issue be resolved before you leave office?

The President. Well, many of the difficulties have been resolved. We have repealed almost 100 percent of the cuts that were imposed in the welfare reform law. And we have tried to alleviate some of the very harsh impacts of the law which would require the return of people who have been here for a long time.

Ms. Salazar. Who have children who were born here.

The President. That's right. And I am now trying—and also by Executive order—everything I could do without an act of Congress, I believe I have done. So the specific answer to your question is, we've done a lot. There are still some important things to do. And I will do my best. I can't say whether it will be done or not, because some of the things that have to be done require an act of Congress. And the Congress has actually been pretty helpful to me in this since '96, in putting the pieces

back together. And I'm doing my best to stop any more family disruption.

Ms. Salazar. And you are aware of the disruptions and the problems?

The President. Oh, absolutely. It's been terrible problems. And I have tried to minimize them, and I will continue to work on it.

New York Senate Race

Ms. Salazar. Well, I was going to ask you about who you were going to vote for in Senate, State Senate of New York, but they won't let me.

The President. I think you know. I will authorize you——

Ms. Salazar. You live in New York now, sir, right?

The President. I will authorize you to tell the people who I'll vote for for Senator in New York.

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 7:20 p.m. on November 4 in the Performance Studio at the Artists Collective for later broadcast and was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 6 p.m. on November 5. In his remarks, the President referred to actor Charlton Heston, president, National Rifle Association; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba.

The President's Radio Address

November 6, 1999

Good morning. Today I want to talk to you about new steps we're taking to make America safer for consumers, particularly for older Americans.

For 7 years now, we've worked hard to build safer streets and stronger communities, and our strategy is working. We have the lowest crime rate in 30 years. Our Nation is safer. But no one really believes America is as safe as it can be. We have to fight all kinds of crime at every level.

To many of our most vulnerable citizens, especially our seniors, the greatest threat may not come from a criminal on the street, but from a scam artist on the phone. Every year, illegal telemarketers bilk the American people of an estimated \$40 billion, and more than half the victims are over 50 years of age.

Telemarketing thieves are stealing more than money; they're stealing people's hopes and dreams and their security. In far too many cases, victims have been robbed of savings they've spent a whole lifetime building up. Some have even lost their homes as a result.

Over the years, I've taken a number of steps to crack down on telemarketing fraud. I signed into law the toughest criminal penalties for telemarketing crimes in history. Our enforcement efforts have resulted in more than 300 convictions nationwide. But we have to do more.

Today I am announcing important new tools to help government, organizations, and con-

sumers take action, and I'm directing the Attorney General to send me a plan to crack down on consumer fraud. Specifically, I'm calling on the Justice Department to strengthen prevention and enforcement and improve coordination among the Federal Government, State, and local law enforcement officials and our consumer groups.

Citizens also need new tools to take on telemarketing fraud and to find out where to go for help. According to a recent study, one out of four Americans said they wouldn't know where to turn if they were victimized by a telemarketing scam. This is an even greater concern as we enter the holiday season and the chance of becoming a victim of fraud rises.

That's why today we're launching a new nationwide campaign to help consumers fight telemarketing ripoffs. It's called Project kNOw Fraud, and it's led by the U.S. Postal Service, the American Association of Retired Persons, the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission, the National Association of Attorneys General, and the Securities and Exchange Commission.

This campaign will give consumers new resources to slam the phone on telemarketing scams. Beginning November 15th, every household in America will receive an easy-to-read postcard with commonsense tips and practical guidelines to prevent telemarketing fraud. This

is the largest consumer protection mailing in our history. It will provide information you can keep by the phone to help you distinguish between fraudulent and legitimate telemarketers. The bottom line is this: You must familiarize yourself with the telltale signs of fraud, and don't give out important personal financial information to an unknown caller.

We're also establishing a new toll free number that will soon be up and running to help people who believe they've been the victims of telemarketing fraud. It will provide links to law enforcement officials who will be able to share information and track down patterns of fraud. As many as 1½ million callers are expected to utilize this new service every year. We've also created a new website for consumers to receive fraud prevention information and even file a complaint on-line. It can be found at www.consumer.gov.

With our actions today we're sending a clear message to fraudulent telemarketers: We've got your number, and we won't let you off the hook.

As we close out the budget season in Washington, I urge Congress to send the same message, to reject arbitrary, across-the-board cuts that will undermine our law enforcement efforts and instead send me a budget that will protect our families and our communities and advance our values.

Let's all answer the call of the American people, put partisanship aside, and finish the work we've been sent here to do.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:15 p.m. on November 5 in the Room 137 at Englewood High School in Chicago, IL, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Memorandum on Protecting Consumers From Fraud

November 6, 1999

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Protecting Consumers from Fraud

My Administration has taken unprecedented steps to safeguard consumers through vigorous law enforcement and prevention, but we must continue to do more. For example, we have announced new initiatives on Internet fraud and identity theft that call on law enforcement to step up their efforts on behalf of consumers. In addition, as part of my 21st Century Crime bill, I announced several new measures that will help protect elderly Americans from fraudulent activities. My crime bill will give the Department of Justice new authority to block and terminate telephone service to illegal telemarketers. In addition, it will give Federal prosecutors new tools to protect nursing home residents from abuse and neglect; to fight health care fraud; and to safeguard retirement and pension plans.

Consumers are often unaware of where to receive assistance. A recent Postal Inspection Service survey found that 12 percent of respondents admitted to being a victim of fraud, but

that 25 percent of all respondents did not know where to go for help if they were the victim of telemarketing or mail fraud.

Today I announced the "kNOw Fraud" project, which is a public-private partnership of the United States Postal Service, the American Association of Retired Persons, the Council of Better Business Bureaus, the Department of Justice, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the National Association of Attorneys General, and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Even though violent crime rates are at record lows, illegal telemarketing fraud costs Americans an estimated \$40 billion every year. Project "kNOw Fraud" will help arm consumers with needed information so that they can protect themselves from telemarketing fraud. This initiative shows how Government can serve the public when working in close coordination to vigorously enforce consumer protection laws and keep the public informed about new scams and how to avoid them.

Federal agencies such as the FTC and the SEC also have initiated important consumer

protection initiatives in order to thwart fraudulent activities. The FTC's Consumer Response Center takes consumer complaints and inputs them into a centralized database, the Consumer Sentinel, which is available for use by Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies across the country and in Canada. Since its launch, Consumer Sentinel counts some 214 partner organizations that have contributed an estimated 200,000 complaints to the database, allowing law enforcement officials to ascertain whether a complaint is an isolated incident or part of a wider pattern of activity. Last year, the SEC's Office of Investor Education and Assistance handled more than 60,000 consumer complaints and inquiries, many of which dealt with telemarketing or online fraud. In addition, the SEC's website warns the public about fast-breaking scams and tells consumers how to investigate investment opportunities.

Recognizing the need for closer coordination, earlier this year you directed the Council on White Collar Crime to coordinate and bolster the consumer protection activities of the Department of Justice, the FTC, the SEC, the Postal

Inspection Service, and others. To further these efforts, I direct you to report back to me within 6 months with a plan (1) to better prevent consumer fraud activities and (2) improve coordination among the Federal Government's consumer protection activities to ensure that each agency's expertise is considered. In creating this plan, you should consult with all interested parties, including other Federal agencies and offices, including the FTC and SEC; State and local law enforcement; and consumer agencies and consumers. This plan also should build on efforts of the private sector, including nonprofits, to protect consumers.

These steps, taken together, will help to protect consumers from fraud and also help to save consumers millions of dollars in the next millennium.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 5 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on November 6. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on the Death of Joseph Serna, Jr.

November 7, 1999

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Mayor Joe Serna earlier today. Joe was an extraordinary public servant, educator, father, husband, and friend. He was a great

leader of Sacramento and a source of inspiration to the Hispanic community and all Americans. Our Nation has lost a remarkable man. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Iran

November 5, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect

beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Iran emergency declared in 1979 is to continue in effect beyond November 14, 1999, to the *Federal Register* for publication. Similar notices have been sent annually to the Congress and published in the *Federal Register*

since November 12, 1980. The most recent notice appeared in the *Federal Register* on November 12, 1998. This emergency is separate from that declared with respect to Iran on March 15, 1995, in Executive Order 12957.

The crisis between the United States and Iran that began in 1979 has not been fully resolved. The international tribunal established to adjudicate claims of the United States and U.S. nationals against Iran and of the Iranian government and Iranian nationals against the United States continues to function, and normalization of commercial and diplomatic relations between the United States and Iran has not been achieved. On March 15, 1995, I declared a separate national emergency with respect to Iran pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and imposed separate sanctions. By Executive Order 12959 of May 6, 1995, these sanctions were significantly augmented, and by Executive Order 13059 of Au-

gust 19, 1997, the sanctions imposed in 1995 were further clarified. In these circumstances, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities that are in place by virtue of the November 14, 1979, declaration of emergency, including the authority to block certain property of the Government of Iran, and which are needed in the process of implementing the January 1981 agreements with Iran.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 5, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 8. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message. The notice of November 5 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Sudan November 5, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to

Sudan that was declared in Executive Order 13067 of November 3, 1997.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 5, 1999.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 8.

Remarks on Budget Negotiations and an Exchange With Reporters November 8, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Over the weekend, we made some progress toward creating a budget that reflects the values of the American people, respects the need for our Government to live within its means, and looks to our future. I believe we can finish our work by Wednesday if we put partisanship aside and focus instead on achieving goals that the vast

majority of the American people want us to achieve: a better education for our children, safer streets, a clean environment, more Americans brought into the circle of our growing prosperity.

Improving education is perhaps the greatest domestic challenge our Nation faces. Education is at the heart of this budget debate. Last fall

we took an important step to improve learning in the classroom. We reached an agreement with Congress to help States and school districts begin hiring 100,000 new, highly trained teachers to reduce class size in the early grades.

The need was obvious. School enrollments are exploding. Record numbers of teachers are or will soon be at retirement. And the research is clear that students do learn more in smaller classes with quality teachers.

Last week we learned from a new survey of the Nation's largest school districts that our class size reduction initiative so far has done precisely what it was intended to do. It has put more teachers in the classroom and increased training for those already there with a minimum of red-tape and bureaucracy. Now we have even more new evidence that our class size reduction is working.

Today I am releasing a new report from the Department of Education. It's called "Local Success Stories: Reducing Class Size." It shows that in just one year, schools across America have actually hired over 29,000 new, highly trained teachers, thanks to our class size reduction initiative. The report also shows that in the early grades in those schools, class size has been reduced by an average of five students per class. Over 1.7 million students are now directly benefiting from this class size initiative.

It shows we are headed in the right direction, and that's the good news. But we must remember, only a fraction of America's students have been reached. So we must continue down that path, not abandon it. I am committed to providing more teachers and better teachers for all our schools. I want to make sure every young student in America receives the benefits of more individual attention and a more disciplined learning environment in a smaller class size setting.

Now, last fall congressional Republicans agreed to support this initiative. Indeed, it was election season, and they even went home and campaigned on it. It was a good idea then, and it's still a good idea. But suddenly the Republican majority has mysteriously changed its mind. Instead of keeping their commitment to hire more teachers and reduce class size—again I say, something they bragged on and ran on last year—now they want an open-ended block grant which could even be used for vouchers for private schools. I think that is wrong.

Nine out of 10 students in our country attend public schools. The percentage of the funding coming from the Federal Government is already too meager, in my judgment. Therefore, our taxpayer money should go for more teachers and smaller classes in our public schools, not for vouchers for private schools.

I am absolutely committed to keeping the promise that I made, and the promise that Congress made, to reduce class size with more quality teachers in the early grades. We need to work together to find a way to keep that promise.

We also must demand more accountability for results, so I call on Congress to pass our plan to help States and schools districts turn around failing schools or shut them down. Working together, we can find a way to deliver a budget that meets our values.

We also value the safety of our families, so we must extend our successful COPS program, which has given us already the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and now put up to 50,000 new community police officers in our neighborhoods with the modern equipment they need to keep the crime rate coming down.

We must support our lands legacy initiative because we value the environment, to set aside precious natural areas for future generations and reject special interest riders that would endanger our environment.

Because we value one America with justice for all, we must pass strong hate crimes legislation. And I would like to say that I want to express my personal appreciation to the parents of Matthew Shepard and to the police officers who have come with them here today and have gone to Capitol Hill to lobby for the hate crimes legislation.

We value our national security and our leadership in the world. Therefore, we have to pay our dues to the United Nations. We value equal opportunity. And so before Congress leaves, we should tackle one more urgent priority: We ought to raise the minimum wage so that more people will participate in our prosperity. And we ought to raise the minimum wage without holding it hostage to special interest tax cuts that are not paid for and don't address national needs.

We can do all this, and we can do it and pay for it, not spend the Social Security Trust Fund and continue to pay down the debt so that in 15 years we'll be debt-free for the first

time since 1835. I urge Congress to continue to work with me in a bipartisan fashion to finish the job the American people sent us here to do.

Thank you.

Reduction of Class Size

Q. Mr. President, on the issue of funding for teachers, sir, you resent it when Congress tells you to spend money in ways in which you do not deem appropriate. Why should a State Governor, who would like to spend that money differently, feel any differently?

The President. Well, because it's not their money. If they don't want the money, they don't have to take it. If they're offended by it, they can give it to other States and other school districts.

Look, we have—the difference is, we are acting on evidence, based on what the local school districts tell us and what we know. We have a record number of schoolchildren; we have a record number of teachers starting to retire. We have mountain upon mountain of evidence that smaller classes in the early grades lead to permanent learning gains if the teachers are well-qualified.

And Congress agreed with that last year. I'd like to see them answer instead why they're ready so—excuse me, so willing to abandon something they campaigned on and asked people to vote for them for doing just a year ago.

This is the right thing to do. It's good educational policy. And let me remind you that the teachers have supported this, the educators have supported this, and the evidence supports this. That's why I'm for it.

Q. Mr. President, do you expect China to get into the—

Q. The Department of Labor—

The President. One at a time, sorry.

Unemployment Insurance

Q. The Department of Labor, at your direction, is drafting regulations to change the use of unemployment insurance so that it could be used for family leave purposes. Opponents of this idea say you don't have the authority to do this, that any such change should be done by Federal legislation. How do you respond to that?

The President. Well, I was informed that we did have the authority to do it in the narrow way that we're doing it. And I think if you

want more information on what the arguments are, you will have to talk to either the Labor Department Counsel or the appropriate people at the White House. But I obviously would not have done it if I hadn't been told that we had the authority to do it.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

World Trade Organization Talks With China

Q. Mr. President, do you expect China to get into the World Trade Organization this time around?

The President. I don't know, but I hope so. Ambassador Barshefsky and Mr. Sperling have gone over there to work on it, and we're doing our best.

Q. Are things looking better?

The President. Well, I don't know yet. Let's not characterize the in-between until we see whether we can produce the product.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—real sticking point?

The President. Obviously, we have a big difference of opinion on education, and I feel very strongly about it. The education community and the country feel strongly about it. And the Democrats in Congress feel strongly about it. And the Republicans felt strongly about it when they were facing an election, and I think it's wrong for them to abandon a commitment the next year that they were proud of in an election year. So I hope we can work that out.

But the other issues I mentioned are all important to me, as well. Can we do it all by Wednesday? In a heartbeat, if we decide to get together. We resolved very quickly many of our differences over the foreign operations bill, and we can do that on these other bills if we really work at it.

Mexican Presidential Primary

Q. Mr. President, Mexico has held its first Presidential primary. The PRI has governed Mexico for over 70 years. What do you think about it, the primary yesterday?

The President. I think it's a good thing that they held a primary, and I think the more democracy they embrace, the better. So I would applaud them and congratulate them for having

done so. And particularly, I would like to congratulate President Zedillo, who took the initiative to promote this primary and to open up the political process in his country.

Situation in Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, how would you characterize the situation in Pakistan differently than George W. Bush did this last week?

The President. Look, I don't want to get into that. You all can handle the Presidential campaign without me. You know that I'm very concerned about the interruption of civilian leadership in Pakistan. We would like to see a stronger democratic system there, not the abandonment of the system that they did have. And we are—we have communicated that to General Musharraf and to the others, and we will continue to work with them and hope that we can achieve some progress there.

And I also want to encourage them to continue to work to diminish tensions with India and to resolve matters in Kashmir, not to continue to use that, as has been done in times past, to inflame tension on both sides of the line of control, and in both countries. Those countries need to be working on their long-term challenges and their common interests. And so I will continue to push for that as well.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House prior to departure for Georgetown University. In his remarks, he referred to murder victim Matthew Shepard's parents, Dennis and Judy; President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico; and Gen. Pervez Musharraf, head of the Pakistani Armed Forces, who led a military coup d'etat in Pakistan on October 14. A reporter referred to Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Remarks at Georgetown University November 8, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary Albright, for your introduction and your leadership. From the reception you just received, I would say you can come home at any time. But I hope you'll wait a while longer.

Thank you, Father O'Donovan, for welcoming me back to Georgetown. Dean Gallucci, thank you. Mrs. Quandt, thank you so much for this lecture. And to the representatives of BMW, members of the diplomatic community, the many distinguished citizens who are here, and to Mr. Billington, Mrs. Graham, and others, and to all the young students who are here. In many ways, this day is especially for you.

I too want to say a special word of thanks to Prime Minister Zeman of the Czech Republic and Prime Minister Dzurinda of Slovakia. They have come a long way to be with us today. They have come a long way with their people in the last decade, from dictatorship to democracy, from command and control to market economies, from isolation to integration with Europe and the rest of the world. It has been a remarkable journey. You and your people have made the most of the triumph of freedom after

the cold war. We thank you for your example and for your leadership and your friendship, and we welcome you. Thank you.

Today we celebrate one of history's most remarkable triumphs of human freedom, the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, surely one of the happiest and most important days of the 20th century.

For the young people, the undergraduates who are here who were, at that time, 9 or 10 years old, it must be hard to sense the depth of oppression of the communist system, the sense of danger that gripped America and the world. I still remember all of our air-raid drills when I was in grade school, preparing for the nuclear war as if we got in some basement, it would be all right. *[Laughter]* It, therefore, may be hard to imagine the true sense of exuberance and pride that the free world felt a decade ago.

So today I say to you, it is important to recall the major events of that period, to remember the role America was privileged to play in the victory of freedom in Europe, to review what we have done since, to realize the promise of

that victory, and most important of all, to reaffirm our determination to finish the job, to complete a Europe whole, free, democratic, and at peace, for the first time in all of history.

Let's start by looking back a decade ago at Berlin. If the Soviet empire was a prison, then Berlin was the place where everyone could see the bars and look behind them. On one side of the wall lived a free people, shaping their destiny in the image of their dreams. On the other lived a people who desperately wanted to be free, that had found themselves trapped beyond a wall of deadly uniformity and daily indignities, in an empire that, indeed, could only exist behind a wall, for, ever if an opening appeared, letting ideas in and people out, the whole structure surely would collapse.

In the end, that is exactly what happened in the fall of 1989. Poland and Hungary already were on the road to democracy. President Gorbachev of the Soviet Union had made clear that Soviet forces would not stand in their way. Then Hungary opened its borders to the West, allowing East Germans to escape. Then the dam broke. Berliners took to the street, shouting, "We are one people." And on November 9th, a decade ago, the wall was breached. Two weeks later, the Velvet Revolution swept Czechoslovakia, started by university students, just like the undergraduates here, marching through Prague, singing the Czech version of "We Shall Overcome." Then, in Romania, the dictator Ceausescu fell in the bloody uprising. A little more than a year later, the Soviet Union itself was no more. A democratic Russia was born.

Those events transformed our world and changed our lives and shaped the future of the young people in this grand room today. Yes, the students of our era will still grow to live in a world full of danger, but probably, and hopefully, they will not have to live in fear of a total war in which millions could be killed in a single deadly exchange. Yes, America will still bear global responsibilities, but we will be able to invest more of our wealth in the welfare of our children and more of our energy in peaceful pursuits.

You will compete in a global marketplace, travel to more places than any generation before you, share ideas and experiences with people from every culture, more and more of whom have embraced and will continue to embrace both democracy and free markets.

How did all this happen? Well, mostly it happened because, from the very beginning, oppressed people refused to accept their fate; not in Poland in 1981, when Lech Walesa jumped over the wall at the Gdansk Shipyard and Solidarity first went on strike, or in Czechoslovakia, during the Prague Spring of 1968. I was there a year and a half later as a young student, and I never will forget the look in the eyes of the university students then and their determination eventually to be free.

They did not accept their fate in Hungary in 1956, or even in St. Petersburg way back in 1920, when the sailors who had led the Soviet revolution first rose against their new oppressors. They did not accept their fate in any Soviet home where the practice of religion was preserved, though it was suppressed by the state, or in countless acts of resistance we have never heard of, committed by heroes whose names we will never know.

The amazing fact is that all those years of repression simply failed to crush people's spirits or their hunger for freedom. Years of lies just made them want the truth that much more. Years of violence just made them want peaceful struggle and peaceful politics that much more. Though denied every opportunity to express themselves, when they were finally able to do it, they did a remarkable job of saying quite clearly what they believed and what they wanted: democratic citizenship and the blessings of ordinary life.

Of course, their victory also would not have been possible without the perseverance of the United States and our allies, standing firm against the Iron Curtain and standing firm with the friends of freedom behind it. Fifty years ago, when all this began, it was far from certain that we would do that. It took determination: the determination of President Truman to break the blockade of the Soviet Union of Berlin, to send aid to Greece and Turkey, to meet aggression in Korea. It took the determination of all his successors to ensure that Soviet expansion went not further than it did.

It took vision: the vision of American leaders who launched the Marshall plan and brought Germany into NATO, not just to feed Europe or to defend it but to unify it as never before, around freedom and democracy. It took persistence: the persistence of every President, from Eisenhower to Kennedy to Bush, to pursue policies for four decades until they bore fruit.

It took resources to bolster our friends and build a military that adversaries ultimately knew they could not match. It took faith to believe that we could prevail while avoiding both appeasement and war; that our open society would in time prove stronger than any closed and fearful society.

It took conviction: the conviction of President Reagan, who said so plainly what many people on the other side of the Wall had trouble understanding, that the Soviet empire was evil and the wall should be torn down; the conviction of President Carter, who put us on the side of dissidents and kept them alive to fight another day.

And it took leadership in building alliances and keeping them united in crisis after crisis and, finally, under President Bush, in managing skillfully the fall of the Soviet empire and the unification of Germany and setting the stage for a Europe whole and free.

This was the situation, the remarkable situation that I inherited when I took office in 1993. The cold war had been won. But in many ways, Europe was still divided, between the haves and have-nots, between the secure and insecure, between members of NATO and the EU and those who were not members of either body and felt left out in the cold, between those who had reconciled themselves with people of different racial and religious and ethnic groups within their borders and those who were still torn apart by those differences.

And so we set out to do for the Eastern half of Europe what we helped to do for the Western half after World War II: to provide investment and aid, to tear down trade barriers so new democracies could stand on their feet economically; to help them overcome tensions that had festered under communism; and to stand up to the forces of aggression and hate, as we did in the Balkans; to expand our institutions, beginning with NATO, so that a Europe of shared values could become a Europe of shared responsibilities and benefits.

Since then, there have unquestionably been some setbacks, some small and some great. Under communism, most everyone was equally poor. Now, some people race ahead while others lag far behind. Former dissidents who once struggled for freedom are now politicians trying to create jobs, to fight corruption and crime, to provide basic security for people who are simply tired of having to struggle.

Most terrible of all have been the wars in the former Yugoslavia, which claimed a quarter-million lives and pushed millions from their homes. But still, 10 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, most of Europe is unquestionably better off, as these two leaders so clearly demonstrate.

Democracy has taken root, from Estonia in the north to Bulgaria in the south. Some of the most vibrant economies in the world now lie east of the old Iron Curtain. Russia has withdrawn its troops from Central Europe and the Baltics, accepted the independence of its neighbors and, for all its own problems, has not wavered from the path of democracy.

The armed forces of most every country, from Ukraine to Romania all the way to Central Asia, now actually train with NATO. NATO has three new allies, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, three strong democracies that have stood with us in every crisis, from Iraq to Bosnia to Kosovo. Other new democracies are eager to join us as well, including Slovakia, and they know our alliance is open to all who are ready to meet its obligations. Eleven countries are beginning a process that will lead them to membership in the European Union.

And just as important, because we and our allies stood up to ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Kosovo, the century is not ending on a note of despair with the knowledge that innocent men, women, and children on the doorstep of NATO can be expelled and killed simply because of their ethnic heritage and the way they worship their God. Instead, it ends with a ringing affirmation of the inherent human dignity of every individual, with our alliance of 19 democracies strong and united, working with partners across the continent, including Russia, to keep the peace in the Balkans, with new hope for a Europe that can be, for the first time in history, undivided, democratic, and at peace. I hope all of you will be proud of what your country and its allies have achieved, but I hope you will be even more determined to finish the job, for there is still much to be done.

On Friday, I will leave on a trip to Greece and Turkey, Italy and Bulgaria. This trip is about reinforcing ties with some of our oldest allies and completing the unfinished business of building that stable, unified, and democratic Europe. I believe there are three principal remaining challenges to that vision that we must meet

across the Atlantic and, I might say, one great challenge we must meet at home.

The first is the challenge of building the right kind of partnership with Russia, a Russia that is stable, democratic, and cooperatively engaged with the West. That is difficult to do because Russia is struggling economically. It has tens of thousands of weapons scientists—listen to this—it has tens of thousands of weapons scientists making an average of \$100 a month, struggling to maintain the security of a giant nuclear arsenal. It has mired itself again in a cruel cycle of violence in Chechnya that is claiming many innocent lives.

We should protect our interests with Russia and speak plainly about actions we believe are wrong. But we should also remember what Russia is struggling to overcome and the legacy with which it must deal. Less than a generation ago, the Russians were living in a society that had no rule of law, no private initiative, no truth-telling, no chance for individuals to shape their own destiny. Now they live in a country with a free press, with almost a million small businesses, a country that should experience next year its first democratic transfer of power in a thousand years.

Russia's transformation has just begun. It is incomplete. It is awkward. Sometimes it is not pretty, but we have a profound stake in its success. Years from now, I don't think we will be criticized, any of us, for doing too much to help. But we can certainly be criticized if we do too little.

A second challenge will be to implement, with our allies, a plan for stability in the Balkans, so that region's bitter ethnic problems can no longer be exploited by dictators and Americans do not have to cross the Atlantic again to fight in another war. We will do that by strengthening democracies in the region, promoting investment and trade, bringing nations steadily into Western institutions, so they feel a unifying magnet that is more powerful than the internal forces that divide them.

I want to say that again—I am convinced that the only way to avoid future Balkan wars is to integrate the countries of Southeastern Europe more with each other and then more with the rest of Europe. We have to create positive forces that pull the people toward unity, which are stronger than the forces of history pulling them toward division, hatred, and death.

We must also push for a democratic transition in Serbia. Mr. Milosevic is the last living relic of the age of European dictators of the Communist era. That era came crashing down with the Wall. He sought to preserve his dictatorship by substituting Communist totalitarianism with ethnic hatred and the kind of mindless unity that follows if you are bound together by your hatred of people who are different from you. The consequences have been disastrous—not only for the Bosnians and the Kosovars but for the Serbs as well.

If we are going to make democracy and tolerance the order of the day in the Balkans, so that they, too, can tap into their innate intelligence and ingenuity and enjoy prosperity and freedom, there can be no future for him and his policy of manipulating human differences for inhuman ends.

A third challenge is perhaps the oldest of them all, and in some ways, perhaps the hardest: to build a lasting peace in the Aegean Sea region, to achieve a true reconciliation between Greece and Turkey, and bridge the gulf between Europe and the Islamic world.

When I am in Greece, I'm going to speak about the vital role Greece is playing and can play in Europe. The world's oldest democracy is a model to the younger democracies of the Balkans, a gateway to their markets, a force for stability in the region. The one thing standing between Greece and its true potential is the tension in its relationship with Turkey.

Greece and Turkey, ironically, are both our NATO Allies, and each other's NATO Allies. They have served together with distinction in the Balkans. Their people helped each other with great humanity when the terrible earthquakes struck both lands earlier this year. This is a problem that can be solved. Eventually, it will be solved. And I intend to see that the United States does everything we possibly can to be of help. When I go to Turkey, I will point out that much of the history of the 20th century, for better or worse, was shaped by the way the old Ottoman Empire collapsed before and after World War I, and the decisions that the European powers made in the aftermath.

I believe the coming century will be shaped in good measure by the way in which Turkey, itself, defines its future and its role today and tomorrow, for Turkey is a country at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia. The future can be shaped for the better

if Turkey can become fully a part of Europe, as a stable, democratic, secular, Islamic nation.

This, too, can happen if there is progress in overcoming differences with Greece, especially over Cyprus, if Turkey continues to strengthen respect for human rights, and if there is a real vision on the part of our European allies, who must be willing to reach out and to believe that it is at Turkey where Europe and the Muslim world can meet in peace and harmony, to give us a chance to have the future of our dreams in that part of the world in the new millennium.

Now the last challenge is one we can only meet here at home. We have to decide, quite simply, to maintain the tradition of American leadership and engagement in the world that played such a critical role in winning the cold war and in helping us to win the peace over this last decade.

Think about it: We spent trillions of dollars in the cold war to defeat a single threat to our way of life. Now we are at the height of our power and prosperity. Let me just ask you to focus on this and measure where we are as against what has been happening in the debate about maintaining our leadership. We have the lowest unemployment rate in this country in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. In my lifetime, we have never had—ever—as a people, the opportunity we now have to build the future of our dreams for our children.

In the early 1960's, we had an economy that closely approximated this, but we had to deal with the challenge of civil rights at home and also the Vietnam war abroad. Today, we are not burdened by crisis at home or crisis abroad, and the world is out there, looking to see what we are going to do with the blessings God has bestowed upon us at this moment in time.

Everything else I said will either happen or not happen without American involvement unless we make up our minds that we are going to stay with the approach to the world that has brought us to this happy point in human history. That is the most important decision of all.

Now, what are we doing? Well, first, our military budget is growing again to meet new demands. That has to happen. But I want to point

out to all of you, it is still, in real terms, \$110 billion less than it was when the Berlin Wall fell. Everyone agrees that most of that money should be reinvested here at home. But don't you think just a small part of the peace dividend should be invested in maintaining the peace we secured and meeting the unmet challenges of the 21st century?

Look at all the money we spent at such great cost over the last 50 years. The amazing fact is we are not spending a penny more today to advance our interest in the spread of peace, democracy, and free markets than we did during the 1980's. Indeed, we are spending \$4 billion less each year.

I think it's worth devoting some small fraction of this Nation's great wealth and power to help build a Europe where wars don't happen, where our allies can do their share and we help them to do so; to seize this historic opportunity for peace between Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East; to make sure that nuclear weapons from the former Soviet Union don't fall into the wrong hands; to make sure that the nuclear scientists have enough money to live on and to feed their families by doing constructive, positive things so they're not vulnerable to the entreaties of the remaining forces of destruction in the world; to relieve the debts of the most impoverished countries on Earth, so they can grow their economies, build their democracies, and be good, positive partners with us in the new century; and to meet our obligations to and through the United Nations, so that we can share the burden of leadership with others, when it obviously has such good results.

I think most Americans agree with this. But some disagree, and it appears they are disproportionately represented—[laughter]—in the deciding body. Some believe America can and should go it alone, either withdrawing from the world and relying primarily on our military strength or by seeking to impose our will when things are happening that don't suit us.

Well, I have taken the stand for a different sort of approach—for a foreign affairs budget that will permit us to advance our most critical priorities around the world. That's why I vetoed the first bill that reached my desk, why I'm pleased that Democrats and Republicans in Congress worked together last week on a strong compromise that meets many of our goals. But we're not finished yet. We still must work to get funding for our United Nations obligations

and authorization to allow the use of IMF resources for debt relief.

This is a big issue. It has captured public attention as never before. I mean, just think about it: This initiative for debt relief for the millennium is being headlined by the Pope and Bono, the lead singer for U2. [Laughter] That is a very broad base of support for this initiative. [Laughter] Most of the rest of us can be found somewhere in between that—our pole-star leaders there.

But it's not just a political issue. It is the smart thing to do. If you go to Africa, you see what competent countries can do to get the AIDS rate down, to build democratic structures, to build successful economies and grow. But we have to give them a chance. And the same is true in Latin America, in the Caribbean, in other places. This is a big issue.

I hope the bipartisan agreement we reached over the weekend on the foreign affairs budget is a good sign that we are now moving to reestablish and preserve the bipartisan center that believes in America's role in the new post-cold-war world.

In the coming year, we have an ambitious agenda that also deserves bipartisan support. We have about 100 days to meet the ambitious timetable the leaders of the Middle East have set for themselves to achieve a framework agreement. We have to secure the peace in the Balkans. We have to ease tensions between India and Pakistan. We have to help Russia to stabilize its economy, resolve the conflict in Chechnya, and cheer them on as they have their first democratic transfer of power, ever.

We have to bring China into the World Trade Organization, while continuing to speak plainly about human rights and religious freedom. We have to launch a new global trade round, enact the African and Caribbean trade bills, press ahead with debt relief, support the hopeful transitions to democracy in Nigeria and Indonesia, help Colombia defeat the narcotraffickers, contain Iraq, and restrain North Korea's missile program. We have to continue to do more to fight terrorism around the world. And we must do what is necessary—and for the young people here, I predict for 20 years this will become a national security issue—we have to do more to reverse the very real phenomenon of global warming and climate change.

To meet those challenges and more, we simply must hold on to the qualities that sustained

us throughout the long cold war, the wisdom to see that America benefits when the rest of the world is moving toward freedom and prosperity, to recognize that if we wait until problems come home to America before we act, they will come home to America.

We need the determination to stand up to the enemies of peace, whether tyrants like Milosevic or terrorists like those who attacked our Embassies in Africa. We need faith in our own capacity to do what is right, even when it's hard, whether that means building peace in the Middle East or democracy in Russia or a constructive partnership with China. We need the patience to stick with those efforts for as long as it takes and the resources to see them through. And most of all, we need to maintain the will to lead, to provide the kind of American leadership that for 50 years has brought friends and allies to our side, while moving mountains around the world.

Years from now, I want people to say those were the qualities of this generation of Americans. I want them to say that when the cold war ended, we refused to settle for the easy satisfaction of victory, to walk home and let our European friends go it alone. We did not allow the larger prize of a safer, better world to slip through our fingers. We stood and supported the Germans as they bravely reunified, and supported the Europeans as they built a true union and expanded it. We stood against ethnic slaughter and ethnic cleansing. We stood for the right kind of partnership with Russia. We acted to try to help Christian and Jewish and Muslim people reconcile themselves in the Middle East, and in the bridge represented by Turkey's outreach to Europe. I want them to say that America followed through, so that we would not have to fight again.

A few months ago, my family and I went to a refugee camp full of children from Kosovo. They were chanting their appreciation to the United States, thanking America for giving them a chance to reclaim their lives. It was an incredibly moving event, with children who have been traumatized far beyond their ability even to understand what has happened to them but who know they have been given a chance to go home now.

Years from now, I believe the young people in this audience will have a chance to go to Europe time and time again, and you will, doubtless, meet some of those children or

maybe some of the young people who actually tore down the Berlin Wall or marched in the Velvet Revolution. They will be older then. I hope they will say, "When I was young I sang America's praises with my voice, but I still carry them in my heart." I think that will be true if America stays true. That is what we ought to resolve to do on the anniversary of this marvelous triumph of freedom.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. in Gaston Hall at Georgetown University, as part of the Her-

bert Quandt Distinguished Lecture series. In his remarks, he referred to Father Leo J. O'Donovan, president, and Robert L. Gallucci, dean, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University; Johanna Quandt, widow of Herbert Quandt; James H. Billington, Librarian of Congress; Katherine Graham, chairman of the executive committee, the Washington Post; Prime Minister Milos Zeman of the Czech Republic; Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks in an On-Line Townhall Meeting November 8, 1999

The President. More than 60 years ago, at the dawn of another era of great change, President Franklin Roosevelt told our Nation "new conditions impose new requirements on Government and those who conduct Government." From that simple proposition, Roosevelt shaped the New Deal, which helped to restore our Nation to prosperity and to define the relationship between the American people and their Government for 50 years.

Now, as we move into the information age, we have reclaimed that true legacy of Franklin Roosevelt by making a real commitment to bold experimentation, to the idea that new times demand new approaches and a different kind of Government.

This evening is a perfect example. As Al said, like FDR's fireside chats and President Kennedy's live press conferences on television, the first Presidential townhall meeting on the Internet taps the most modern technology for old-fashioned communication between the American people and their President.

Tonight's event is exciting not only because of the technology involved in its execution but, on a larger scale, for the unbridled potential it represents. You know, when I became President, in January of 1993, the Internet was the province of scientists funded by Government research projects. Back then, there were only 130 sites on the Web, only 1.3 million computers connected to the Internet. Today, over 56 million computers are connected to the Internet,

and there are 3.6 million websites. And we're adding new pages at the rate of over 100,000 an hour.

Since 1993, our administration has worked hard to unleash the power of information technology and to bridge the digital divide. Vice President Gore and I set a goal of connecting every classroom and library to the Internet, and we've come a long way. The number of classrooms connected to the Internet has increased from 4 percent in 1994 to 51 percent in 1998 with the E-rate providing over \$2 billion to help connect all our schools and libraries to the Internet. That's just the kind of thing Vice President Gore and I came to office to do, to replace outmoded and failed ideas of the past with a new vision for the role of Government in the 21st century.

In the early 1990's, long-neglected economic and social problems had piled up. Unemployment and welfare were high. Crime was spiraling; virtually no one believed it could be stopped. Poverty was growing. The real wages of working families were steadily falling. There were deficits as far as the eye could see. Our debt had quadrupled in just 12 years, and some experts were telling us that we couldn't really solve our problems, that Government at best was useless and at worst was the source of all of our problems.

Now, for too long, I felt that both our parties had put ideology above ideas that actually worked. And the American people too often

were presented by Washington with false choices, choosing between work and family, between growing the economy and cleaning up the environment, between helping business and helping working people, between being safer or maintaining freedom, between what makes us different as a people and what makes us equal before the law and in the eyes of God. For too long Government seemed to either try to solve all of our problems or to use the failures of Government as an excuse to do nothing at all.

Now, it was in this environment that the New Democratic movement, which had been developing for nearly a decade by 1992, or what has now become known as the Third Way, began in earnest. We believe, like Franklin Roosevelt and Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and Abraham Lincoln before him, that new conditions demand a new approach to Government. We said, in 1992, we want opportunity for all, but we also want responsibility from all our citizens, in a community of all Americans.

It was clear to Vice President Gore and to me that we couldn't meet the challenges of our new century by returning to the past but that we also had to overcome the great neglect of the 1980's. We also knew that we needed a new kind of Government which focused not on neglect or solving all the problems, but instead on giving our citizens the tools and conditions they needed to make the most of their own lives. And at the same time, we had to challenge our own citizens to take a far more active role by serving in our communities and shaping our Nation's future.

Because of our commitment to Third Way principles and the hard work of the American people, our country has made a dramatic transformation. Over the last 6½ years, the American people have created almost 20 million new jobs with rising wages, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership ever, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare, a 30-year low in the crime rate, the first back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years, with growing projected surpluses for years to come. And all of this while we were shrinking and reinventing the Government so that it is now the smallest it's been since John Kennedy was here in the White House in 1962.

And I'm trying to continue that process by passing a budget that honors our values and our commitment in the future, with 100,000

new teachers for smaller classes, 50,000 new community police officers to keep the crime rate coming down, stronger efforts to protect and preserve our environment and to meet our responsibilities abroad.

The world is starting to take notice of what's happening here and where we're headed. Now Third Way ideas are influencing governance in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Brazil, to name just a few.

In closing, let me say that now we have to use the progress we've made and the new tools of Government and technology at our fingertips to meet the big challenges of the 21st century: the aging of America; the largest and most diverse group of schoolchildren we've ever known; extending our prosperity to people in places who haven't felt it yet; genuinely meeting the challenges of the new environment; making the most of biotechnology; getting this country out of debt for the first time since 1835; and continuing to be the world's major force for peace and freedom and against technology that proliferates nuclear weapons and biological and chemical weapons and against terrorism.

But more important than any of that, we have to find a way in this most modern of worlds to use our new knowledge and our new technology as forces for unity, not division. We have to usher in a new age of genuine enlightenment where we are coming together as a people across all the lines that divide us. That's why I've worked for things like the employment non-discrimination act and the hate crimes legislation; why I've done as much as I could to end wars and killing and conflict based on religious or racial or ethnic hatred around the world, from the Balkans to the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Africa.

We believe that this can be a unifying age. We can celebrate our diversity, all the differences. We can respect those genuine differences of opinion as long as we understand that what unites us, our common humanity, is the most important thing of all.

Now I'd like to turn it back to Al and get on with the questions.

[Democratic Leadership Council President Al From, who hosted the townhall discussion, read questions submitted on the Internet]

Prescription Medication

Q. My wife and I are both disabled, with two teenaged children. Our medication expenses take a very large amount of our monthly Social Security income. Will Medicare ever pay for medications?

The President. Well, the answer to that is, I certainly hope so, and I have proposed it.

As a part of our reform of the Medicare system, to deal with the fact that we're going to double the number of people over 65 within 30 years and increasing numbers of people with disabilities will have access to Medicare, I recommended a lot of changes that will actually save some money in the system but also providing a prescription drug option which would be completely voluntary.

Three-quarters of the disabled and seniors on Medicare don't have access to an affordable, adequate prescription drug program. If we were designing the program again today, given the role that prescription medication has in our lives now, as compared with 34 years ago when Medicare was established, we would certainly not even set it up without prescription medication.

We should do it. We should do it as quickly as possible. And we can afford to do it in the budget that I presented and still get the country out of debt in 15 years.

So I hope that next year—Congress is—the Republican majority has refused to deal with it this year. I certainly hope they'll deal with it next year. And maybe the fact it's an election year will make them more interested in doing so.

Health Care Reform

Q. What else can you do in your Presidential term to help the common people to have health care reform before you leave office?

The President. Well, let me just mention two things very quickly. First, we ought to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights to protect people who are in HMO's with the quality of their health care, the right to see a specialist, the right to the nearest emergency room. And we ought to have privacy in medical records. We ought to have a requirement that—and I think we'll get this, by the way—that people who are disabled who get Medicaid can go to work and not lose their Government health insurance. And we now have the funds available to sign up 5 million or more children of lower income working peo-

ple, working families, on health care. We ought to try to do that.

Now one other thing we can do is to get more States to try to let more and more working families buy into the Medicaid system. Tennessee was the first State to do this, and they immediately got up over 90 percent of their people with health insurance. And we're working to try to persuade more States to do this. Then we can provide the Medicaid money, and you can work out, State-by-State, how much people pay for the premiums.

Those are just some of the things that I think we can do in my term. Now in the coming election season, I hope all the candidates will be required to talk about this because, as you know, I think it's terrible that America has so many people without health insurance who are working for a living. And I said back in '94 that if we didn't do something about it, the number would only increase, and that's exactly what's happened.

So there are some things we can do now. Some things you'll probably have to debate in the 2000 election.

Funding Higher Education

Q. How do you feel about the need for less expensive higher education?

The President. Well, you've got to be for that. I mean, everybody's for less expensive higher education. But what I'd like to emphasize is what we have done, because I think that a lot of Americans do not know that in the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, we created something called the HOPE scholarship, which is a \$1,500 tax credit for the first 2 years of college. We also have more generous Pell grants; we have better student loan programs. You can now borrow money through a Government loan program and pay it back at lower interest rates and as a percentage of your income, no matter how much you borrow.

So college is, as a practical matter, less expensive than it has been in many, many years because of the assistance programs that are out there. And I would urge you to look and make sure you know about every single one for which you might be eligible.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Gun Control Legislation

Q. What kind of laws would you like to see Congress pass concerning gun control?

The President. Well, first, Greg, let me say that one of the first laws I signed in 1993 was the Brady law, which requires background checks for people who buy guns in gun stores. The NRA and the others who opposed this said it wouldn't do any good, but now, in 1999, we've had 400,000 people who haven't been able to get guns because of their criminal records or other problems. And the murder rate's at a 31-year low.

So what else would I like to see? I would like to see us close the loophole in the background check law by saying there will also be background checks for guns sold at gun shows and at flea markets. I would like to see more done to limit the importation of big ammunition clips, because we banned assault weapons, but there are still loopholes in that law. I think the Brady law ought to be extended to juveniles who commit serious offenses. I don't think they ought to be able to get handguns. And I think these are very important.

Now, you may know that in the Presidential election, I think both the Democratic Presidential candidates, Vice President Gore and Senator Bradley, have recommended that people who buy handguns at least have to get a license like you get a driver's license, to show that you know how to use the gun safely and that your background's been checked. And I think there's some real merit to that, and that's something the American people are going to have a chance to be heard on.

But we've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years. But we ought not to quit until we're the safest big country in the world. And we won't be until we have reasonable restrictions to keep guns out of the wrong hands. They don't interfere with hunting or sport shooting. And there's more we can do. I'm strongly committed to it, and I hope you will be, too.

Funding for Research and Development

Q. Where do you see the Federal Government's role heading in funding non-defense research in science and technology?

The President. Well, most of that is done at the National Institutes of Health, at the Energy Department. It's done in universities through Federal grants. And I believe we ought to see a dramatic increase of that.

Essentially, if you look at the last few years, Congress has been good about increasing funding for NIH, not so good about increasing fund-

ing for environmental research and other non-defense areas. So good on the health care, not so good on the rest. We need more on the rest.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The Digital Divide

Q. As Government makes it services available via the Internet, how will this affect people who are not computer literate or connected? Will the non-techies be accommodated?

The President. First of all, this is a good question because this illustrates the problem of the so-called digital divide. And the answer to your question is: Number one, we will continue to provide services in non-computer options; and number two, we'll continue to do things to bridge the digital divide. We're trying to hook up all the classrooms and libraries to the Internet by the year 2000. We have community computer centers that we are establishing around the country, where we're trying to make access to computers more universal.

But I will say this: I think we should also be trying to get people who aren't computer literate to be computer literate and then to have access to the technology, because I believe if we have the same density of computer and Internet access that we have of telephone access, that would dramatically improve the economic prospects for a lot of Americans and, I might add, a lot of people around the world.

So we have to keep providing the services in non-Internet, non-computer ways. But I think we also ought to try to get more people hooked up. And we're doing both.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Let me just make one other point before we go on to another question, to go back to my point that we ought to try not only to provide the services for people who aren't computer literate or connected in ways they can access—of course, we have to do that—but why we should try to get more people connected and more people computer literate.

I was out in Silicon Valley in the last few weeks where the number of people from eBay, which all of you know is a remarkable trading company—I learned that in addition to the employees of eBay, some 20,000 people now make a living on eBay just trading. That's the way they make a living. And a lot of them used to be on welfare. So this technology is getting

more and more user-friendly. And I think that if we continue to work toward making it more and more universal, you will create lots of more economic opportunities which will be good for the overall economy and good for people who, today, are kind of non-techies, to use your word.

Class Size

Q. Mr. President, how are you going to decrease the class sizes with the vast shortage of teachers?

The President. I think the most important thing that the Federal Government can do is to give the States the money to continue our class size initiative. Last year the Congress approved a proposal of mine to make a downpayment on putting 100,000 more teachers in our schools, concentrated on reducing class size in the early grades, because we know from lots of research that that increases educational achievement long term. This year Congress is seeking to reverse that commitment, for reasons I do not entirely understand. And I am fighting to keep it, along with the Democrats in our caucus in the House and Senate. I'm hoping that we'll have a successful resolution of this.

But you should know that—maybe you do know, since you asked the question—We have the largest number of schoolchildren in our history, the first group bigger than the baby boomers, over the last 2 years. It's the most diverse group in our history. And about 2 million teachers are going to retire over the next few years. So it's important right now to get these teachers in there that are well-trained and to get them in the early grades.

Now, there's a lot of flexibility in this program. So if class size is already small, this money can be used to retrain teachers, to upgrade their skills, and other things. But the most important thing that we can do to reduce class size is to put 100,000 more teachers in the classroom. That's the main thing I'm fighting for in the remaining budget struggles here in Washington.

That's a good question.

Tax Relief

Q. I would like to know what programs are going to be cut to provide for some of the much-needed tax relief, starting with the marriage penalty.

The President. Well, what you have to do basically to provide tax relief under our system, the rules that we operate up here, is to figure

out what it costs over 10 years and then to slow the rate of growth of other programs. Now, what I did was to present a budget to the Congress which would allocate, as I recall, about \$250 billion to tax relief over a decade. And we slowed the rate of growth of everything else to accommodate that, including defense, where we still were going to have real increases.

Congress passed a \$792 billion tax program, and I vetoed that because I said we couldn't pay for it. And then they proceeded to spend more money than I recommended in this year's budget, in different ways but more money.

So the truth is, you don't have to have any big cuts to pay for, let's say, marriage penalty relief or something like that, that is clearly affordable. All you have to do is to make a decision now that you will manage the rate of growth of all the other expenditures to accommodate the tax relief.

And I still think we ought to have modest tax relief package. I will try again next to pass one, and I will be flexible in working with the Congress on what the contents of the package are. But we just have to make sure that it's something we can afford and still pay down the debt, save Social Security and Medicare, and continue to invest in education and the environment and in research and technology.

Young People and Politics

Q. Mr. President, what would you recommend to high school students who want to get involved in the political process?

The President. Well, I think I would recommend two or three things. First of all, I would recommend that you get involved in the 2000 election. You know, with all the technology and all the television ads and all the money that's raised and spent in elections, candidates still need volunteers. And I think you ought to pick someone who is running, either for President or Governor or Senator or maybe a local office, maybe mayor in your hometown, that you believe in and show up and volunteer and learn everything you can about how the electoral process works, what the issues are, and you'll also learn about different kinds of people and human nature. Secondly, I think you ought to pick an issue you care about in your school and get involved in that. And then the third thing that I would strongly recommend is that you try to make sure you're as well-informed as possible, by accessing information on the

Internet or your local newspaper or however else you want to do it.

But I think that those three things, together, will give you a chance to really get started. And it's not too soon for you to get started, to start working in politics. And I thank you for your interest.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Livability Agenda

The President. If I could just say, Al, the mayor said a lot of good things, but one of the things he said that I'd like to highlight is that they're using computer technology to help manage traffic patterns and alleviate congestion. That is one of the elements in Vice President Gore's livability agenda we're trying to pass through Congress, not just preserving more green space in urban areas but actually using the most up-to-date technology to give people some freedom, give them back some of their time by minimizing traffic congestion and waiting.

I mean, it's becoming a bigger and bigger issue for Americans both in their cars on the street and, unfortunately, in their airports and in their airplanes. So I think anything we can do to give people back time is enhancing their freedom dramatically. And I think that more and more public officials will have to focus on this.

Y2K Readiness

Q. Mr. President, if you were an ordinary citizen, would you save a little food for Y2K? [*Laughter*]

The President. You know, we've had so many jokes about that, about taking our pickups to Arizona and all. The answer is, no. America is—[*laughter*—]I wouldn't, because I think America is in good shape. We have worked very, very hard on this. I want to thank the Vice President and John Koskinen, who's helped us. I want to thank all the big—the financial institutions, the utilities, the other big sectors in our economy that have gotten Y2K-ready.

The only problems left in the United States that we're aware of are with some of our small businesses who basically haven't yet made sure that they're Y2K compliant. But the United States is doing fine, and I wouldn't hoard food, and I wouldn't hide. I would be trusting, because I think we're going to make it fine.

Internet and E-Commerce

Q. How can citizens be assured that the Internet will not become another political ploy that is harmed rather than helped by politicians?

The President. It's a good question. What we're trying to do, I can tell you, is to protect E-commerce, because it's growing so fast. And I signed legislation that would prohibit taxation on Internet transactions for several years. And I think we need to continue to work. So the first thing you can do as a citizen is to try to protect E-commerce, to let it grow, to let it flourish, to let all the jobs be created, the businesses be created, because of this incredible thing.

Then I think, in terms of objectionable material on the Internet, how do you keep the freedom and the creativity of the Internet without having children too exposed? I think the answer to that is to support the efforts that are being made by many in the industry now to give parents appropriate screening and other technologies, so that you continue to have creativity and growth on the Internet and parents can still do their jobs. I think those are the two most important things.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Presidential Term Limits

Q. Mr. President, would you like to serve another term in office, like you can in the U.K.? Maybe you ought to talk to Tony Blair about that. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, I love the job, and I would continue to do it if I could. But we've had a two-term system here ever since President Truman's time, and I respect it, and I honor it. And so I'll try to find some way to be useful to my country and to the causes I believe in around the world when I leave the White House. But I love it, and I would not willingly give up any day of the opportunity to serve as President.

AmeriCorps

Q. Will future administrations be able to continue the support for the AmeriCorps program?

The President. You know, for people who are on this hookup who don't know what AmeriCorps is, we ought to say first what it is. It is a national service program of local community efforts so that young people and sometimes not-so-young people of all ages can give

a year and with the option of giving the second year of community service in an AmeriCorps-affiliated program. And we have community groups; we have church groups and other religious groups; we have all kinds of groups who are doing good things in their community. And in the process, they earn credit for college tuition.

So many young people actually do it and use the funds they get from working in AmeriCorps over and above their living stipend to go on to school. And we've had 150,000 young Americans serve in 6 years. To give you some basis for comparison, it took the Peace Corps 20 years to get 100,000 volunteers.

So AmeriCorps is changing America for the better. I believe it has broad bipartisan support and, therefore, I think future administrations will be able to continue to support it. I would like to see us get up to where we have at least 250,000 people a year in it, because I think you could get that many people who want to serve. But at least insofar as funding become available, I'd like to see it continue to expand. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Before we go on, I'd just like to reiterate for the people who are interested in this subject, that thanks to Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Maryland is the only State in America which presently requires young people to engage in community service as a part of their course study. In order to get a high school diploma, you've got to do some community service. Now, some of us know of specific schools that require that, but Maryland is the only State that requires it.

Twelve years ago the former Republican Governor of New Jersey Tom Kean and I were on a middle school study task force for the Carnegie Corporation, and we recommended that community service ought to be a requirement, an academic requirement. It's part of learning to be a good citizen. It's part of an education. And I'd like to see most States follow Maryland's lead.

[*The discussion continued.*]

School Safety and Youth Violence

Q. I attend a public high school. Considering the events of the past few years, how can you ensure my safety at school?

The President. Well, first of all, I understand why you're concerned about it. We've had all these terrible incidents of school shootings. But I think you should know that, on balance, we have the lowest murder rate in our country in 31 years and that schools are the safest places kids can be.

Now what we have to do to ensure that all our schools are safe, are, number one, have a strict, zero tolerance for weapons in schools. I've announced a zero tolerance for guns policy several years ago out in California. We're trying to get every school to adopt it. We had several thousand young people who were sent home last year and expelled because they brought guns to school.

Number two, we need a system in every school that identifies kids who are troubled, who might cause trouble and get some help before they commit violent acts, whether they're being reported to the authorities, part of a peer mediation group, getting mental health or other counseling. I think you have to have a system in which all the kids are involved in trying to identify people who might be disturbed and might cause these kinds of problems.

And I think, number three, we have to try to make sure that the schools that are in high-crime areas, that there is adequate security there.

So there are lots of things that can be done, but on balance, you should not believe that you're in more trouble at school than you are someplace else, because for almost all of our children, they're safer at school than they would be on their streets or in their neighborhood.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. If I could just say one other thing to Joshua, who asked this question, and to others who—particularly young people who might be listening, there. I had a White House Conference on Youth Violence, and then we set up a national effort on youth violence. If you or anybody else that's part of this press conference tonight have any ideas, I want you to send them in. And I can assure you that we will carefully review them. We will do our best to see whether, if they're working in someplace, they can be made to work everywhere. If you have some new ideas, send them to us, because there is hardly anything more important in the whole country than giving our children

the safety and security that they and their families need.

So please, we're still working on this. We have a highly concentrated effort, and we'd like to have your ideas.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Post-Presidential Plans

Q. Mr. President, what are your plans after you leave the White House, beside supporting the First Lady for a possible Senate run?

The President. Well, I will certainly support her in any way that I can, and I'm looking forward to that. But I want to build my library and my public policy center at home in Arkansas. And then I want to be a useful citizen. I'll do what I can to support other people, if they ask me to, who are running for office or when they're in office. But I want to use that public policy center and the educational programs there to bring in people who are interested in public service and to advance a lot of these issues I'm interested in, that I think will have great significance in the future.

For example, how can you maximize the use of technology to bring educational opportunities to poor people in poor areas in America and around the world? How can you grow the economy and improve the environment? How can you use new technologies to prove that we can clean up the environment, reduce greenhouse gases, and create more jobs? How can we minimize racial and religious and ethnic and other tensions, both in our society and around the world?

These things, these big issues I've worked on as President, I want to find a way to continue to work on at my library and center in a way that doesn't get in the way of the next President. I don't want to do that, but I do think I can be a good citizen and help solve a lot of these problems and continue to move us forward.

Mr. From. Mr. President, do you think the people who are sending these questions think we're humorless? Because they have a line on here that says, "Laughing is permitted."

The President. I don't know what that means, but I've already been laughing, so thank you for permission. I never knew we had to give people permission to laugh, but I'm glad to have it. [*Laughter*]

Child Care

Q. What are you going to do about the rising cost of child care?

The President. Let me say, this is a huge issue. If you want to balance work and family in America, you have to have adequate family leave laws, and then affordable quality child care. And given the fact that most parents work and the percentage will go up, one of the most significant issues we have to resolve as a people is how to make people successful at the same time at home and at work because if you have to choose between one or the other, the country's going to be badly hurt.

We had a question earlier about an affordable tax cut. One of the things that I asked the Congress to do was to increase the tax credit for child care so that we could embrace more people. I've also asked the Congress to appropriate more money, because right now, we only serve with Federal subsidies about 10 percent of the working parents who are eligible for child care help.

So the answer to your question is, we have—at the national level and at the State level, we ought to be doing more with both tax credits and with direct subsidies to child care centers to help lower income and middle income people who otherwise can't find affordable quality child care. It's a huge issue out there that I don't believe has gotten the attention it deserves yet. I hope this, too, we'll make progress on, both next year in Congress and in the Presidential election. I'd like to see it heavily debated.

[*The discussion continued.*]

On-Line Townhall Meeting

Q. I commend you, Mr. President, for using the available new technology to stay in touch with the people. It gives anyone the chance to speak to the President, truly a shining example of freedom.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Class Size

Q. What do you think about the fact that in other countries, classrooms have many more children per teacher, yet they are ranked higher than the U.S. in education?

The President. Well, I think you have to, first of all, look at what the differences in those countries and the United States are. Let me also say, the United States is doing better in

these international exams. And among the schools that have set high standards and measure in tests for them, they're doing quite well, indeed.

But if you look at the countries which can have larger classes and have higher achievement levels in the early grades, what you will find is two things. You will find that they are not as diverse as we are, racially and ethnically and linguistically. And secondly, you will find that they don't have the same income and other social variations that you have in American classrooms.

So there is no country in the world with anything like the kind of diversity we have in the classroom, that has much bigger class sizes and higher performance. If the kids are more similar, obviously they would tend to have more similar learning patterns, and you can do things that sort of routinize the educational system more in the early grades. If the kids are vastly dissimilar, in terms of family circumstances and, literally, even language, you need more individual attention in the early grades.

And all I can say to you is that the American context—we have lots and lots and lots of research that well-trained teachers and smaller classes give not only immediate but permanent learning gains. And that's why I favor doing that.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Staying in Touch With the People

The President. Mayor, I want to thank you for that. You know, when I came here in 1993, one of the things that I promised myself I would do is to try to keep in touch with the American people, to try to avoid getting out of touch. And I now, having been President for nearly 7 years, I understand why Presidents get out of touch, how easy it is to happen. And I do think that this technology will help more and more Presidents to kind of be accountable to the American people, stay in touch with them, even in those weeks and sometimes months when they can't be out of Washington in the States and communities very much because of the workload here. So this is very, very hopeful, and I appreciate what you said.

Free and Fair Trade

Q. Do you believe in more open trade between our two countries,* or are you and your party committed to protectionism more than open trade?

The President. Well, the short answer is, I believe in more open trade between our two countries. Our two countries have a huge bilateral trading relationship, the biggest in the world; and it's benefited Canada; it's benefited the United States. Both of us have among the highest growth rates in the developed world now. We're both doing real well.

I would say two things about the trade issue. First of all, it is true that there are still some people in the Democratic Party who do not believe that we grow the economy and benefit people through expanding trade. And that is a difference of opinion we're still having. I will say this: There is a New Democratic majority, a big one, for almost every other issue on how to manage the economy, the importance of paying off the debt, what our education policy ought to be, what our crime policy ought to be, what our welfare policy ought to be. We don't have, in my judgment, the right consensus on trade yet, but we're moving in the right direction. And let me just give you two examples, if I might, of what we are concerned about with trade.

First of all, the United States, even though we've got a budget surplus and we're paying down our debt, has, by far, the biggest trade deficit in the world, because we've tried to keep our markets open. We think they help us to maintain low inflation and to be sharp and to be competitive. But if the competition is unfair, if countries can do things in our markets we can't do in theirs, then we're going to have a distortion of the trading system, and Americans who shouldn't lose their jobs will do so. I don't think that's right.

And so, I believe in open trade, but it ought to be fair. I'll give you just one example. We've won two cases in the World Trade Organization against the Europeans, one on beef and one on bananas, and we still can't get any satisfaction. We won the banana case three times. So it's going to be impossible to sustain support

* Canada and the United States.

for an open trading system if the rules and the rulings are ignored.

Now, the second point I want to make is that we have got to put a human face on the global economy. As we expand trade, ordinary people have to benefit and they have to believe we're not destroying the environment. So I have concluded that we should do more to open up the trading system to labor and environmental groups, let them be a part of the development of trading rules and regulations, and have certain standards for the environment and for labor in these trade agreements. I think in the end, that's the best way to do it.

We've got to succeed in putting a human face on the global economy if you want to have broadbased support for it.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. When the Asian financial crisis hit in 1997, we had been increasing our manufacturing employment, including in steel. But in the 1980's and early nineties, we lost 60 percent of our employment in steel. Then we modernized, and we were competitive globally. And other countries started dumping steel on our markets and throwing people out of work who were competitive on the global economy. In other words, they weren't playing by the rules.

So we had antidumping actions, and we worked hard to reverse that and to restore the imports back to their pre-crisis levels. That doesn't mean I'm against free trade, but I had to fight for those jobs. And I can tell you, there are a lot of people out there who don't think we did enough to do that.

So there will always be difficult questions. But on balance, America has 4 percent of the world's people, with 22 percent of the world's income; we've got to sell something to the other 96 percent of the world. And you don't have to be a mathematical genius to figure out, therefore, we should be in favor of expanding trade.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Seattle Round and the Environment

Q. During the WTO summit in Seattle this month, will President Clinton propose to strengthen environmental safeguards?

The President. Yes. Yes, and in addition to that, the involvement of environmental groups in the whole World Trade Organization process. We've got to open this process up.

One of the reasons you're going to have thousands of demonstrators in Seattle telling everybody that this world trading system is some sort of dark conspiracy to destroy the environment and keep down ordinary working families is that they use funny language, and they have big, secret rules, and they meet too much in secret in Switzerland. And I think we've got to open this process up. This is not complicated. If some people produce some things better than others and the more we can work together and lift the fortunes of people everywhere, the better wealthier countries will do. This is not complicated.

But I think it's very—I'm actually kind of glad all these demonstrators are coming to Seattle, even though it may be kind of messy, because we ought to have a big global debate on this. And the people who feel like they've been shut out ought to be brought in and listened to, not just the environmentalists but the others as well.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What do you feel are the chances that there will be any real progress in the talks between the Palestinians and the Israelis before you leave office?

The President. Oh, I think they're quite good. For one thing, there already has been real progress. Keep in mind, it was back in 1993 that we signed the Israel-PLO accord. We now have the Palestinians with their land in the West Bank and in Gaza. There's a high level of security cooperation between the two. And Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat reaffirmed their commitment to the peace process in Oslo when we went last week to honor the late Prime Minister Rabin. And they are now on, literally, about a 100-day timetable to finish a final framework agreement.

Now I don't want to kid you. The issues are very, very tough. But I think the chances of success are better than 50-50. And with a lot of prayers and a lot of pushing, maybe we'll make it. I feel hopeful.

Education On-Line

Q. How does the President feel about supporting on-line education to serve the increasing number of students?

The President. I'd be for that. And we'll have more of that anyway. That's going to happen.

You want to take these two and then come back?

Q. Yes, we'll do that. What I like is a micro-manager. [Laughter]

The President. At my age, I'm just glad I can read that. [Laughter]

National Defense in the New Millennium

Q. Taking into consideration the fact that the Chinese have developed an ICBM capable of reaching American shores, what is your position on the missile defense system for the United States?

The President. Well, if we can develop a missile defense that will actually work to block incoming missiles that could have nuclear, chemical, or biological warheads, it would be irresponsible not to develop it, assuming we can do so consistent with our obligations under treaties.

However, I don't think the Chinese will be the biggest problem. China does have 20 such missiles; we have 6,000 such missiles. I think the real problem is the danger that in the future, rogue states and terrorist groups might, themselves, get missile technology that could pierce America's traditional defenses. So we're working on missile defense, and we're also working with the Russians to see if we can agree to make some amendments to the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty so that we can put the missile defense up if we can develop it, and they can share the benefits of it.

Now, let me also say to all of you, not to be unnecessarily alarmist, but I think we need to be realistic here. I think in the future, future Presidents will have to tell you that we'll also have to worry about defenses from miniaturized nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons in the hands of terrorists who won't need missiles to try to deliver them.

So it will be a whole new world out there, and there's a lot of blessings from the end of the cold war, but we'll have to deal with more and different threats. And I would favor doing whatever is responsible to enhance the national security of the United States, including deploying the right kind of missile defense system.

Federal Involvement in Education

Q. Can you explain to me why you feel the Federal Government needs to get involved in education and why this can't be left to State and local government?

The President. Well, yes I can. First of all, the Federal Government has been involved in education for over 30 years now and in very discrete ways: in higher education, to help more people afford the costs of college, because that's something most States don't have massive resources to do; in preschool education like Head Start, to help more poor children get started. In public schools, the Federal Government's role traditionally has—first of all, it's always been less than 10 percent of the total budget of the public schools. It's basically designed to give poor children or children whose first language is not English or children with special education needs the access to the best possible education they can have, and then designed to meet discrete needs, like after *Sputnik* we spent more money to train teachers in math and science.

So what I have proposed is consistent with our historic mission: 100,000 teachers, because we have more kids and more teachers retiring, and we now have evidence that smaller classes work; a policy to end social promotion but to dramatically increase the number of after-school and summer school programs and funds to help failing schools turn around or shut down; and then a big DLC favorite, more charter schools. When I became President, we had one; there are now 1,700. We want 3,000 of these schools that are set up and chartered by teachers or parents; that are free of a lot of the redtape of local school districts and are judged and stay in business only on their results.

These, I think, are appropriate roles for the Federal Government. They are limited. We don't tell the States how to achieve excellence in education. We tell them there ought to be standards; here are things that work. If you want to do these things, we'll help you fund them.

President's Legacy

Q. Mr. President, what kind of legacy do you think the American people will remember about your administration?

The President. I think they will see it as a time of dramatic transformation and change; where we restored economic prosperity; where we widened the circle of opportunity to include people who'd been left out; where we deepened the bonds of freedom and community in this country, by helping to solve social problems and bridge a lot of the divisions in our society; and when we essentially assumed the leadership of

the post-cold-war world, whether it's in expanding NATO or fighting against ethnic cleansing in the Balkans or working to deal with the challenges of terrorism in the 21st century. So I think it will be seen as a time of transformation, of hope, of genuine opportunity, and genuine community in America.

So I'm very grateful for the chance I've had to serve. And I'm very grateful for the results that the approach that Al From and I have been working on for 15 years now has had in the lives of the American people. I think it's, by and large, a tribute to the public and the citizens of this country. But for whatever role I've been able to play, I am profoundly grateful. And I believe that the legacy will be transformation, movement, the restoration of prosperity and hope.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. Let me say, first of all, I want to thank you, Al, again for giving us all this opportunity and for always being a visionary and thinking about the future. I want to thank the other elected officials who have shared this press conference with me tonight, and commend you and those like you who have taken our New Democratic ideas and actually used them to change the lives of our people for the better.

And finally, let me say to all the people who have been a part of this, I'm not running for anything anymore. I'm doing this because I believe in the enterprise of Government and in the work and impact of citizenship. And if we can use technology to chip away at cynicism and increase participation and give—empower citizens to feel that they're holding their elected officials accountable and they're helping them to do their jobs, that will be a very great thing, indeed.

So I would urge you to keep the E-mails coming into the White House, keep the E-mails coming into the DLC. If you have questions that weren't answered or ideas you want to share, keep pouring them in there.

But let me tell you something. There's a reason this country's been around here for more than 200 years, and there's a reason we're enjoying this enormous level of economic prosperity with our social conditions improving and our leadership in the world unquestioned. America is a great country founded on a great set of ideas, capable of permanent renewal. And the technology of the moment has made it more exciting than ever before. But it still requires, more than anything else, even more than good leaders, good citizens.

Those of you who have been part of this tonight have been good citizens. I thank you, and I want to urge you on because our country's best days lie ahead in the new century.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:14 p.m. in the Marvin Center Auditorium at George Washington University. In his remarks, he referred to John A. Koskinen, Chairman, President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Democratic Presidential candidate former Senator Bill Bradley. The discussion, which was sponsored by the Democratic Leadership Council, included the following participants: Marc Andreessen, founder, Netscape; Gov. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire; Mayor Donald T. Cunningham, Jr., of Bethlehem, PA; Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; and Wisconsin State Assemblyman Antonio Riley, chairman, Democratic Leadership Council State Legislative Advisory Board. On-line participants used first names only.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Locate and Secure the Return of Zachary Baumel and Israeli Soldiers Missing in Action

November 8, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1175, "An Act to locate and secure the return of Zachary Baumel, a United States citizen, and other Israeli soldiers missing in action." I deeply sympathize with the families of the missing soldiers

and have made the resolution of these cases a priority throughout my Administration. The United States remains determined to pursue every concrete lead to ascertain their fate. We will continue to consult closely with the families

and the Government of Israel in our long effort to resolve this important issue. We will also continue to raise this issue with other governments in our search for answers.

I believe that two sections of the bill must be carefully construed to avoid constitutional and practical problems. Specifically, section 2(a) of the bill states that "the Secretary of State shall continue to raise the matter of Zachary Baumel, Yehuda Katz, and Zvi Feldman on an urgent basis with appropriate government officials" of certain foreign governments. To the extent that this provision can be read to direct the Secretary of State to take certain positions in communications with foreign governments, it interferes with my sole constitutional authority over the conduct of diplomatic negotiations. Therefore, this provision will be treated as precatory.

In addition, section 3 of the bill would require the Secretary of State to report to the Congress on efforts taken with regard to section 2(a) and additional information obtained about the individuals named in section 2(a). I sign this bill

with the understanding that this section does not detract from my constitutional authority to withhold information relating to diplomatic communications or other national security information.

Section 3(b) of the bill would require the Secretary of State to report to the Congress not later than 15 days after receiving "any additional credible information" relating to the missing servicemen. Because there could well be a delay between the receipt of information and the determination that such information is "credible", I regard the 15-day period as commencing upon that determination.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 8, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1175, approved November 8, was assigned Public Law No. 106-89. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 9.

Remarks on Budget Negotiations and an Exchange With Reporters *November 9, 1999*

The President. Good morning. We're about to begin a Cabinet meeting that will be a briefing on the current state of the budget negotiations. As I think all of you know, our budget negotiators have been meeting with congressional leaders almost around the clock in an effort to complete our work and produce a budget that reflects the values of our people, lives within our means, and looks to the future.

We are seeing encouraging signs of real progress in our efforts to put 50,000 community police officers on our streets and keep the crime rate coming down, in our new markets initiative that seeks to bring investment to areas of our country that have not participated fully in our prosperity, in our efforts to preserve and protect our environment. We are even seeing the first signs of agreement.

But there's still a lot of work to be done, a number of critical priorities yet to be resolved. Most important is the commitment to a quality education and our agreement to hire 100,000

new highly qualified teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We will keep working with Congress to keep the promise that both of us made to the people of America last year.

The Senate's voting on a minimum wage bill today. I urge them to pass a bill that helps more Americans into the circle of opportunity and to do it in a way that does not give unfair and excessive tax breaks to special interests. Congress also needs to pass a strong hate crimes bill to protect more of our citizens from violence and bigotry.

And I am hopeful that we can resolve these issues and the other remaining issues, especially the one involving United Nations dues, so that we can complete our work. It's still possible that we can complete our work in the next few days and get out of here. And we're working hard; Mr. Lew's working hard particularly, and Mr. Podesta and Mr. Ricchetti and others, and I thank them for their efforts. And I'm going to give the Cabinet an update.

Education Legislation

Q. Mr. President, on education, what is really wrong with the Republican idea of giving the money to the school districts and letting them decide whether to buy computers or hire new teachers?

The President. Well, first of all, we have done a great deal for the school districts on computers, and in 4 years we went from 4 of our school districts wired to 51 percent.

Secondly, there is flexibility—Secretary Riley might want to answer this—but there's flexibility in that bill if the schools get their classes down. But Secretary Riley brought that study with him today, we mentioned yesterday, that gives clear evidence that smaller classes in the early grades have permanent learning benefits. And I think that we need to stay with that.

We don't have enough money to spend, in my judgment, to risk wasting any of it. And when the educators and local school leaders and all the educational research agree that something needs to be done and we allocate the money for it, I don't think we should turn around and break the commitment and just say, "We'll give you a blank check. We don't really care what happens to the money." We can't afford to waste a penny of the money we spend on education.

UnitedHealthcare

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of a major HMO deciding that doctors should say whether you're sick or well?

The President. Good for them. I applaud them. And they're large enough that they might be really able to do it and have an impact on this.

You know—Secretary Shalala can maybe refresh my memory, but as I remember, when we outlined the principles for a Patients' Bill of Rights in the commission that Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman headed, I think there were—I don't know—14 or 15 HMO's that agreed right then, but some of them were not big enough to basically withstand the economic competition if they did it and others didn't. So I think it's a wonderful thing they've done, and I hope it's the first step toward a resolution of this issue.

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, on Russia and its actions in Chechnya, are you comfortable that they are responding to your appeals for humanitarian concerns, as far as civilian casualties, in that situation there?

The President. I don't think you can use the words "comfortable" and "Chechnya" in the same sentence, in any way. All I can tell you is that we will continue to press for a minimization of civilian casualties and a maximum use of negotiated options to settle this. I think in the end, there will have to be a political solution, and I hope that the end will come sooner rather than later, so fewer people will die.

Q. But are they responding to you, sir, when you ask them not—

The President. Well, I think the United States and the rest of the world, the more we ask, the more likely it is to occur at a sooner date. But I don't know—I think that if I—however I answer that minimizes the chances that we'll have any influence over the decisions, because I think no country wants to be seen as giving in to pressure from another country. But I think they are listening.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you, everybody.

President's Visit to Greece

Q. Are you confident there will be good security in Greece when you go there?

The President. Oh, I think so. You know, I know that Greece has a long and rich history of communists, anarchists, others on the left, demonstrating, and they all disagreed with my position in Kosovo, as you know. But the United States and Greece are allies not only in NATO but in many other important ways.

We want very badly to see a resolution of the tensions between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean and especially over Cyprus. And I think all Greeks share that hope without regard to their political views. So I expect the demonstrations, and I'm not troubled by them, and I think that the security issues will be fine.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:02 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House prior to a meeting with Cabinet members. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Presenting Congressional Gold Medals to the Little Rock Nine November 9, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Senator Daschle, Leader Gephardt, Senator Hutchison, Senator Lincoln, Members of Congress, Secretary Riley, and members of the Cabinet and administration; a special word of thanks to Congressman Thompson and to my good friend Senator Bumpers.

The great privilege of speaking last is that you get the last word. *[Laughter]* The great burden is that everything that needs to be said has been said. *[Laughter]*

I would like to begin by introducing some people who have not yet been introduced but whose presence here is altogether fitting. The story of the Little Rock Nine, in the end, is the story of the triumph of the rule of law and the American Constitution which was given expression not only by a decision of the United States Supreme Court but by a decision of a President determined to enforce the rule of law.

A couple of hours ago I had the great honor of signing legislation naming the Old Executive Office Building the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. President Eisenhower's son, daughter-in-law, and granddaughter are here, and I would like to ask General John Eisenhower, Joanne, and Susan to stand and be recognized and thank them for their presence here. *[Applause]*

I want to thank all the previous speakers for their very moving words. This is a special day for me, a happy day and a sad day, an emotional day. I thank all of you for what you said about Daisy Bates who, in my years of service in Arkansas, became a good friend to Hillary and to me. I was privileged to go to the Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, which is built around the Lorraine Motel, when we dedicated the exhibit on Central High School, with the statue of Governor Faubus on one side and Daisy on the other. *[Laughter]* And even though by then she had to get around in a wheelchair, she got a big laugh out of that. *[Laughter]* And what a wonderful laugh she had.

So I ask you all to remember her today, her smiling self, for that gave a lot of confidence to those whom we honor. Secretary Slater is representing the administration at her funeral

today, and I thank him for that, because he would dearly love to be here with his friends.

I think it was Senator Hutchison who first mentioned that we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Berlin Wall's fall today, and it is fitting that we, on this same day, recognize what these people did to make the walls of bigotry and prejudice fall in America. For when they marched up the steps to school, a simple act, they became foot soldiers for freedom, carrying America to higher ground.

You know, when Little Rock happened, I was 11 years old, living 50 miles away. Like every schoolchild in Arkansas, except those in Charleston—all six of them—*[laughter]*—I was—how I miss you. I miss doing this. *[Laughter]* When Little Rock happened, all the kids in Arkansas, white and black, we all went to segregated schools, with very few exceptions. And these people, they just burst in on our lives. And I feel like I've been walking along with them for 42 years now, because they forced everybody to think, you know? Before then, oh, why, you know, I was 11 years old, and my grandparents believed in school integration, and they taught me about that, and I thought it was a great thing.

But the truth is nobody really thought about it very much because segregation was a way of life, and most people just got up and went through their lives, and nobody questioned it. Nobody challenged it. It was just the way things were. It was unfortunate, but that's the way things were.

And all of a sudden, they showed up, and it wasn't the way things were anymore. And then everyone had to decide, everyone, everyone in everybody's little life. You had to decide: Where do you stand on this; what do you believe; how are we going to live? So these people, when they were young, they changed the way we were.

I would like to say to all of you that they paid a price for doing that. And they look real fine sitting up here today, and they have this vast array of family and supporters here, and they have lived good lives and accomplished remarkable things. But we're giving them this medal because they paid the price.

Daisy said what they endured was a volcano of hatred. And like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, they walked out without being burned. But they have their scars. They taught us that you can turn your cheek from violence without averting your eyes to injustice, and they taught us that they could pay their price and go on.

On this journey that started 42 years ago, I could never have known that life would bring us in contact. But 12 years ago, on the 30th anniversary of the Central High incident, I invited them all to come to the Governor's Mansion, and I showed them around in the rooms where Governor Faubus plotted all the stratagems to keep them out of school. [Laughter] They got a kick out of that, and so did I. Ten years later, as President, I had the profound honor of going to Central High School to hold the doors open for them as they walked in, without incident. And it was great.

That school now has a very diverse student body, and a faculty, one of the best records of academic excellence in our home State. It had then an African-American student body president, which it frequently does, and in all the years I was Governor, it was the only high school in my State and one of the few in the country where you could still study Greek.

Now, we open the doors of this house. And I want to say a special word of thanks to the Speaker and the other congressional leaders for allowing us to make this presentation—let's not forget, this is the Congressional Gold Medal—which the President always participates in, but usually we do it in their House, now on Pennsylvania Avenue. But because of our relationship, the Speaker and the other leaders have agreed for us to come here. And I thank them for that, for personal reasons, for our friends.

Today we celebrate the faiths of our Founders, the faith of parents in their children, the faith of children in their future. We celebrate it because we can, and we can because these nine people helped us to keep it alive and to redeem it. And now, as others have said, it is for us to take that faith into a new millennium, once again to redeem the promise of our country by giving all of our children a world-class education and all of our people a chance to be part of our prosperity and by giving all of our increasingly diverse citizens a chance to be a part of one America.

So in addition to giving them a medal, we ought to make that commitment, for like all people, we—and I certainly include myself in this—we all find it easy to condemn yesterday's wrongdoing. But these people stood up as children to condemn today's. And so let us learn from them and honor their example.

The Speaker joined me in Chicago the other day, in the common cause of giving economic opportunity to those who haven't had it in this most remarkable of economic recoveries. Many of you have committed yourselves to opening the doors of quality education to all of our children.

But the most important thing we have to do is to truly build one America in the 21st century. I want to read you something that Melba Pattillo Beals put in her book. "If my Central High experience taught me one lesson," she wrote, "it is that we are not separate. The effort to separate ourselves, whether by race, creed, color, religion, or status, is as costly to the separator as to those who would be separated. The task that remains is to see ourselves reflected in every other human being and to respect and honor our differences."

A couple of months ago in this very room—or a couple of weeks ago, actually—Hillary hosted one of our Nation's top scientists and one of the founders of the Internet. And they discussed the remarkable convergence of the explosion in computer advances with the unlocking of the mysteries of the human gene and the gene structure, the so-called genome.

And the scientist said that if you put all the people together, and you had a genetic map of every individual on Earth, you would find that we are 99.9 percent the same genetically. Then, even more surprising perhaps, the scientist said, if you took a representative group of people of different races—if you took 100 African-Americans and 100 Chinese-Americans and 100 Hispanic-Americans and 100 Irish-Americans—and you put them in these little groups, you would find that the genetic differences within each group, from individual to individual, are greater than the genetic differences of one group to another. Now, Melba knew that before the scientists found it out. [Laughter]

I say that to make this point: Every one of us, in some way or another, almost every day, is guilty in some way, large or small, of forgetting that we are 99.9 percent the same. Every

person, every family, every group, every nation is guilty from time to time of trying to give meaning to life by denigrating someone else who is different in some way. Honest and real differences can only be explored, confronted, and worked through, and diversity can only be celebrated when we recognize that the most important fact of life is our common humanity. They all knew that in some instinctive way.

The truth is almost all children know that. They have to be taught differently. Because so many were taught differently, it fell to these nine Americans when they were young, as children, to become our teachers. And because they taught us well, we are a better country. And we honor them today, but let us not forget to heed their lessons.

The Book of Job says, "My foot has held fast. I have not turned aside. And when tried, I shall come forth as gold." For holding fast to their steps, for not turning aside, we now ask these nine humble children, grown into strong adults, to come forth for their gold.

Major, please read the resolution.

[At this point, Maj. William Mullen III, USMC, Marine Corps Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

The President. Now we have a special treat to cap off this event. But before I introduce the final presenter, I want to say again how much I appreciate the very large delegation

from Congress from both parties who are here and particularly the fact that every Representative from our home State is here, Representative Hutchinson, Representative Dickey, Representative Berry, and Congressman Vic Snyder, the Congressman from Central High School. Thank you all for being here.

And I want to thank the really large number of people from our home State, from Arkansas, who are here, many who live in Washington, many who have come up here from Arkansas to be here, and thank all of you for coming.

And now I would like to ask Reverend Wintley Phipps to come forward to sing us on our way, a great gift to America. And thank you for sharing your time and your gift with us. God bless you, sir.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to gospel singer Rev. Wintley Phipps; the late Daisy Bates, civil rights activist; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research. The Congressional Gold Medals were presented to Ernest Green, Elizabeth Eckford, Jefferson Thomas, Dr. Terrence Roberts, Carlotta Walls Lanier, Minnijean Brown Trickey, Gloria Ray Karlmark, Thelma Mothershed-Wair, and Melba Pattillo Beals, collectively known as the Little Rock Nine.

Statement on Proposed Minimum Wage Legislation

November 9, 1999

The Senate Republican leadership made a serious mistake by insisting on using a minimum wage increase as a cynical tool to advance special interest tax breaks that aren't paid for and do little to help working families. I cannot let this bill become law in its current form. I once again call on Congress to give working American

families the pay raise they deserve. Congress should pass clean legislation that boosts the minimum wage by one dollar over the next 2 years and simply restores the value of the minimum wage to what it was in 1982. American workers deserve no less.

Statement on the Resignation of Michel Camdessus as Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund

November 9, 1999

Today I want to express my appreciation to Michel Camdessus, who announced his intention to resign as Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, for his years of service. Mr. Camdessus exhibited strong leadership during his two-plus terms at the IMF. His tireless efforts helped contain the fallout from the East Asian economic crisis in 1997 and 1998, improve

the global financial architecture, increase the transparency of the IMF itself, establish “good practices” for transparency of national governments, and create greater focus on debt relief for the world’s poorest countries. I will greatly miss working with Mr. Camdessus in the international economic policy arena and wish him the best in his retirement.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Women’s Leadership Forum Reception

November 9, 1999

Thank you. Well, Janice, thank you, and thanks for giving this group such a build-up when you said there were 300 here for Tipper and 250 for me. [*Laughter*] This is the first concrete manifestation I have had of the fact that I’m the only one in this crowd not running for anything anymore. [*Laughter*]

Let me first of all say, I’m delighted to be here. I got a good report from Hillary on her visit with you, and thank you for the good reception you gave her. I brought—I see Ann Lewis is here. I brought Minyon Moore, my political director, with me, and the new head of our women’s outreach office, who used to operate this wonderful organization, WLF, Lauren Supina, is here. So thank you very much for coming.

As all of you know, since Al and Tipper and Hillary and I moved to the White House, we have tried very hard to involve women to an unprecedented degree and to show a great sensitivity to interests of particular concern to women. And I’m sure that you’ve had that repeated over and over again.

But one of the things that I am proudest of is that we have really enabled women to share in the benefits of the work of this administration. You know, we have now the lowest unemployment in 30 years, but we have the lowest women’s unemployment in 46 years. That’s amazing. And when you consider how many

fewer women were looking for work 46 years ago, those numbers are even more meaningful.

We’ve also tripled the number of SBA loans to women. We’ve worked very hard on issues—the family and medical leave, I don’t have the newest numbers, but as of last year, 15 million people had taken advantage of it.

And as we look ahead, as I have said repeatedly, if you compare where we are now with where we were in 1992, we’ve gone from a period of economic distress, social division, political drift, and a complete discrediting of Government to the strongest economy in our history, welfare and crime rates at a 30-year low; we learned last week teen pregnancy is at a 30-year low; a country beginning to come to grips with its social problems and come together. We have a clear direction for the future, and no one’s out there running against the Government anymore. We heard for 12 years that Government was the problem, and things got worse, including the deficit and the debt.

But that’s the good news. The question that we have to face now is what’s at stake ahead of us? What is still to be done?

And I just want to make two points very briefly. One is, we have the first chance in my lifetime—and I’m 53 years old—the first chance in my lifetime to really deal with the big challenges and opportunities out there facing our country, without the paralysis or the threat of an external crisis or an internal crisis. And I

believe that imposes upon us a very heavy responsibility. And we ought to look at our country as a family would its children and its grandchildren. We have to deal with these big issues.

And I think that the women of America can make sure that's what the subject of the election is about, and the WLF can make sure that we involve lots of people who've never been involved before, who care deeply about this.

But if you look at—and I'll just mention two or three—if you look at the aging of America, that will affect more women than men, because you have a longer life expectancy. And as we talk about saving Social Security for the 21st century, one of the things we ought to be doing is making special provisions for women who could not pay into Social Security at the same amount men could and who therefore are much more likely to be living in poverty.

If you look at reforming Medicare and extending the life of it and providing affordable prescription drug coverage, that affects women disproportionately to men. But it's profoundly important.

If you look at the challenges we face with our children, the challenges we face in eradicating poverty and bringing prosperity to the people and places we haven't touched yet, of guaranteeing long-term economic health for our country by paying down the debt and getting out of debt for the first time, literally, in 165 years, these are things that I believe we ought to be taking to the American people.

We've proved you can grow the economy and improve the environment. In this period of economic growth, we have cleaner air, cleaner water, safer food. We set aside more land for protection than any administration, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt, in the history of the country. That will continue to be a major concern.

If you look at our responsibilities around the world, there's a big struggle I've been having here in Congress to adequately fund out foreign affairs budget. You know, one of the things that we do with that money, as I'm sure Hillary talked about today, is try to make sure that in developing countries around the world women have a chance to make a living by getting credit and girls have a chance to make a future by going to school and being free from oppressive social practices. That's going to be a big issue in the future. Will we continue to

do that? Will that continue to be part of America's role in the world?

And of course, in the next election one of the things that will clearly be up for grabs is somewhere between two and four seats on the United States Supreme Court and the question of whether we will revisit a whole raft of issues, the most obvious of which is the right to choose, but believe me, that's not the only one that is hanging in the balance of this election.

So I hope that you're all pumped up about what you've done. I'm particularly pleased, when Janice was giving the report, that you had so many people here today who had not previously been active. One of the things that I think is important for the Democrats to do is to recognize that there are literally thousands, even tens of thousands of people out there who have been directly benefited by the policies of his administration and the direction of the country, who have never participated in politics, that don't imagine that they have a contribution to make, because they have never been asked, and they've never been asked to do anything specific and given an opportunity to participate.

People now believe in the possibilities of our country and the possibilities of our political system again. And so if they don't participate but they could, it's our fault, not theirs, and we have to look at it that way.

And that's the last thing I would leave you with. You know, I'm fighting now for strengthening the equal pay law. I'm fighting now for adequate efforts at child care. We passed the family and medical leave law; 15 million people have taken advantage of it. I'd like to add 10 million more people to the coverage.

But you should know, for example, that today, under present Federal law, of those who are eligible to receive assistance from the Federal Government to help to provide for quality affordable child care, we have funding for only 10 percent—only 10 percent. And in spite of all that, we have the lowest unemployment rate in 46 years, but I promise you a lot of those women are going to work every day worried sick about their kids.

And that is not good for our country, because one of the big challenges we have to face that I didn't mention and I want to mention in closing is—I'm proud that the first bill I signed was the family and medical leave law, but we have come nowhere near where we need to be in terms of enabling people to succeed both

in the workplace and at home. And I think that ought to be one of the major issues that we take into the 2000 elections, even as I continue to redouble my efforts to pass the child care initiative we have before the Congress, to pass the strengthening of equal pay initiative we have before the Congress, and to do many other things.

So I'm very grateful that I've had a chance to serve these last 7 years. I'm grateful for what we have done and what we still can do. But the decision we should be making as Democrats is that we are not going to let our children and our grandchildren down. We're going to use the—literally, it's the only opportunity we've had in my lifetime to have this level of pros-

perity, in the absence of domestic or foreign crisis, to shape the future of our dreams.

The only chance we have to do that is with the massive involvement and leadership of the women of this country. And you will be one of the most important engines of the victories that we have in the year 2000.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:39 p.m. in the Potomac Room at the St. Regis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Janice Griffin, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum; and Lauren Supina, Director, White House Office for Women's Initiative and Outreach.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Hispanic Leadership Forum Dinner

November 9, 1999

Thank you very much. After that introduction, I am thinking many things. [Laughter] I'm thinking, I wonder how long it will be before Miguel will run for office. [Laughter] I'm thinking, it is much better to have such a friend than an opponent. [Laughter] Thank you. Thank you for being my friend in ways that are personal as well as political. You may, however, have caused me quite a problem tonight, not over Vieques but over saying I have a Hispanic soul. Not very long ago the great African-American Nobel Prize winning author Toni Morrison said I was the first black President. [Laughter] And if I am the first black President and the first President to have a Hispanic soul, I'm afraid they'll never let me go home to Ireland. [Laughter] It might be worth it. [Laughter]

Loretta Sanchez, thank you very much for your leadership and standing up here tonight and performing in your usual, laid back, repressed fashion. [Laughter] What a joy it is to have somebody like you in Congress who's not ashamed to have a good time being in public life. We ought to all enjoy it and be honored.

You know, when I see people trudging around here all the time, complaining about how hard public life is and all the burdens, I say, "You know, they're not giving these jobs away. Nobody made you come up here." [Laughter] Peo-

ple come to me all the time and say, "Hasn't this been just awful for you?" I say, no. [Laughter] It's actually been quite wonderful. You know, a few turns in the road one way or the other and I could be home doing deeds, wills, and divorces. [Laughter] I am grateful to be here, and I like it, every day of it. And Loretta likes it, and she's grateful to be here, and I appreciate that.

I want to thank the administration members who are here: Secretary Slater, who represented me at home today in Arkansas at the funeral of Daisy Bates, a great hero of the civil rights movement; Administrator Alvarez; Maria Echaveste; my former Secretary of Transportation and Energy, Federico Peña, who did a superb job in both places, it's nice to see you. I would also like to thank another former member of my administration who is here tonight, who is now working for Vice President Gore, Janet Murguia. Her brother was just confirmed as the first Hispanic Federal judge from Kansas, so we've got one of them on the payroll, anyway.

I want to thank all the people at my table and other places who had so much to do with the success of this evening, Joe and Alfie and Roger and Leo and all the others. Nelson, thank you very much for your leadership. Thank you, Joe Andrew and the others who are here from

the DNC. Lottie Shackelford, Lydia Camarillo, thank you for your willingness to go run our convention. Make sure we all have a good time out there, will you? *[Laughter]*

And let me say one serious word before I go forward. There's one person I really wish were here tonight, who died a couple of days ago, the great mayor of Sacramento, California, Mayor Joe Serna. Mickey Ibarra would be here, but he's out there representing me at that service today. So I ask you all to remember Isabel Serna and the family in your prayers. They've been through a lot. He was a magnificent mayor and a great Democrat and a great friend of mine. He was one of those people who enjoyed public service, had a good time doing it, and was proud down to the last day—his health would no longer permit him to serve—and I ask you to remember.

I also would like to thank two people who aren't here tonight: one, Secretary Richardson, who is still in the administration; and the other whom I wish were here, Henry Cisneros, who has served us so ably and is such a great man. I thank him.

Now, as all of you know, we're trying to finish this year's budget, and we're trying to do a few other things before the Congress goes home. And I'd like to mention just a few of them because I think they relate particularly to the concerns of the Hispanic community. I want you to know what's still out there. We're fighting to get a reaffirmation of the commitment that Congress made last year, right before the election, that the majority, the Republican majority has voted to go back on. But I am determined that we will reinstate it, and that is to put 100,000 teachers out there in the early grades so we can lower class size and give our children a better education.

We are fighting to give our hardest pressed communities that still have a high crime rate 50,000 police officers on the street. We are fighting to raise the minimum wage, which I think is very, very important, especially for lower income workers, many of whom are Hispanic. You know, we lifted over 1½ million Hispanics out of poverty by doubling the earned-income tax credit in 1993 and then by raising the minimum wage. And it's time to raise it again. And I hope we can prevail, and I hope you will help us.

We're trying to pass hate crimes legislation. We're trying to pass legislation that will enable

disabled people to go into the work force and not lose their Medicaid health insurance. We're trying to pass the Caribbean Basin initiative and the African trade bill, which would open our markets to the Caribbean nations and African nations and open their markets more to us and put our Caribbean neighbors on a more equal footing with our Mexican neighbors in our trading relations.

All of those things can still be done before the Congress goes home. And insofar as any of you have influence with anyone, I hope you will get out there and help us with our agenda, because all these things reflect the deepest values of the Democratic Party and our commitment to the future.

I just want to make a couple of other points. I don't want to keep you late, and most of you have heard me give a lot of speeches. I had a very emotional day today. I was thinking about many things. I'm about to leave to go to Europe. Hillary and Chelsea just left to go to the Middle East to continue the work that I was doing last week in our hope that we can, over the next 100 days, actually get a framework for a final peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Then I'm going to Turkey and to Greece, two great friends of America, in the hope I can help them resolve some of their difficulties over Cyprus and other issues before I leave office. And then I'm going on to Bulgaria, a great ally of ours, to try to keep pushing to make peace in the Balkans, where we have had to take up arms in Bosnia and Kosovo to stop ethnic cleansing and slaughter.

And today I had this incredible experience, which would have been wonderful for any President but was especially wonderful for me. I hosted in the White House about 30 members of the United States Congress, Republicans and Democrats, and a couple of hundred other people to give the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest award Congress can award, to the nine students who integrated Little Rock Central High School 42 years ago.

For those of you who are old enough to remember that or young enough to have studied it, you may know also that, in addition to the courage of the young children and the power of the Supreme Court's decisions and the court orders, the power of the Presidency was necessary for the integration of Little Rock Central High School when President Eisenhower sent

in the 101st Airborne Division and later federalized the Arkansas National Guard to stop the obstruction.

Today I signed a bill naming the Old Executive Office Building after President Eisenhower because he worked there many years in the military. That building, until the Great Depression, housed all the offices of the executive branch, including all the offices of what was then called the War Department, except for the Treasury Building and the Office of the President. So Dwight Eisenhower actually worked in that building as long as he worked in the White House as President.

And his son, General John Eisenhower, who is also a noted historian, and John's wife and their daughter were there, so I asked them to come. So Dwight Eisenhower's son and granddaughter were actually present as we recognized these nine students. And because Arkansas is my home, I have lived with the reality of these people all my life, since I was 11 years old.

And I said today that these nine students, in their simple desire to get a better education became, as children, our teachers. When I lived at home, literally 99 percent of all children in my State went to segregated schools. And we may have had an opinion one way or the other, but everybody more or less accepted it was the way it was.

But when they did what they did, then all of a sudden, they came crashing in our lives and everyone had to decide: Where do you stand; what do you believe; how will we live? Thirty years later, I hosted them in the Governor's Mansion for the 30th anniversary of Little Rock Central High. I brought them all in, and I showed them all the rooms where the then-Governor planned the obstruction to keep them out the school. They got a big kick out of that.

And 40 years later, 2 years ago, I went home to Little Rock, to the steps of Little Rock Central High School—which in the 1920's was voted the most beautiful school building in America, and it's still a magnificent structure—and I held the doors open for them, with our Governor, as they walked freely through the front door, something they had not been able to do 40 years ago. And then 2 years later, they came to the White House, with all their myriad family, kinfolks, and friends, for a celebration that truly represented America at its best.

This has been a great day, a great day to be President and a great day to be an American. And to end it with you—you and all those you represent have been so good to me and to Hillary and to the Vice President and Mrs. Gore—is a great privilege.

I just want to leave you with a couple of thoughts. Number one, many of you helped me in 1992 because you knew we didn't want to keep on going the way we were going, because we had economic problems and social discord and political drift, and Government was discredited. So you knew what you were against, and you were willing to try something else. But I was just an argument for most of you. Most of you never met me before I started running for President, and you decided to give me a chance.

So the first thing I want to say to you is it is not an argument anymore. Together, we made a good decision, and we've changed America for the better. Seven years later, when you go home tomorrow and you go back across the country and people ask you why you were there, you can say, "Well, we gave him a chance, and we tried it their way." And as has already been said, we not only have had the most diverse administration with the most diverse appointments, including the judicial appointments—more of whom I'm trying to get up for a vote by the way—in history, but we have the longest peacetime expansion in history, 19.8 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest crime rates in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 46 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. It is not an argument anymore. It's working. It's the right direction for America.

So the second thing I want to say to you is, we've got to decide now, what are we going to do with this. Because even if I pass everything I'm trying to pass, if we get a good minimum wage bill and the 100,000 teachers and the 50,000 police and we get the antienvironmental riders off the bills and we pass the Caribbean Basin/Africa trade initiative, we do all the things I mentioned to you, there still will be a lot for America to do.

And of all Americans, Hispanics ought to be able to think about this, our country, as we would our family. I remember one of the nicest

nights we ever shared at the White House, Federico and I, was when we previewed that wonderful movie "Mi Familia" at the White House.

In my lifetime, which is stretching on and on as the days go by, in my lifetime, this is the first chance America has had to have, on the one hand, the prosperity and confidence that we have and, on the other, to be unburdened by serious, wrenching foreign threats to our security or domestic crises. In the 1960's we had, for a brief period more or less, the best economy we'd ever had, with low unemployment, low inflation. But we had, first, the civil rights crisis to deal with and then the war in Vietnam.

Now what do you do, as a person, as a family, as a business, if things are better than they have ever been, but you can look ahead to the future and clearly see challenges and opportunities that will not be met or seized if you don't do certain things you're not doing now? What do you do? That is the great question before our people.

I can tell you—you know, I don't know about you, but I'll just use my own life; from the time I was a little boy, one of the—well, when I first ran for office, let me start with that. I asked an old sage in Arkansas politics, I said—I was running really well in this race for Governor. I said, "What do you think I ought to really remember?" He said, "Bill, just remember this: In politics, you're always most vulnerable when you think you're invulnerable."

How many times can you remember in your own life, when you broke your concentration, when you got divided, when you made a stupid mistake because you thought things were rocking along so well, nothing bad could happen? How many times has that happened to a family or to a business, where you just think things are going to roll on forever? It's never that way. Human nature is not that way. Human circumstances don't work that way. I'm telling you, this is a precious jewel we have been given, a gift we have been given as a country, to look ahead and say, "Okay, what are the big challenges? What are the big opportunities?" You ought to make your own lists. And ask yourself, in your lifetime, has there ever been an opportunity like this for America?

What are the challenges? I'll just give you a few. The number of people over 65 is going to double in 30 years. There will be two people

working for every one person drawing Social Security. Medicare is supposed to run out of money in 15 years. Seventy-five percent of our seniors can't afford prescription drugs but need them to stay alive and maintain their quality of life. How are we going to deal with the aging of America?

We have the largest number of children in our schools in history, the first time more people than the baby boom, and by far more diverse. Loretta was talking about that Republican newsletter from northwest Arkansas. That's really true. Northwest Arkansas is one of the fastest growing areas of America, has been for 20 years, and one of the most racially and religiously homogeneous areas in the country. And all of a sudden, boom, they have this big infusion of Hispanics. The Catholic Church there now has a Spanish mass every Sunday and has had for the last several years. And that's nothing if you're from Orange County, but if you're from northwest Arkansas, that's a huge deal. [*Laughter*]

We also have a big influx of people in western Arkansas from Southeast Asia. But last year, our State ranked first or second—I'm not sure which, but I'm sure it's one of the two—in the percentage growth of Hispanic population. Joe Andrew didn't mention this, I don't think, but in addition to all the mayors we've celebrated, we've had a truly historic, breathtaking election in the State of Mississippi, where we won the governorship in a State where they didn't think a Democrat could be elected for love or money.

And part of it was the overwhelming African-American turnout. But there are also more Hispanics moving to Mississippi. All over the South, their voices are being heard. And we only won the election by about 6,000 votes, so everybody can take credit for the victory. [*Laughter*]

So we have to think about this. What are we going to do for all these children? They need a world-class education. If we do it right, the diversity of America will be a blessing in a global society. What are we going to do about the fact that this fabulous recovery has left people and places behind? Unemployment on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is 73 percent. Upstate New York, outside of the suburbs in New York City, if it were a separate State, would rank 49th in job growth since I've been President. Hawaii, burdened by the collapse of the Asian economy, is the only State with no

economic growth—the inner cities, the Mississippi Delta, Appalachia.

How are we going to bring prosperity to people and places left behind? Do we have the will to guarantee economic growth for a generation of Americans by taking America out of debt? I gave a budget to the Congress that will get us out of debt over the next 15 years, for the first time since 1835. And the progressive party, the Democrats, ought to be for that. It sounds like a conservative thing—it is—but it's the progressive thing to do in a global economy. Because if the government is not borrowing money, you can borrow it for less, and our trading partners can get more for less, and then they can be better partners with us, and they can lift their people out of poverty.

How are we going to grow the economy and meet our environmental responsibility? We've proved you could do it. Are we going to keep doing it? We've got the lowest crime rate in 30 years. Does anybody seriously think America is as safe as it ought to be? If you do, let me just give you one statistic. The accidental death rate of children from gun shots in the United States is 9 times the rate of the next 25 biggest industrial economies combined.

I think we now know we can bring the crime rate down. Why don't we set a realistic goal? I mean realistic in terms of our dreams. Why don't we say we won't quit until America is the safest big country in the world? And if we want that, how are we going to do it?

Last night, I appeared in the first-ever town-hall meeting on the Internet, which was interesting for me, since one of the reasons I asked the Vice President to join the ticket is because I was so technologically challenged. [Laughter] It was quite a thrill for me to do that.

But there is a digital divide, and it can have huge consequences. I was in northern California the other night, meeting with people who work for eBay. Do you all ever use eBay? Buy anything on eBay? You want to hear something interesting? Over 20,000 Americans now make a living on eBay, not working for eBay, trading on eBay, many of them former welfare recipients. Think of what we could do in America to close the economic divide if we could close the digital divide, if usage and access to computers and connections to the Internet were as dense as telephone ownership and usage. Think of it. Now, these are the kind of things we ought to be thinking about.

What are the security threats of the 21st century? Well, I think one of them is we can start running away from each other because we've all of a sudden gotten afraid of trade. We need to keep expanding trade but work harder to put a human face on it, to take into account legitimate environmental issues and labor issues, but not to run away from the fact that with 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's income if we want to continue to grow, we've got to sell something to the other 96 percent. And if we want to sell something to them, particularly since we're richer, we have to be willing to buy things. But this is a good thing.

What else? The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical, and biological, and the possibility that they can be made in smaller quantities, like everything else is smaller. We've got cell phones so small now my big old fingers won't even hit the numbers right. The miniaturization of all things technical will apply to weapons, as well, make no mistake about it. This is a serious challenge, the growth of terrorism around the world, the prospect that the terrorists, the drug runners, the organized criminals will all start working together, and the rampant threat of racial, ethnic, and religious wars—big challenges.

Which brings me to the last one. And it's what I've spent so much time on around the world and what I celebrated today with honoring the Little Rock Nine: Can we truly make our motto, *E Pluribus Unum*, real as we grow ever more diverse?

It requires, I would argue, three things. One is we have to respect, not just tolerate—not just tolerate—but respect and celebrate our differences. You know, I don't have the same attitude as the people that put out that memo Loretta talked about. I think it's a lot more interesting in America as we grow more diverse.

I'll never forget the first Cinco de Mayo celebration I went to in San Francisco. I thought, "Where has this been all my life?" [Laughter] You know? I mean, what have we been doing here?

You know, I used to—when I was Governor of my home State, I used to go to a place called Little Italy to eat spaghetti in a town called Slovak, to meet with the farmers that came there in the 1848 revolution. And now we're just repeating our history in technicolor, times four. And I think it's fascinating.

But let's stop all this tolerance stuff. Tolerance is not good enough. We need respect and celebration of our differences, number one.

Number two, we need to recognize that, as we have from the beginning, we have genuine differences of opinion, which ought to be forthrightly and publicly argued. In that sense, and if that's all we're doing, partisanship is not necessarily a bad thing. When people say partisanship with a little negative edge, what they really mean is these people in Washington are fighting their partisan battles trying to increase their power without concern for the public interest. They think there's some game going on that's not real. But we will always have honest differences.

I know why I'm a Democrat in the year 1999. And I have friends in the Republican Party who know why they're Republicans. And we honestly see the world in different ways. We ought to create a safe and constructive way for people to feel free to think and argue.

But the third thing we have to do is to recognize that the differences we celebrate and the differences we fight over, neither one of them are nearly as important as our common humanity. And that is what the world keeps forgetting, at its peril.

Don't you think it's interesting that, at a time when we talk about the Internet—this and finding a cure for cancer, and last year we actually were able to transplant nerves into the spine of laboratory animals that had had their spines severed, and for the first time ever they have movement in their lower limbs. Two years ago we identified the two genes that are the biggest predictors of breast cancer for women. Within a couple of years, when mothers take their babies home from the hospital, we'll be able to give them a genetic map which will say, here are the things your child has a greater than normal propensity for, but if you do the following things, you can minimize them. A lot of people I know, experts in the field, actually believe within a very few years babies will be born with a life expectancy of nearly a century—within a very few years. Already today, if you live to be 65, your life expectancy is over 82 years.

Isn't it interesting, at this time, with all this marvelous stuff happening, not to mention all the techno-joys we can have, that the biggest problems we have in the world are rooted in the oldest failing of human society? We are

afraid of people who are different from us. And when you're afraid of somebody who's different from you, it's easy to formalize that fear in dislike or hatred, and it's a short step to dehumanizing them, after which it's a short step to taking violent action against them and to thinking it really doesn't matter.

I'll never forget being in the airport at Kigali, Rwanda, talking to a woman who thought she had been killed, because she was cut up in one of the machete rampages in the Rwandan genocide, and she woke up to find her husband and her six children all slashed to death around her. She's the only surviving one, knowing that they had been betrayed by her neighbor, a person they lived with, lived next to her, in total peace for years, and boom, like that, they started the fight between the Hutus and Tutsis, and people turned on a dime, betrayed their neighbors-for-life, and let people be slaughtered.

Now, there are lots of other stories that are heroic on the other side. But what happens to people? Why does that happen?

Why are the Catholics and the Protestants still fighting in Northern Ireland when the Irish Republic has got the fastest growing economy in Europe, and their common heritage is rich and fascinating and interesting, and they could be having arguments in bars or in Parliament and making money, instead, and educating their children?

What is it that's keeping the Israelis and the Palestinians from taking these last few steps, the Syrians from joining in? Why are there other terrorist and rejectionist groups that are prepared to go out and kill innocent civilians to keep the Israelis and the Palestinians and the Syrians from making their final peace agreement?

If you look at America, you look at the success of people from the Indian subcontinent in America—from India, from Pakistan, from Bangladesh—the phenomenal success, if you look at the fact that India will be bigger than China in 20 years, that they both have big scientific bases of expertise, why are they fighting over the line of control in Kashmir? Why can't they work that out? Why is that such a big problem that they keep spending money preparing to go to war with one another instead of educating their children and alleviating the abject poverty that is holding them down and keeping them from their full potential? I mean, I could go on and on and on. But you get the point.

Why did I have to go into Europe and bring the power of the American military to bear in Bosnia and Kosovo to keep people from slaughtering mostly Muslims, although others were involved too. What is the deal here? Same reason, in a more—thank God—mundane but still very cruel way people were spitting on and kicking and cursing those nine kids when they tried to go to Little Rock Central High School 42 years ago.

One of the great human weaknesses is that when people get organized, they think that, in order for their tribe to matter, the other tribe has to matter less. In order for their lifestyle to be validated, somebody else's has to be invalidated, that every difference of opinion turns out to be a difference justifying the dehumanization of your opponent. This is a very dangerous thing, made more dangerous, not less, by the collision of societies and the close contact and the openness of borders.

So we need you for another reason. We need you in the Democratic Party. We need you as Americans. We need you to remind us of what the concept of family means to you. What are the obligations of people who are in your family? What do we owe to one another? If you're like me, once you get about 50, your family members, there are some you don't even like very much. But you are bound together. You are bound together.

I want you to think about that, so when you go out across the country, you go back home and people say, "Why are you here? What are you doing? Why are you a Democrat? Why are you helping who you're helping in 2000?" Say, "Well, number one, I tried him in '92 and it worked. We're in a lot better shape than we

were then, and we're in a lot better shape than we've been in a long time. Number two, I'm doing it because I want to take on the big challenges of the future. And I'm really determined that we're not going to blow this responsibility to our children and grandchildren. And number three, because the Democrats represent the best hope for creating a family in America and a family in the world that doesn't minimize our differences; it celebrates them. It doesn't minimize our arguments; it respects them. But it recognizes that underneath it all is our common humanity. And without that, nothing else matters much. With it, there's nothing we can't do."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 p.m. in the Crystal Ballroom at the St. Regis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Miguel Lausell, chair, Hispanic Leadership Council; Representative Loretta Sanchez, general cochair, Lottie Shackelford, vice chair, and Nelson Diaz, Hispanic caucus leader, Democratic National Committee; dinner vice chairs Alfonso Fanjul, Roger Rivera, and Leo Perez; Jo Velazquez, president, Strategics Group International, LC; Lydia Camarillo, chief executive officer, Democratic National Convention Committee; Carlos Murguia, Judge, U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas; former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry G. Cisneros; and Joanne Eisenhower, wife of Gen. John Eisenhower, and their daughter, Susan. The President also referred to Public Law 106-92, approved November 9, which renamed the Old Executive Office Building to the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks on Y2K Readiness and an Exchange With Reporters November 10, 1999

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I want to thank John Koskinen and all the leadership that he and others have provided in helping to prepare America for Y2K.

We are releasing our fourth and final quarterly report on public and private efforts to address the Y2K computer problem. The report shows that our hard work in this country is

paying off, and while there is more to do, I expect we will experience no major national breakdowns as a result of the year 2000 date change.

First, the report makes clear that the Federal Government is Y2K ready and leading by example. Thanks to the efforts of the Office of Management and Budget, we have completed work

on more than 99 percent of all mission-critical computer systems, which means the American people can have full faith that everything from air traffic control systems to Social Security payment systems will continue to work exactly as they should.

Second, the report documents remarkable Y2K progress in all of America's critical infrastructure areas. When it comes to financial services, power, telecommunications, air and rail travel, leading organizations report they have completed or nearly completed all their Y2K work. I am confident the Y2K problem, therefore, will not put the savings or the safety of the American people at risk.

But in some areas we do continue to have concerns. Some small businesses, local governments and other organizations have been slower to address the Y2K challenge. So again I say to these groups, don't just sit back and wait for problems to occur. Call 1-888-USA-4Y2K, and we'll show you where to get help.

And while most of our large trading partners are in good shape, we still have concerns about the Y2K preparations of some developing nations. The State Department will continue to update its country-by-country assessments and advisories as new information becomes available.

We have less than 2 months now until the year 2000. Even those groups that have already completed their Y2K work must now put great emphasis on creating and testing contingency plans, as the Federal Government has already done. Back in October, when the Government made the transition to fiscal year 2000, we did encounter some small date-related computer problems. But the overriding lesson of that experience was that alert organizations, armed with good contingency plans, can fix Y2K disruptions in short order.

Thanks to the hard work of John Koskinen and his staff and proactive leaders all across our Nation, America is well on its way to being Y2K ready.

Now, over the next 52 days, we must continue to reach out to smaller organizations and local governments whose preparations are lagging behind. If we work together and use this time well, we can ensure that this Y2K computer problem will be remembered as the last headache of the 20th century, not the first crisis of the 21st.

Budget Negotiations

Q. Mr. President, as the budget negotiations drag on, Members of Congress have indicated, of course, they want to get out of town tonight. You don't want to leave town until Sunday. I'm wondering if that is your personal deadline, and doesn't that give you a slight advantage over them?

The President. Well, I don't really have a personal deadline. I did have good talks, as recently as this morning, with Senator Lott and Speaker Hastert. And I've been in constant contact. I saw the Democratic leaders yesterday, and we visited briefly. I think we're making good progress. We made some real progress in putting 50,000 more police on our streets. We're making some progress in other areas. We still have to resolve our Nation's commitment to 100,000 teachers. We're still working on the United Nations arrears and a number of other environmental issues. But I think we're making good progress, and I'm hopeful.

And we should know—let me say, I know you have a lot of questions. But actually, you ought to know more by 12 or 1 o'clock today about how well we're doing. I think we'll know certainly by the middle of the afternoon if we're in any shape to finish more or less when the Congress would like to.

And let me also say, I'm still very hopeful that we can pass the Africa trade bill and the Caribbean Basin initiative. I'm still very hopeful we can pass this very important legislation to let people with disabilities to go into the work force and carry their Medicaid. That could be one of the most important social pieces of legislation we've passed in a long time.

So we've got a lot to do. But I think we can; if we just keep working, we'll get there.

Timing of President's Visit to Greece

Q. Sir, could you tell us about the Greek postponement, what precipitated it, your level of concern for security there?

The President. Oh, I'm not concerned at all. You know, if the Greek Government and the Secret Service aren't concerned, I'm not concerned.

I explained yesterday, the Greeks have a tradition of large demonstrations, and the communists, the anarchists, perhaps some others in Greece want to demonstrate, in large measure I understand, because they strongly disagreed

with my policy in Kosovo and, presumably before that, in Bosnia. And you know, I think we were right, and I disagree with them. But the fact that they have the right to free speech doesn't concern me.

The Greek Government asked us to put the trip when we did, I think, largely for other reasons. I think they thought it would be better for them and that meetings we have might be more relevant if we did it after, rather than before, the OSCE meeting in Turkey. And so they asked to do it. Whether the demonstrations had anything to do with it, I don't know. But they might have. But I'm not bothered about it. You know, it's going to happen. And you all get to take pictures of it.

World Trade Organization Talks in China

Q. Mr. President, can you give us a readout on the WTO talks in China? Any progress there?

The President. No, I can't. All I know is that they are going on, and we're doing our best. I've got to run to Pennsylvania.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. on the South Grounds at the White House prior to departure for York, PA. In his remarks, he referred to John A. Koskinen, Chairman, President's Council on Year 2000 Conversion.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With Harley-Davidson Employees in York, Pennsylvania November 10, 1999

The President. Let me just say first, I have had a great tour. I'm glad to be here. Thanks for the jacket. But thanks, most of all, for your wonderful job you do. And I'd like to just have some opening remarks from Jeff and Harry, and then maybe we'll do a little roundtable discussion.

As you know, as I said, I'm interested in two things today. One is how has Harley done it; what are the major elements in your success at home and around the world? And secondly, how important is the global market to the profitability and long-term success of your company?

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. Several years ago, you were subject to unfair competition in the American market, and it took some action to get that straightened out. But one of the reasons that I wanted to have this new trade meeting that we're going to have next month in Seattle—we're going to try to launch a new round of trade negotiations, and the main purpose, from our point of view, is lowering tariffs to American products, because there's a lot more, not just yours but a lot of other products where, even though we have a very successful economy and relatively high wages compared to most other countries, we are quite competitive in a whole

range of areas if we can get these tariffs down. I think it's very important.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. You know, it's very interesting, I have tried to get the White House and the Government to operate more like you just described, and one of the real problems of doing it in politics is that if you make a mistake, it's big news. And if you don't, it's kind of like the dog that doesn't bark. I mean, it's not like—if you don't make a mistake, you sell a lot of motorcycles; the bottom line goes up. Sometimes if we don't make a mistake, you get your Social Security check.

And it's become—one of the things that Vice President Gore really tried to do with our reinventing Government initiative is to get decisions made more quickly by people that are closer to the decision point. And we tried to run the White House as a team and have people not be scared of their shadow when they come to work, to go ahead and make a decision and do things at work.

But it's very interesting to see what the problem in Government is, which is that—and I'm not blaming anybody and certainly not our friends in the press who are here covering this event—but it is—the pressures are great not

to mess up, so that tends to set up systems that are too top-down, too rule-oriented. And we really tried to change that. And we've had pretty good success, I think.

But you've got to be willing—if you trust people to make decisions, you've got to be willing to make a mistake, because managers make mistakes, so workers are going to make mistakes. Everybody makes mistakes. I'd be curious to know how you handle that, how you deal with the inevitable occasional error.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. One of the things that will inevitably happen, and we deal with this in every trade negotiation, is you have more and more trade; you have to move toward greater uniformity; you have to respect other countries, their determination about what's safe and what's good. Sometimes a lot of these standards are also a ruse to promote protectionism, and we've had a lot of problems with that, too, in addition to tariffs. We've had standards that—we used to have laughable standards with the Japanese, I remember, on things like importing skis and whether the skis were a quarter of an inch too wide or too narrow. So these things happen, and the only way you can change them is to enter into and do a negotiation and just keep trying to push through, push through. And then if the rules aren't followed once you've set up rules, as Tom pointed out, there have to be some consequences to them.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. That's a very important point. If people overseas aren't making any money, they can't buy whatever it is we're selling. But we have done that; the United States has maintained the most open market in the world. We've been fortunate enough to have low unemployment and low inflation for a long time, so it has benefited us as a whole. But it still puts enormous pressure on certain higher wage workers that are very competitive in a global economy if they have free access to markets.

So it's this constant balancing act for me, how to protect the overall health of the economy and still make sure that no sector is getting the shaft. But we do have an interest in other people making money. We ought to want our friends around the world to do well. That's the only way that we can—we have 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's

income. So you don't have to be an Einstein at math to figure out you've got to sell something to the other 96 percent, and they can only buy what they can afford to buy.

So to me, that's the ultimate logic of trade. But it's a constant fight to make sure the rules are fair.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. As I said, one of the major purposes of this new trade round we hope to start in Seattle next month is to get a comprehensive review of all the problems that are still out there and try to take them down. And I hope we can do it. I guess I ought to say this. In the first 5 years of my Presidency, through 1997, 4½ years, 30 percent of our growth came from expanded trade. Then since—in '98 and the first half of '99, a higher percentage has come generated from domestic economic growth because of the Asian financial—but as they come back, it will be 30 percent or more, particularly if the European economy grows and they're relatively open to our products and services. We'll do even better than 30 percent, starting in, I'd say, 2 years from now.

[*The discussion continued.*]

The President. We've just been learning how these great motorcycles are made and the teamwork between management and labor here and also how they're sold not only in the United States but around the world. And their message is that if they have fair access to markets, they can sell them everywhere—and I believe they can—and that the partnership and the trust that exists between the people who work here and the management is a major reason for the absolutely stunning success that this country has enjoyed in the last several years.

[*The discussion continued.*]

Mr. Harry Smith. I want to thank you also, Mr. President. I think you treated labor very fairly over the years, and I think you've done one hell of a job. And we thank you for coming.

The President. I'm not done yet. But when I am, I'm going to get on one of those motorcycles. [*Laughter*] Most Presidents get on Air Force One and ride off into the sunset. Maybe I'll just get on a Harley and ride off into the sunset. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Jeffrey L. Bleustein. You can get on Hog One. We'll make one of those. [Laughter]

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us why you think education and teachers are becoming the showdown issue on the budget this year?

The President. I don't know why, except that I have very strong feelings about it. And the Congress changed its position from last year to this year, the Republican majority in Congress changed its position. We had an agreement last year. And there is something to the argument, well, if schools already have small class sizes, they should be able to use the money on other things, but we have agreed to that. I just don't believe we ought to give a block grant out there when we know we've got the largest school population in history, the most diverse in history, and the kids who have small classes have permanent learning gains. We've got all this research that shows that. We made a commitment last year; I think we ought to keep our commitment. And I think we're getting closer. It may or may not be the last unresolved issue by the close of business today. But we're working at it.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. The people who are here like working here. I shook hands with a lot of the workers here today. They like it. They're proud of it. And all they want is a fair chance to sell their products. And I told them that when we meet in Seattle in this meeting of the World Trade Organization, what our goal is to open a new trade round that will reduce the tariffs and the non-tariff barriers to American products and services and, in return, make sure that people have continued access to our markets.

But these people here and your company prove, and so many others prove that if we have open and fair trade, the United States can compete with anybody. And it's the only way we can continue to grow our economy at a rapid

rate, and at the same time help the rest of the world do well.

[The discussion continued.]

The President. First of all, I want to thank you for being here together and for working together and for making America number one in telecommunications in so many, many ways. And I want to thank all the people at all the other sites for their support for America's role in the global economy and for expanding the opportunities for trade.

We're going to be working hard for it. I think we need to work hard to keep trying to build a consensus in our own country for the expansion of trade and for policies that will support benefits to all Americans who are out there working every day and deserve to be a part of this global economy. And we'll keep working on it. And I thank you very much.

And I'd be curious, before we close, to know, do you sell Harleys over the Internet? And can I order one over the Internet? If not, Armstrong will provide at a very reasonable price a comprehensive way to do that. [Laughter]

NOTE: The discussion began at 11:55 a.m. in the Conference Room at the Harley-Davidson Motor Co. plant. In his remarks, the President referred to Jeffrey L. Bleustein, chief executive officer, Harley-Davidson Motor Co.; Harry Smith, president, Local 175, International Union of Machinists; R. Thomas Buffenbarger, international president, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers; and AT&T chief executive officer C. Michael Armstrong, chairman, President's Export Council, who led the final portion of the roundtable discussion via satellite teleconference to a trade dialog with AT&T employees in Basking Ridge, NJ. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Harley-Davidson Employees in York November 10, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. It's nice to be in a restrained, laid-back crowd like this. [Laughter] The truth is, it's wonderful to be in a place where people are happy, and they're not ashamed to be excited, and they're proud

to go to work every day. Thank you very much for making me feel welcome here today.

Thank you, Jeff Bleustein; thank you, Bobby Ramsey. Old Bobby kind of hurt my feelings. You know, I went up to him and he said, "Well,

you're not nearly as tall as I thought you were." [Laughter] He said, "When I saw you playing saxophone on Arsenio Hall, I thought you were a lot taller guy." [Laughter] And I said, "That's why I got elected President. I was 6'8" back then." [Laughter] But I still think you did a good job, Bobby, and I thank you.

I want to thank Bill Dannehl. Thank you, Harry Smith. I enjoyed meeting Willie Davidson today. And I thank Tom Buffenbarger, the president of the International Association of Machinists, for being here and joining us today.

I want to thank Mayor Robertson for welcoming me to York, and all the county commissioners and legislators and others who are here. And I want to say a special word of appreciation again, Jeffrey, to you for making me feel so welcome here and for the nice things you said about Bill Daley, behind his back. Usually, when you talk behind somebody's back, you're not saying nice things. [Laughter] So Daley is up here talking, and Jeff is telling me what a good Secretary of Commerce he is. And I will say, Secretary Daley, you have been superb, and we're grateful for what you do for the United States.

Now, you may remember this, some of you, but after I was nominated for President, way back in the summer of 1992, Al and Tipper Gore and Hillary and I got on a bus, and we started this bus tour. Our very first overnight stop was in York, Pennsylvania. And I'm sure none of you were there when we got in. We got in about a quarter to one, but the crowd was about the size that it is today. And I looked at that crowd. It was in the middle of the night, you know; we'd been stopped everywhere along the way, and I decided I'd take a bus tour so I could go see normal people. We went out to all these little towns. And then we got to York, it was the middle of the night, and there was this huge throng there. And I popped out, and I looked at Hillary, I said, "You know, we might win this election"—[laughter]—"and we'd better not mess it up."

When I was here before, I didn't get to come and visit Harley-Davidson. And I wish I had, because since then—I had a beautiful Harley jacket before I came here, that I got in Milwaukee, but I gave it to a guy who worked for me because he thought he was going to ride to heaven on a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. So when he retired, the only thing I could think of to give him that really reflected the service he had given to our country and to me

was my jacket, which I hated to part with. But the only gifts that really count are the ones that you'd like to keep yourself, I think sometimes. So today I got another one, and I thank you. I love it.

You know, Bill Daley was talking about being over in the United Arab Emirates and how they were dying to have more motorcycles and other paraphernalia to sell. And I told Jeff when he mentioned it, one of the great treasures of being the President is having the opportunity to meet people around the world you would never meet and make friends with them. A person who became a particular personal friend of mine and of my wife's was the late King Hussein of Jordan. And some of you may know, he was a very satisfied Harley customer.

When Hussein and his wife, Queen Noor, came to stay with us a few years ago and we became very good friends, he gave me a gift that I treasure that's still up in the White House today. It's a picture of himself and his wife in very casual clothes in the Jordanian desert, astride a Harley.

My best Harley story—I was just recently in Paris on my way to Sarajevo and Bosnia to try to settle the outstanding issues of all the Balkan wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. So I stopped in France to have a meeting with the President of France, and I went to the American Ambassador's residence in Paris. Now if you ever saw that house, you'd want to be Ambassador to France, too. [Laughter] It's a beautiful place, built in the 1700's, just takes your breath away to walk in, these grand gardens and this beautiful marble foyer when you walk in. In the beautiful marble foyer when you walk in now, replete with all the proper lighting, is a stunning, 1944 Harley-Davidson. [Laughter]

And the way it got there is that when your predecessors were making motorcycles for the war effort, some of them were sent in packages, to be assembled to our allies in Europe. And some of them went to Yugoslavia, where Mr. Tito was fighting the Nazis. Two of them were never opened, and the son of the American Ambassador actually came upon these 54-year-old boxes of unassembled 1944 Harleys last year, and he gave one to his daddy. And now, if you ever go to France, it's now the main tourist attraction of the American Embassy, is a 1944 Harley. It is so beautiful, and I know you'd be proud of it.

I came here today not just because I wanted to see you and not just because I wanted to come back to York to thank the people of this community and this State for being so good for the last 7 years and through two elections to me and my wife and Vice President and Mrs. Gore. I came here because I want America to know exactly what you have done and how.

The recovery of this company since the 1980's has been truly remarkable. When you were down in the dumps, people were saying American industry was finished, that we couldn't compete in the global economy, that the next century would belong to other countries and other places. Today, you're not just surviving; you're flourishing, with record sales and earnings and one of the best managed companies in America, according to Industry Week. According to management and labor, one of the reasons you're the best managed company in America is that you have a genuine partnership between labor and management, where all employees are valuable and expected to make good decisions on their own for the benefit of the common enterprise. And I thank you for setting that example. I wish every manufacturer in America would model it.

I came here because I knew before I got here—although I had never quite experienced the full force of it until you were shouting and screaming and having such a good time—I knew that this was about more than making bikes for profit, more than selling attractive leather jackets. What we see here today is how people feel when they have got a job that they do well, that gives them not only a decent income but a full measure of dignity and pride.

I used to tell people all the time that politics is about a lot more than economics. But if you get the economics right, people figure out how to live and shape good lives and raise their children and build strong communities. And if you don't get the economics right, then you have to deal with a lot of the other values issues, extraordinary welfare rates and higher crime rates and all those other problems.

I want people to see that you have, yes, turned a company around, yes, you make an exciting product, and you sell it all around the world, but that you do it in the right way, a way that makes you proud to come to work every day. It puts a spring in your step and a shout in your voice and a light in your eyes. That is what I want for every American working

family, and I hope that more people will follow your lead so that more people can stand up and shout every day just for the joy of going to work and being part of a common enterprise and doing something they can be profoundly proud of. Thank you, thank you, thank you for that example.

The second point I want to make is the point that Secretary Daley has already mentioned. To really do as well as you can, you have to sell these wonderful products not only around the country but around the world. And I think that's very important.

In 1973, when the first Harley rolled off the assembly line here, America exported only 6,300 motorcycles. By last year, that number had increased to 66,000. Today, you're selling about a quarter of your bikes around the world from Costa Rica to Korea, from central Europe to the Middle East. The global market for motorcycles, and for Harleys, is exploding. It's a big part of your future.

And in order for it to be a part of your future and our future, America has to continue to support expanding trade on fair terms to all, including Americans. Now, this is a big issue. And I want you to just give me a couple minutes of serious time here to talk about it.

When I got elected in 1992, I don't think there's any way in the world a Governor of a small southern State—in the affectionate terms that President Bush used then to describe me—would have been elected President if we hadn't had economic distress, social division, political drift, and a Government discredited. You all remember that. It was tough in this country. It was tough in this State.

And I had spent 12 years—at that time, not quite 12, a little over 10—working as Governor of my State, trying to figure out how this economy works, how the education system plays into the economy, how I could actually get up and go to work every day and create the conditions and give people the tools to make the life of their dreams. And I asked the American people, I said, "Look, give me a chance to put people back at the center of our politics, to create opportunity for every responsible citizen, to create a community that every American has a chance to be a part of. And give me a chance to put in some new ideas. I believe we can grow the economy and protect the environment. I believe we can move people from welfare to work and still allow them to take care of their children.

I believe we can be tough on crime and still do more to keep kids out of trouble in the first place. I believe we can do more to help people succeed at home and at work. I believe we can have a trading system that expands trade and still protects legitimate labor rights and our responsibilities to the environment. I believe we can have a community where all of us serves more and help one another reach our common dreams." Anyway, I said, "The center of this has to be an economic strategy, and mine is very simple. I want to get rid of the deficit, but I want to find a way to invest more money in education, in technology, in training, and in research. And I want to expand trade." To me, it was simple math: we have 4 percent of the world's people with 22 percent of the world's income. You don't have to be a genius to figure out, if you want to keep 22 percent of the world's income with 4 percent of the world's people, you've got to sell something to the other 96 percent.

And yet, I knew people were afraid of that. They were afraid that if we opened our borders here, a lot of our lower wage workers would be put out of business by people who worked for even less money abroad, and they might not ever get another chance. They were afraid a lot of our well-paid workers would not do well, because we'd have markets opened to our competitors in those areas, but they wouldn't open their markets to ours. A lot of people were afraid we would see a big transfer of wealth to poor countries, but the money would stay in a few hands, and it wouldn't flow down to the workers there, and it would lead to a degradation of the environment in ways that could hurt us. That was especially an issue along the Rio Grande River when we were working out the trade agreement with Mexico. So there was all this fight about it.

Well, the results of the last 7 years are in, and it's not an argument anymore. We have the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, 19.8 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, and the Federal Government is the smallest it's been in 37 years. The record is in.

Now I might add, there's a lot of women in this plant. Last month the female unemployment rate was the same as the overall unemploy-

ment rate, 4.1 percent. That was the lowest unemployment rate for women in 46 years. And from 1993 until the end of 1997, when the Asian economy collapsed and the Russian economy had such great difficulty, until that point, 30 percent of this growth came from exports. And an enormous amount of it came because of improvements and advances in technology, not just computers in Silicon Valley but the computer programs running all these machines I saw on the plant floor here today, a lot of them taking the most dangerous jobs, some of the jobs that caused people to have long-term injuries, away, so that you can work and make a contribution and make these motorcycles at some less risk and wear and tear to yourselves.

Thirty percent of our growth came from exports, until we had the Asian collapse. And they're coming back now. We've worked hard to help them. They're coming back now.

Now, in spite of these economic statistics—I mean, here's why we're here, apart from the fact that Bill Daley and I wanted to come here. And we're glad we got our jackets, and we really wish we were leaving with motorcycles. But I have to wait a year and a half, you know? I've got to wait a year and a half. I couldn't bear all the stories out here if I rode around on a motorcycle for a while.

But let me tell you, the reason we're here, to be fair, is that, ironically, in spite of all those economic numbers I just recited, there's actually more division and controversy over whether trade is or isn't good for us today in Washington than there was in 1993 and in 1994 when we joined the World Trade Organization and set off this explosion of economic activity.

And again I say, I think it's because people are afraid that Americans always get a raw deal. They see we have a big trade deficit—that's because we've got even more money than we produce for. We buy things from other countries, but we also sell a lot abroad. We keep setting records for our exports. And a lot of what we sell abroad supports higher wages in America. The average trade-related job pays almost 20 percent more than a job unrelated to trade, like yours do. You know that.

So we have to find a way not just for big business leaders and people like me who live in Washington, who, you know, get a job that lasts for a term of years, regardless. We have to find ways for people like you, that get up and go to work every day and will have a lot

of job security when you're doing well, and people who aren't in unionized plants and who may be working for low wages and who feel more vulnerable. We have to find a way to build a consensus in America so that all Americans understand that if we want to keep growing this economy, raising wages, creating jobs, we've got to stick with what has brought us this far.

We've got to keep paying down this debt. We can make America debt-free in 15 years, for the first time since 1835, if we stay on the budget plan that I've laid out. And that will be great for you. Why should you care if we're debt-free? Because if the Government is out of debt, this business can borrow money at lower cost, and you will have lower home mortgage rates. You will have lower car payment rates. If you send your kids to college, the college loans will be lower. Just because of the amount we've reduced the deficit already, the average home mortgage costs the average American working family \$2,000 a year less and the average car payment is \$200 a year less and the average college loan is \$200 a year less. We ought to keep going until we get America out of debt for the first time since 1835, so the money will be there at the lowest possible costs for the American enterprise system to create jobs and improve lives. That's important.

The second thing we ought to do is to find a way to continue to expand trade. You know, we just had a meeting, and I was told, well, just what you heard here in the speech: Thank you very much for helping us get into the Japanese market, and we're doing well there, but there are still some barriers there. I hear that everywhere. So next month in Seattle, we're going to have a chance to make the global trading system stronger, to tear down more tariffs, to deal with more non-tariff barriers, to make it clear that if countries want access to our markets, we have to have access to theirs, but basically, to commit to expanding trade. Now that is what is in the interest of Harley Davidson, and that is what is in the interest of the 21st century American economy.

So I came here to say, we can have more companies like yours. We can have more success stories like yours. This company can have more employees like you. But if we're going to do it, we have to find a way to expand trade. There's 4 percent of us. We've got 22 percent of the income. We've got to sell something to the other 96 percent. It's just as simple as that.

But we will never be able to do it unless working people believe that trade benefits ordinary American families.

You know, the politicians and the CEO's can talk until they're blue in the face. But we still have elections in this country, and in the end, you guys run the show. And it's a good thing. That's why we're still around here after 200 years. But if we can't convince people like you that we're right about this trade issue, then we are going to shrink America's future prospects. It's as simple as that.

You know, I want you all to watch Seattle when it rolls around. Every group in the world with an axe to grind is going to Seattle to demonstrate. I'll have more demonstrators against me than I've had in the whole 7 years I've been President. I'm kind of looking forward to it. *[Laughter]* I'll tell you why. I told them all I wanted them to come. I want all the consumer groups to come. I want all the environmental groups to come. I want everybody who thinks this is a bad deal to come. I want everybody to get all this out of their system and say their piece of mind. And I want us to have a huge debate about this.

But I'm telling you, I've worked really hard for you the last 7 years to turn this economy around and to get it going in the right direction. I've worked hard to make sure other people play by the rules, not just in York, Pennsylvania, but in York, England, and in York, western Australia.

And now, as I look ahead to the last year and a couple of months of my term, I try to think of what things I can still do that will allow this prosperity to go on and on and that will embrace people who haven't yet been affected by it. We still have people in places who haven't been picked up by this recovery. And I want this to go on. It's already the longest peacetime expansion in history. In February it'll be the longest economic expansion, including those that embraced our World Wars. But we can keep it going. But only if we find more customers and more investment in a non-inflationary way, and there's only two places to find it. You've got to go to the places in America which have had no recovery and to the people who are still on welfare or otherwise left out, or you've got to sell more stuff overseas.

Therefore, I say to you—I don't think the trading system is perfect, by the way. I have argued until I'm blue in the face, and I will

continue to argue that when we make these trade rules, we need to take the concerns of ordinary citizens into account. We should be growing the economy not just in America but everywhere and still improving the environment.

Let me tell you, compared to 7 years ago, with all these jobs, in America, the air is cleaner; the water is cleaner; the food is safer. We've set aside more land to protect it for sportspeople and for tourists and people that just want to be out in nature, than any administration in the history of this country, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. You can improve the economy and improve the environment at the same time. People ought to have that everywhere. They ought to have that security everywhere.

Working people everywhere, even if they can't enjoy the same income you do, ought to have access to basic labor rights. We shouldn't be having child labor in some of these countries producing products to compete in our markets and exploit children when they ought to be in school. We ought to have basic, decent labor standards for people everywhere.

And I believe—that's why I'm glad the demonstrators are coming. I want us to try to find a way to build a consensus where we can expand trade and respect the rights of labor and the environment.

But let me tell you something. You know this. You think about your own life. If we have more trade and it's good for you and it's good for those countries, don't you think it's more likely that working people will be better off and their environment will be cleaner? I mean, the more money you've got, the more you can afford to give workers wages that are increased, and the more you can afford to clean up the environment. So I think all these things work together.

In Seattle, I'm going to ask the trade organization for the very first time to establish a working group on trade and labor, so we get working people and their concerns involved in the trade process before all the decisions are made. I have worked hard to make environment a part of this. I think it's important.

But I came here for this simple reason. This is a great company. You've got a great union. You've found a successful way to compete in the world. You represent the future of the American economy. But if I cannot convince the decisionmakers in Washington and ordinary people like you all across America that a key

part of the economic success we've enjoyed in the last 7 years and the economic success America can enjoy in the years ahead requires us to continue to break down barriers to trade, then in the future, when I'm not around anymore, you won't have the economic prosperity that I think you deserve.

So I ask you to think about this. I thank you for being so quiet and listening to this. I wouldn't be for this if I didn't think it was right for you, if I didn't think it was good for ordinary Americans. But I'll leave you with this thought: We live in a world that is smaller and smaller, and that is either going to make us more prosperous and more secure or more vulnerable and more insecure. If we don't trade with other people and help them to get involved in a cycle of growth with us, and you have more and more people that are poor, with open borders, you're going to have more drug trafficking, more organized crime, more political terrorism, and more headaches. And everybody everywhere will be more vulnerable to it.

On the other hand, if we make a living by selling more of our things overseas and the price of that is to let people sell more of their things to us and they do better and their children do better, you will have more cooperation and a far more interesting world for your children to live in.

I believe the best days of this country are still ahead. I believe the life our kids and grandkids are going to have will be truly amazing. Within 10 years, children might actually be born with a life expectancy of a hundred years. Their mothers will take home with them from the hospital a map of the children's genetic system, which will say, your child has the following strengths and the following problems, but if you do these 10 things in the child's upbringing, you will dramatically reduce the fact that your little girl will get breast cancer or your little boy will develop colon cancer. It will be an amazing future.

But we have to do the big things right. That's what you do here. You do the big things right. And you know a lot of little mistakes will be made. You know even you aren't perfect. You know mistakes will be made, but if you get the big things right, you know it's going to come out all right.

What I'm trying to do, with this new trade round in Seattle, Washington, and with these speeches across the country, is to make sure

as Americans, we get the big things right. Should we fight for fair trade? You bet. Did we get a lot of steel dumped on us when the Asian and the Russian economies went down, and was it unfair, and did I have to push hard to get it out? You bet. Did you deserve trade protection several years ago when you got it? Absolutely you did.

Do we have to make the system work right? Yes. That's true. You've got to make the system work right. But let's not lose the big point: if we want to continue to grow, have high incomes, low unemployment—the lowest minority unemployment in the history of the country, lowest women's unemployment in 46 years, the lowest overall unemployment in 30 years—if we want that, if we want a country growing together, a part of our strategy has got to be to sell more, not just Harleys but everything we can possibly sell, around the world.

So I ask you, don't let this trade debate be the province of politicians and CEO's. You embrace it. It's your future and your children's future. And every company can be like Harley. But we have to embrace the world and say, "We are not afraid. We can get the big things right."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1 p.m. in a tent at the Harley-Davidson Plant. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey L. Bleustein, chief executive officer, and Willie G. Davidson, vice president of styling, Harley-Davidson Motor Co.; Bobby Ramsey, chief shop steward, and William Dannehl, York facility general manager, Harley-Davidson Motor Co.; Harry Smith, president, Local 175, International Union of Machinists; and Mayor Charles Robertson of York.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Carol Moseley-Braun To Be Ambassador to New Zealand

November 10, 1999

I am very pleased that the Senate has confirmed Carol Moseley-Braun to be our Nation's Ambassador to New Zealand. The Senate's overwhelming bipartisan vote is a strong endorsement of her outstanding experience and creden-

tials for this position. I appreciate her willingness to take on this responsibility, and I expect her to do a superior job representing our country's interests in New Zealand.

Statement on Funding for Colombian Counternarcotics Efforts

November 10, 1999

Fourteen months ago, the inauguration of President Andres Pastrana brought to Colombia a new spirit of hope for deeper democracy, for broader prosperity, for an end to that country's long civil conflict. President Pastrana has put forth a bold agenda—plan Colombia—to address his nation's toughest challenges. But the obstacles to a better future for Colombia are substantial. In particular, continued drug production and trafficking puts Colombia's progress in peril. It also fuels addiction and violence in other countries, including ours.

Therefore, I am pleased that the current foreign operations bill, which I hope the Congress will approve, provides our full \$78 million request for programs to help President Pastrana fight the drug trade in Colombia. It provides a total of \$305 million for global counterdrug efforts, which could allow additional spending focused on Colombia. My overall FY 2000 budget request funds other efforts to assist in this fight—such as asset forfeiture, military assistance, and training—totaling more than \$70 million. Earlier this fall, we approved a further \$58 million in drawdown funds for counterdrug

efforts in Colombia, and we anticipate providing additional help, including DEA assistance, alternative development, and potential additional drawdown authority.

While we will continue to move forward to aid plan Colombia with currently available funds, more funding is needed if we are to gain the upper hand in the fight against drugs and help Colombia on the path to stable democracy. I have asked my senior advisers to work with Congress, following completion of the current budget process, to enhance our bilateral

assistance programs for counterdrug efforts and for other programs to help President Pastrana deepen democracy and promote prosperity. We will also continue to encourage our allies and the international institutions to assist Colombia in implementing President Pastrana's strategy.

Strengthening stability and democracy in Colombia, and fighting the drug trade there, is the right thing to do, and it is very much in America's own national interest. So, with President Pastrana and with our Congress, we must and we will intensify this vital work.

Message to the Congress Reporting on the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction

November 10, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

On November 14, 1994, in light of the dangers of the proliferation of nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons ("weapons of mass destruction"—WMD) and of the means of delivering such weapons, I issued Executive Order 12938, and declared a national emergency under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.). Under section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), the national emergency terminates on the anniversary date of its declaration unless, within the 90-day period prior to each anniversary date, I publish in the *Federal Register* and transmit to the Congress a notice stating that such emergency is to continue in effect. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. I am, therefore, advising the Congress that the national emergency declared on November 14, 1994, and extended on November 14, 1995, November 12, 1996, November 13, 1997, and November 12, 1998, must continue in effect beyond November 14, 1999. Accordingly, I have extended the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12938, as amended.

The following report is made pursuant to section 204(a) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act

(50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), regarding activities taken and money spent pursuant to the emergency declaration. Additional information on nuclear, missile, and/or chemical and biological weapons (CBW) nonproliferation efforts is contained in the most recent annual Report on the Proliferation of Missiles and Essential Components of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Weapons, provided to the Congress pursuant to section 1097 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1992 and 1993 (Public Law 102-190), also known as the "Nonproliferation Report," and the most recent annual report provided to the Congress pursuant to section 308 of the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991 (Public Law 102-182), also known as the "CBW Report."

On July 28, 1998, in Executive Order 13094, I amended section 4 of Executive Order 12938 so that the United States Government could more effectively respond to the worldwide threat of weapons of mass destruction proliferation activities. The amendment of section 4 strengthens Executive Order 12938 in several significant ways. The amendment broadens the type of proliferation activity that can subject entities to potential penalties under the Executive order. The original Executive order provided for penalties for contributions to the efforts of any foreign country, project or entity to use, acquire, design, produce, or stockpile chemical or biological

weapons; the amended Executive order also covers contributions to foreign programs for nuclear weapons and for missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Moreover, the amendment expands the original Executive order to include attempts to contribute to foreign proliferation activities, as well as actual contributions, and broadens the range of potential penalties to expressly include the prohibition of U.S. Government assistance to foreign persons, and the prohibition of imports into the United States and U.S. Government procurement. In sum, the amendment gives the United States Government greater flexibility and discretion in deciding how and to what extent to impose measures against foreign persons that assist proliferation programs.

Nuclear Weapons

In May 1998, India and Pakistan each conducted a series of nuclear tests. World reaction included nearly universal condemnation across a broad range of international fora and multilateral support for a broad range of sanctions, including new restrictions on lending by international financial institutions unrelated to basic human needs and on aid from the G-8 and other countries.

Since the mandatory imposition of U.S. statutory sanctions, we have worked unilaterally, with other P-5 and G-8 members, and through the United Nations, to dissuade India and Pakistan from taking further steps toward developing nuclear weapons. We have urged them to join multilateral arms control efforts and to conform to the standards of nonproliferation regimes, to prevent a regional arms race and build confidence by practicing restraint, and to resume efforts to resolve their differences through dialogue. The P-5, G-8, and U.N. Security Council have called on India and Pakistan to take a broad range of concrete actions. The United States has focused most intensely on several objectives that can be met over the short and medium term: an end to nuclear testing and prompt, unconditional ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); engagement in productive negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) and, pending their conclusion, a moratorium on production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices; restraint in development and deployment of nuclear-capable missiles and aircraft; and adoption of controls

meeting international standards on exports of sensitive materials and technology.

Against this backdrop of international pressure on India and Pakistan, high-level U.S. dialogues with Indian and Pakistani officials have yielded little progress. In September 1998, Indian and Pakistani leaders had expressed a willingness to sign the CTBT. Both governments, having already declared testing moratoria, had indicated they were prepared to sign the CTBT by September 1999 under certain conditions. These declarations were made prior to the collapse of Prime Minister Vajpayee's Indian government in April 1999, a development that has delayed consideration of CTBT signature in India. The Indian election, the Kargil conflict, and the October political coup in Pakistan have further complicated the issue, although neither country has renounced its commitment. Pakistan has said that it will not sign the Treaty until India does. Additionally, Pakistan's Foreign Minister stated publicly on September 12, 1999, that Pakistan would not consider signing the CTBT until sanctions are removed.

India and Pakistan both withdrew their opposition to negotiations on an FMCT in Geneva at the end of the 1998 Conference on Disarmament session. However, these negotiations were unable to resume in 1999 and we have no indications that India or Pakistan played helpful "behind the scenes" roles. They also pledged to institute strict controls that meet internationally accepted standards on sensitive exports, and have begun expert discussions with the United States and others on this subject. In addition, India and Pakistan resumed their bilateral dialogue on outstanding disputes, including Kashmir, at the Foreign Secretary level. The Kargil conflict this summer complicated efforts to continue this bilateral dialogue, although both sides have expressed interest in resuming the discussions at some future point. We will continue discussions with both governments at the senior and expert levels, and our diplomatic efforts in concert with the P-5, G-8, and in international fora. Efforts may be further complicated by India's release in August 1999 of a draft of its nuclear doctrine, which, although its timing may have been politically motivated, suggests that India intends to make nuclear weapons an integral part of the national defense.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) continues to maintain a freeze on its nuclear facilities consistent with

the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework, which calls for the immediate freezing and eventual dismantling of the DPRK's graphite-moderated reactors and reprocessing plant at Yongbyon and Taechon. The United States has raised its concerns with the DPRK about a suspect underground site under construction, possibly intended to support nuclear activities contrary to the Agreed Framework. In March 1999, the United States reached agreement with the DPRK for visits by a team of U.S. experts to the facility. In May 1999, a Department of State team visited the underground facility at Kumchang-ni. The team was permitted to conduct all activities previously agreed to help remove suspicions about the site. Based on the data gathered by the U.S. delegation and the subsequent technical review, the United States has concluded that, at present, the underground site does not violate the 1994 U.S.-DPRK Agreed Framework.

The Agreed Framework requires the DPRK to come into full compliance with its NPT and IAEA obligations as a part of a process that also includes the supply of two light water reactors to North Korea. United States experts remain onsite in North Korea working to complete clean-up operations after largely finishing the canning of spent fuel from the North's 5-megawatt nuclear reactor.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is the cornerstone on the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. In May 1999, NPT Parties met in New York to complete preparations for the 2000 NPT Review Conference. The United States is working with others to ensure that the 2000 NPT Review Conference is a success that reaffirms the NPT as a strong and viable part of the global security system.

The United States signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty on September 24, 1996. So far, 154 countries have signed and 51 have ratified the CTBT. During 1999, CTBT signatories conducted numerous meetings of the Preparatory Commission (PrepCom) in Vienna, seeking to promote rapid completion of the International Monitoring System (IMS) established by the Treaty. In October 1999, a conference was held pursuant to Article XIV of the CTBT, to discuss ways to accelerate the entry into force of the Treaty. The United States attended that conference as an observer.

On September 22, 1997, I transmitted the CTBT to the Senate, requesting prompt advice

and consent to ratification. I deeply regret the Senate's decision on October 13, 1999, to refuse its consent to ratify the CTBT. The CTBT will serve several U.S. national security interests by prohibiting all nuclear explosions. It will constrain the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons; end the development of advanced new types of weapons; contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the process of nuclear disarmament; and strengthen international peace and security. The CTBT marks a historic milestone in our drive to reduce the nuclear threat and to build a safer world. For these reasons, we hope that at an appropriate time, the Senate will reconsider this treaty in a manner that will ensure a fair and thorough hearing process and will allow for more thoughtful debate.

With 35 member states, the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a widely accepted, mature, and effective export-control arrangement. At its May 1999 Plenary and related meetings in Florence, Italy, the NSG considered new members (although none were accepted at that meeting), reviewed efforts to enhance transparency, and pursued efforts to streamline procedures and update control lists. The NSG created an Implementation Working Group, chaired by the UK, to consider changes to the guidelines, membership issues, the relationship with the NPT Exporters (Zangger) Committee, and controls on brokering. The Transparency Working Group was tasked with preparing a report on NSG activities for presentation at the 2000 NPT Review Conference by the Italian chair. The French will host the Plenary and assume the NSG Chair in 2000 and the United States will host and chair in 2001.

The NSG is currently considering membership requests from Turkey and Belarus. Turkey's membership is pending only agreement by Russia to join the intercessional consensus of all other NSG members. The United States believes it would be appropriate to confirm intercessional consensus in support of Turkey's membership before considering other candidates. Belarus has been in consultation with the NSG Chair and other members including Russia and the United States regarding its interest in membership and the status of its implementation of export controls to meet NSG Guideline standards. The United States will not block intercessional consensus of NSG members in support of NSG membership for Belarus, provided that

consensus for Turkey's membership precedes it. Cyprus and Kazakhstan have also expressed interest in membership and are in consultation with the NSG Chair and other members regarding the status of their export control systems. China is the only major nuclear supplier that is not a member of the NSG, primarily because it has not accepted the NSG policy of requiring full-scope safeguards as a condition for supply of nuclear trigger list items to nonnuclear weapon states. However, China has taken major steps toward harmonization of its export control system with the NSG Guidelines by the implementation of controls over nuclear-related dual-use equipment and technology.

During the last 6-months, we reviewed intelligence and other reports of trade in nuclear-related material and technology that might be relevant to nuclear-related sanctions provisions in the Iran-Iraq Arms Non-Proliferation Act of 1992, as amended; the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945, as amended; and the Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act of 1994. No statutory sanctions determinations were reached during this reporting period. The administrative measures imposed against ten Russian entities for their nuclear- and/or missile-related cooperation with Iran remain in effect.

Chemical and Biological Weapons

The export control regulations issued under the Enhanced Proliferation Control Initiative (EPCI) remain fully in force and continue to be applied by the Department of Commerce, in consultation with other agencies, in order to control the export of items with potential use in chemical or biological weapons or unmanned delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.

Chemical weapons (CW) continue to pose a very serious threat to our security and that of our allies. On April 29, 1997, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (the Chemical Weapons Convention or CWC) entered into force with 87 of the CWC's 165 States Signatories as original States Parties. The United States was among their number, having ratified the CWC on April 25, 1997. Russia ratified the CWC on November 5, 1997, and became a State Party on December 8, 1997. To date, 126 countries (including China, Iran, India, Pakistan, and Ukraine) have become States Parties.

The implementing body for the CWC—the Organization For the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)—was established at entry-into-force (EIF) of the Convention on April 29, 1997. The OPCW, located in The Hague, has primary responsibility (along with States Parties) for implementing the CWC. It consists of the Conference of the States Parties, the Executive Council (EC), and the Technical Secretariat (TS). The TS carries out the verification provisions of the CWC, and presently has a staff of approximately 500, including about 200 inspectors trained and equipped to inspect military and industrial facilities throughout the world. To date, the OPCW has conducted over 500 routine inspections in some 29 countries. No challenge inspections have yet taken place. To date, nearly 170 inspections have been conducted at military facilities in the United States. The OPCW maintains a permanent inspector presence at operational U.S. CW destruction facilities in Utah and Johnston Island.

The United States is determined to seek full implementation of the concrete measures in the CWC designed to raise the costs and risks for any state or terrorist attempting to engage in chemical weapons-related activities. The CWC's declaration requirements improve our knowledge of possible chemical weapons activities. Its inspection provisions provide for access to declared and undeclared facilities and locations, thus making clandestine chemical weapons production and stockpiling more difficult, more risky, and more expensive.

The Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1998 was enacted into U.S. law in October 1998, as part of the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriation Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105-277). My Administration published an Executive order on June 25, 1999, to facilitate implementation of the Act and is working to publish regulations regarding industrial declarations and inspections of industrial facilities. Submission of these declarations to the OPCW, and subsequent inspections, will enable the United States to be fully compliant with the CWC. United States noncompliance to date has, among other things, undermined U.S. leadership in the organization as well as our ability to encourage other States Parties to make complete, accurate, and timely declarations.

Countries that refuse to join the CWC will be politically isolated and prohibited by the

CWC from trading with States Parties in certain key chemicals. The relevant treaty provisions are specifically designed to penalize countries that refuse to join the rest of the world in eliminating the threat of chemical weapons.

The United States also continues to play a leading role in the international effort to reduce the threat from biological weapons (BW). We participate actively in the Ad Hoc Group (AHG) of States Parties striving to complete a legally binding protocol to strengthen and enhance compliance with the 1972 Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (the Biological Weapons Convention or BWC). This Ad Hoc Group was mandated by the September 1994 BWC Special Conference. The Fourth BWC Review Conference, held in November/December 1996, urged the AHG to complete the protocol as soon as possible but not later than the next Review Conference to be held in 2001. Work is progressing on a draft rolling text through insertion of national views and clarification of existing text. Five AHG negotiating sessions were scheduled for 1999. The United States is working toward completion of the substance of a strong Protocol next year.

On January 27, 1998, during the State of the Union address, I announced that the United States would take a leading role in the effort to erect stronger international barriers against the proliferation and use of BW by strengthening the BWC with a new international system to detect and deter cheating. The United States is working closely with U.S. industry representatives to obtain technical input relevant to the development of U.S. negotiating positions and then to reach international agreement on data declarations and onsite investigations.

The United States continues to be a leading participant in the 30-member Australia Group (AG) chemical and biological weapons non-proliferation regime. The United States attended the most recent annual AG Plenary Session from October 4–8, 1999, during which the Group reaffirmed the members' continued collective belief in the Group's viability, importance, and compatibility with the CWC and BWC. Members continue to agree that full adherence to the CWC and BWC by all governments will be the only way to achieve a permanent global ban on chemical and biological weapons, and that all states adhering to these Conventions

must take steps to ensure that their national activities support these goals. At the 1999 Plenary, the Group continued to focus on strengthening AG export controls and sharing information to address the threat of CBW terrorism. The AG also reaffirmed its commitment to continue its active outreach program of briefings for non-AG countries, and to promote regional consultations on export controls and non-proliferation to further awareness and understanding of national policies in these areas. The AG discussed ways to be more proactive in stemming attacks on the AG in the CWC and BWC contexts.

During the last 6 months, we continued to examine closely intelligence and other reports of trade in CBW-related material and technology that might be relevant to sanctions provisions under the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. No new sanctions determinations were reached during this reporting period. The United States also continues to cooperate with its AG partners and other countries in stopping shipments of proliferation concern.

Missiles for Delivery of Weapons of Mass Destruction

The United States continues carefully to control exports that could contribute to unmanned delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction, and closely to monitor activities of potential missile proliferation concern. We also continued to implement U.S. missile sanctions laws. In March 1999, we imposed missile sanctions against three Middle Eastern entities for transfers involving Category II Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) Annex items. Category I missile sanctions imposed in April 1998 against North Korean and Pakistani entities for the transfer from North Korea to Pakistan of equipment and technology related to the Ghauri missile remain in effect.

During this reporting period, MTCR Partners continued to share information about proliferation problems with each other and with other potential supplier, consumer, and transshipment states. Partners also emphasized the need for implementing effective export control systems. This cooperation has resulted in the interdiction of missile-related materials intended for use in missile programs of concern.

In June the United States participated in the MTCR's Reinforced Point of Contact Meeting

(RPOC). At the RPOC, MTCR Partners held in-depth discussions of regional missile proliferation concerns, focusing in particular on Iran, North Korea, and South Asia. They also discussed steps Partners can take to further increase outreach to nonmembers. The Partners agreed to continue their discussion of this important topic at the October 1999 Noordwijk MTCR Plenary.

Also in June, the United States participated in a German-hosted MTCR workshop at which Partners and non-Partners discussed ways to address the proliferation potential inherent in intangible technology transfers. The seminar helped participants to develop a greater understanding of the intangible technology issue (i.e., how proliferators misuse the internet, scientific conferences, plant visits, student exchange programs, and higher education to acquire sensitive technology), and to begin to identify steps governments can take to address this problem.

In July 1999, the Partners completed a reformatting of the MTCR Annex. The newly reformatted Annex is intended to improve clarity and uniformity of implementation of MTCR controls while maintaining the coverage of the previous version of the MTCR Annex.

The MTCR held its Fourteenth Plenary Meeting in Noordwijk, The Netherlands, on October 11–15. At the Plenary, the Partners shared information about activities of missile proliferation concern worldwide. They focussed in particular on the threat to international security and stability posed by missile proliferation in key regions and considered what practical steps they could take, individually and collectively, to address ongoing missile-related activities of concern. During their discussions, Partners gave special attention to DPRK missile activities and also discussed the threat posed by missile-related activities in South and North East Asia and the Middle East.

During this reporting period, the United States continued to work unilaterally and in coordination with its MTCR Partners to combat missile proliferation and to encourage nonmembers to export responsibly and to adhere to the MTCR Guidelines. To encourage international focus on missile proliferation issues, the USG also placed the issue on the agenda for the G8 Cologne Summit, resulting in an undertaking to examine further individual and collective means of addressing this problem and reaffirming commitment to the objectives of the MTCR.

Since my last report, we continued our missile nonproliferation dialogues with China (interrupted after the accidental bombing of China's Belgrade Embassy), India, the Republic of Korea (ROK), North Korea (DPRK), and Pakistan. In the course of normal diplomatic relations we also have pursued such discussions with other countries in Central Europe, South Asia, and the Middle East.

In March 1999, the United States and the DPRK held a fourth round of missile talks to underscore our strong opposition to North Korea's destabilizing missile development and export activities and press for tight constraints on DPRK missile development, testing, and exports. We also affirmed that the United States viewed further launches of long-range missiles and transfers of long-range missiles or technology for such missiles as direct threats to U.S. allies and ultimately to the United States itself. We subsequently have reiterated that message at every available opportunity. In particular, we have reminded the DPRK of the consequences of another rocket launch and encouraged it not to take such action. We also have urged the DPRK to take steps toward building a constructive bilateral relationship with the United States.

These efforts have resulted in an important first step. Since September 1999, it has been our understanding that the DPRK will refrain from testing long-range missiles of any kind during our discussions to improve relations. In recognition of this DPRK step, the United States has announced the easing of certain sanctions related to the import and export of many consumer goods.

In response to reports of continuing Iranian efforts to acquire sensitive items from Russian entities for use in Iran's missile and nuclear development programs, the United States continued its high-level dialogue with Russia aimed at finding ways the United States and Russia can work together to cut off the flow of sensitive goods to Iran's ballistic missile development program. During this reporting period, Russia's government created institutional foundations to implement a newly enacted nonproliferation policy and passed laws to punish wrongdoers. It also passed new export control legislation to tighten government control over sensitive technologies and began working with the United States to strengthen export control practices at Russian aerospace firms. However, despite the Russian government's nonproliferation and export control

efforts, some Russian entities continued to cooperate with Iran's ballistic missile program and to engage in nuclear cooperation with Iran beyond the Bushehr reactor project. The administrative measures imposed on ten Russian entities for their missile- and nuclear-related cooperation with Iran remain in effect.

Value of Nonproliferation Export Controls

United States national export controls—both those implemented pursuant to multilateral nonproliferation regimes and those implemented unilaterally—play an important part in impeding the proliferation of WMD and missiles. (As used here, “export controls” refer to requirements for case-by-case review of certain exports, or limitations on exports of particular items of proliferation concern to certain destinations, rather than broad embargoes or economic sanctions that also affect trade.) As noted in this report, however, export controls are only one of a number of tools the United States uses to achieve its nonproliferation objectives. Global nonproliferation norms, informal multilateral nonproliferation regimes, interdicting shipments of proliferation concern, sanctions, export control assistance, redirection and elimination efforts, and robust U.S. military, intelligence, and diplomatic capabilities all work in conjunction with export controls as part of our overall nonproliferation strategy.

Export controls are a critical part of nonproliferation because every proliferant WMD/missile program seeks equipment and technology from other countries. Proliferators look overseas because needed items are unavailable elsewhere, because indigenously produced items are of insufficient quality or quantity, and/or because imported items can be obtained more quickly and cheaply than producing them at home. It is important to note that proliferators seek for their programs both items on multilateral lists (like gyroscopes controlled on the MTCR Annex and nerve gas ingredients on the Australia Group list) and unlisted items (like lower-level machine tools and very basic chemicals). In addition, many of the items of interest to proliferators are inherently dual-use. For example, key ingredients and technologies used in the production of fertilizers and pesticides also can be used to make chemical weapons; vaccine production technology (albeit not the vaccines themselves) can assist in the production of biological weapons.

The most obvious value of export controls is in impeding or even denying proliferators access to key pieces of equipment or technology for use in their WMD/missile programs. In large part, U.S. national export controls—and similar controls of our partners in the Australia Group, Missile Technology Control Regime, and Nuclear Suppliers Group—have denied proliferators access to the largest sources of the best equipment and technology. Proliferators have mostly been forced to seek less capable items from nonregime suppliers. Moreover, in many instances, U.S. and regime controls and associated efforts have forced proliferators to engage in complex clandestine procurements even from nonmember suppliers, taking time and money away from proliferant programs.

United States national export controls and those of our regime partners also have played an important leadership role, increasing over time the critical mass of countries applying nonproliferation export controls. For example, none of the following progress would have been possible without the leadership shown by U.S. willingness to be the first to apply controls: the seven-member MTCR of 1987 has grown to 32 member countries; several nonmember countries have been persuaded to apply export controls consistent with one or more of the regimes unilaterally; and most of the members of the nonproliferation regimes have applied national “catch-all” controls similar to those under the U.S. Enhanced Proliferation Control Initiative. (Export controls normally are tied to a specific list of items, such as the MTCR Annex. “Catch-all” controls provide a legal basis to control exports of items not on a list, when those items are destined for WMD/missile programs.)

United States export controls, especially “catch-all” controls, also make important political and moral contributions to the nonproliferation effort. They uphold the broad legal obligations the United States has undertaken in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (Article I), Biological Weapons Convention (Article III), and Chemical Weapons Convention (Article I) not to assist anyone in proscribed WMD activities. They endeavor to assure there are no U.S. “fingerprints” on WMD and missiles that threaten U.S. citizens and territory and our friends and interests overseas. They place the United States squarely and unambiguously against WMD/missile proliferation, even against the prospect of

inadvertent proliferation from the United States itself.

Finally, export controls play an important role in enabling and enhancing legitimate trade. They provide a means to permit dual-use export to proceed under circumstances where, without export control scrutiny, the only prudent course would be to prohibit them. They help build confidence between countries applying similar controls that, in turn, results in increased trade. Each of the WMD nonproliferation regimes, for example, has a "no undercut" policy committing each member not to make an export that another has denied for nonproliferation reasons and notified to the rest—unless it first consults with the original denying country. Not only does this policy make it more difficult for proliferators to get items from regime members, it establishes a "level playing field" for exporters.

Threat Reduction

The potential for proliferation of WMD and delivery system expertise has increased in part as a consequence of the economic crisis in Russia and other Newly Independent States, causing concern. My Administration gives high priority to controlling the human dimension of proliferation through programs that support the transition of former Soviet weapons scientists to civil-

ian research and technology development activities. I have proposed an additional \$4.5 billion for programs embodied in the Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative that would support activities in four areas: nuclear security; nonnuclear WMD; science and technology nonproliferation; and military relocation, stabilization and other security cooperation programs. Congressional support for this initiative would enable the engagement of a broad range of programs under the Departments of State, Energy, and Defense.

Expenses

Pursuant to section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641 (c)), I report that there were no specific expenses directly attributable to the exercise of authorities conferred by the declaration of the national emergency in Executive Order 12938, as amended, during the period from May 15, 1999, through November 10, 1999.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 10, 1999.

NOTE: The notice of November 10 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Certification of Major Drug Producing and Transit Countries

November 10, 1999

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 490(h) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, I have determined that the following are major illicit drug producing or drug transit "countries" (including certain entities that are not sovereign states): Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, Hong Kong, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Taiwan, Thailand, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

This year I have removed Aruba and Belize from the majors list; added Belize as part of this year's Central America region of concern;

added the entire Eastern and Southern Caribbean, including the Leeward and Windward Islands, Aruba, and the Netherlands Antilles, as a region of concern; and also added North Korea as a country of concern.

I wish to make clear that the inclusion of a country or entity on the majors list does not reflect an assessment of its government's counter-drug efforts or extent of cooperation with the United States. For example, among the reasons that a transit country or entity is placed on the majors list is the combination of geographical, commercial, and/or economic factors that allow drug traffickers to operate despite the most assiduous enforcement measures of the government concerned. In the case of Hong

Kong and Taiwan, for instance, both entities have excellent counter-drug records and cooperate closely with the United States.

Aruba. Aruba was designated as a major transit country in 1997. While geography makes Aruba, like most of the other island countries in the Eastern and Southern Caribbean, a potential drug transit point, at this time we do not have evidence that it is a major transit country for drugs bound for the United States. Rather, the drug trade there appears directed toward Europe. We will continue, however, to keep Aruba under observation together with the rest of the islands in the region.

Belize. Belize's geographical position next to Mexico on the Yucatan peninsula offers would-be drug smugglers an attractive corridor for moving drugs into Mexico and on to the United States. Traffickers have used Belizean territory in previous years, when enforcement activities elsewhere enhanced the value of this route. Recently, however, we have detected significantly reduced drug flows to and through Belize.

Therefore, I have decided to remove Belize from the majors list. If future monitoring of Central America indicates a resumption of important drug flows through Belize bound for the United States, I will again place the country on the majors list.

Central America. Central America's location between South America and Mexico, together with its thousands of miles of coastline, several container-handling ports, the Pan-American Highway, and limited law enforcement capability make the entire region a logical conduit and transshipment area for illicit drugs bound for Mexico and the United States. The variance in seizure statistics from country to country, and their fluctuation from year to year, underscore my concern with Central America's potential and volatile role as a transit region. For instance, Panama and Guatemala continue to report more seizures than other countries in the region, while seizures to date by Costa Rica, Honduras, and Nicaragua are below levels during the same period in previous years and flow levels in El Salvador remain low. Taken together, these circumstances indicate a need to continue to monitor the situation in Central America.

Cuba. While there have been some reports that trafficking syndicates use Cuban land territory for moving drugs, we have yet to receive any confirmation that this traffic carries significant quantities of cocaine or heroin to the

United States. In particular, the intelligence and law enforcement communities reviewed the information concerning whether the 7.2 metric ton shipment of cocaine seized in Colombia in December 1998, in a container reportedly headed to Cuba, was destined for the United States. Their judgment remains that Spain, and not the United States, was the intended final destination.

We also looked closely at the use of Cuban waters and airspace for transit of drugs to the United States, as the term "major drug transit country" is understood to apply to the land, waters, and airspace of a country over which sovereignty may be exercised, consistent with international law and United States practice. Although we have detected what appears to be some air and sea activity consistent with trafficking patterns, this activity has decreased significantly since last year and indicates a corresponding decrease in drug flow. We continue to keep trafficking in the area under close observation and will add Cuba to the majors list if the evidence warrants.

Eastern and Southern Caribbean. The Leeward and Windward Islands, together with Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles, constitute a broad geographical area through which drugs bound for the United States may pass en route from Latin America. We have no evidence at this time, however, that any of these Eastern Caribbean nations is a major drug transit country under the statutory definition. The information we do have indicates that drugs moving through the area are overwhelmingly destined for Europe. We are, therefore, keeping the region under observation, and I will add the relevant countries to the majors list should conditions warrant.

Iran. Although Iran in the past had been a traditional opium producing country, over the past few years the Government of Iran reported success in eradicating illicit opium poppy cultivation. A survey of the country this year revealed no detectable poppy cultivation in the traditional growing areas. While one cannot rule out some cultivation in remote parts of the country, it is unlikely that there would be enough to meet the threshold definition of a major drug producing country. Important quantities of opiates reportedly continue to transit Iran en route to Europe, but we have no evidence that these drugs significantly affect the United States, a

requirement for designation as a major drug transit country under current legislation.

Malaysia. Malaysia was removed from the majors list last year because drug flow estimates did not indicate that drugs transiting the country had reached the United States in significant quantities.

North Korea. Our observations to date have been unable to confirm reports that significant quantities of opium poppy may be under cultivation in North Korea or that heroin originating in the country may be entering the international drug trade. We continue, however, to monitor the situation. If we confirm that there is indeed significant poppy cultivation, or that North Korea is a transit point for drugs significantly affecting the United States, I will add the country to the majors list.

Syria and Lebanon. We removed Syria and Lebanon from the majors list 2 years ago after we determined that there was no significant opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon's Biqa' Valley. Recent surveys have confirmed that there has been no detectable replanting of opium poppy, and we have no evidence that drugs transiting these countries significantly affect the United States. We continue, however, to keep the area under observation.

Turkey and Other Balkan Route Countries. We remain concerned about the large volume of Southwest Asian heroin moving through Turkey and neighboring countries to Western Europe along the Balkan Route. We have no clear evidence, however, that this heroin significantly affects the United States as required for a country to be designated a major transit country. In the event that we determine that heroin

transiting Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia-Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, or other European countries on the Balkan Route significantly affects the United States, I will add the relevant countries to the majors list.

Major Cannabis Producers. While Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, the Philippines, and South Africa are important cannabis producers, we have not included them on the majors list since in all cases the illicit cannabis is either consumed locally or exported to countries other than the United States. I have determined that such illicit cannabis production does not significantly affect the United States.

Central Asia. We have conducted probes in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, traditional opium poppy growing areas of the former Soviet Union. These probes have not shown significant opium poppy cultivation. If ongoing analysis reveals cultivation of 1,000 hectares or more of poppy, I will add the relevant countries to the majors list.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus November 10, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period August 1, 1999, to September 30, 1999. The previous submission covered events during June and July 1999.

In an official working visit to the United States, Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit and I had a productive meeting on September 28. We exchanged views on a number of topics, including Cyprus. I emphasized that reaching a just and lasting solution to the Cyprus dispute remains one of my highest priorities. The Prime Minister and I agreed that there cannot be a solution to the Cyprus problem that would return the

situation to what it was before 1974: all Cypriots must live in security. Prime Minister Ecevit supported my idea that my Special Emissary for Cyprus, Alfred H. Moses, travel to the region to explore ways to move forward on the Cyprus issue, in particular by starting comprehensive talks with no pre-condition under U.N. auspices, as called for by the G-8.

The international community mourned the death of Greek Alternate Foreign Minister

Kranidiotis. His passing is a true loss for Greece and Cyprus.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Ukraine-United States Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters

November 10, 1999

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty Between the United States of America and Ukraine on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters with Annex, signed at Kiev on July 22, 1998. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, an exchange of notes which was signed on September 30, 1999, which provides for its provisional application, as well as the report of the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is one of a series of modern mutual legal assistance treaties being negotiated by the United States in order to counter criminal activities more effectively. The Treaty should be an effective tool to assist in the prosecution of a wide variety of crimes, including drug trafficking offenses. The Treaty is self-executing. It provides for a broad range of cooperation in criminal matters. Mutual assistance available

under the Treaty includes: taking of testimony or statements of persons; providing documents, records, and articles of evidence; serving documents; locating or identifying persons; transferring persons in custody for testimony or other purposes; executing requests for searches and seizures; assisting in proceedings related to restraint, confiscation, forfeiture of assets, restitution, and collection of fines; and any other form of assistance not prohibited by the laws of the requested state.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 10, 1999.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at a National Coalition of Minority Business Award Dinner

November 10, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Whew! This is a pretty rowdy crowd tonight. We may have to sing that song before we're done. [Laughter]

Chairman Garrett, when you were sort of introducing Weldon, and you kept reading all those quotes about his influence, and this, that,

and the other thing—and I thought, this can all be distilled in one sentence: Bill Clinton does what he asked him to. [Laughter]

I want to thank Weldon and Mel for having me here. And I want to thank you, Chairman Garrett, and the board and all of you who made this dinner possible tonight. I want to thank

the members of the administration who are here. Secretary Slater—do you know what I thought about when Secretary Slater got up to read Reverend Jackson's letter? If Jesse had known Rodney was going to read for him, he probably would have come back for fear that Rodney would read it better than he would. [Laughter] I'll pay for that later. [Laughter]

I want to tell you, I think Reverend Jackson is where he ought to be tonight, and you should know that he's been with me every step of the two new markets tours we have taken, and it's been a great joy. We've been friends for many years. I can still remember when we ate french fries in the kitchen of the Arkansas Governor's mansion, more than a decade ago, and talked about how foolish it was that we weren't trying to include all Americans in the economic mainstream of our life. And he was on this road before I was, and I'm glad that we're walking it together now.

I want to thank Secretary Alexis Herman and Aida Alvarez for their leadership. There are others here in this administration. Alvin Brown does a wonderful job for the Vice President and for me, leading our empowerment zones and enterprise community initiative. And one of the things I want to compliment him on is that we just got—among the victories in this last-minute budget process is we've now fully funded the second round of empowerment zones to give more poor communities opportunities. Thank you, Alvin.

I told Aida Alvarez that if Weldon really had the guts to tell Erskine Bowles that she was the best Administrator of the SBA, we could all enjoy his misery tonight—[laughter]—because you have done a wonderful job. And there are others who are here. Bill Lann Lee, the head of the Civil Rights Division; thank you, sir, for your leadership. And I see Dave Barram, the Government's landlord, GSA; thank you for what you have done here. And Fred Hochberg, at the SBA, out there. And a person who used to be a part of this administration who had a lot to do with "mend it, don't end it," and a lot of other good things, Deval Patrick. Thank you for being here tonight. Bless you, sir.

And thank you for acknowledging Minyon Moore, my political director; and Ben Johnson who runs our One America office; and my good friend Ernie Green. I tell you, I wish every one of you had been in the White House yesterday for that Gold Medal celebration for the

Little Rock Nine. It was one of the most moving things that I have ever been involved in.

I want to also acknowledge the Members of Congress here tonight, that I believe are here: Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard; Congressman Rubén Hinojosa, my good friend from south Texas; Congressman John Conyers is here, obviously.

And I want to pay special recognition to one other person who is here, because he's up for reelection next year; he needs your help, and he is one of the most courageous Members of the United States Congress. If ever we had a friend who deserves to be reelected, it's Senator Chuck Robb from Virginia. And I want to ask him to stand up. [Applause]

He may well be the greatest Virginia—greatest Governor Virginia had since Thomas Jefferson, in his record in education and in so many other ways. We served together, and I have seen him cast vote after vote in the Senate, knowing that it might cost him his seat. And he just gets up every day and does what he thinks is right. He deserves the support of every thinking person in America who cares about the direction of the United States Senate. He's got a hard fight. I believe he's going to win, but he has to have all kinds of help, financial, vote, and otherwise, to win. And I want to urge you to support him in every way you can.

I'm told that Mayor David Dinkins from New York is here tonight. If he's here, or was here, anyway—and if you're not here, I still think you're great. [Laughter] You've heard this speech before.

I thank you for this award. You know, I always feel generally that Presidents shouldn't receive awards, that having the job is award enough. But I confess I kind of like this one. [Laughter] And I'm going to put it on my desk in the Oval Office tomorrow, so you'll begin to see it on television, and you'll know how much I like it.

You told that joke about "Lift Every Voice and Sing." I remember one time Vernon Jordan and I sang that song to a group of unbelieving people on Martha's Vineyard. [Laughter] You know, this is all beginning to cause me some difficulty. Last night I spoke to a Hispanic Democratic dinner, and I was introduced by my friend Miguel Lausell from Puerto Rico. And he stood up and said, "This President has a Latino soul." [Laughter] And not long ago, Toni Morrison said that I was—Toni Morrison, the

Pulitzer Prize-winning African-American writer, said that I was the first black President America had ever had. [Laughter] So I thought to myself, now I'll never be able to go home to Ireland. What am I going to do? [Laughter]

All of this that we're laughing about really stems from something I deeply believe. I believe it about America, but I believe it about every person's journey through life. We all struggle, and we all fail. But we all struggle to live a life of integrity, which means literally that we are integrated, that our mind and our body and our spirit are in the same place at the same time, centered and connected to other human beings. And I've always believed that, in so many ways, the purpose of politics is to find a unifying vision that will allow people to release the barriers that keep them from one another so they can join hands and enhance our common destiny.

It's been a privilege to serve. I don't really deserve any awards. I got to be President, and it's the greatest honor that any American could ever have. Your success is the greatest award I could get, because the mission of our country, the eternal mission of our country is to deepen the meaning of our freedom and widen the circle of opportunity and strengthen the bonds of our community. And it turns out that trying to make sure that everybody shares in our prosperity is not only the morally right thing to do, it's good for all the rest of America, too, which is why all these businesses are here tonight. So we have come a long way by following the admonition of the Scriptures to be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

Twelve years ago, or in the 12 years before the Vice President and I came here, we had a very different view, I think, of ourselves as a country, which dominated Washington, and a very different economic philosophy. But in the end, by 1992, it had brought us to a place where we had economic distress and social division, with a Government that had been discredited by the people who were running it, who said the Government was the problem. And even though along the way I thought they did some quite good things—standing up against communism, signing the Americans with Disabilities Act—but all the time telling us that the Government was the problem. And also defying the basic laws of arithmetic when it came to doing our budget. [Laughter]

So in 1992 Vice President Gore and I asked the American people to give us a chance to put people first, to be driven by a vision of opportunity for all, but responsibility from all Americans. I always thought, contrary to the prevailing political rhetoric, that most people wanted to be responsible and would respond to a challenge to do that and to build a community of increasingly diverse Americans.

We had some new ideas about the economy, about welfare, about crime, about the environment, about national service, about America's role in the world. And with the help of a lot of you here, the American people gave us a chance to try our ideas. And after 7 years, the results are in. And I am very grateful that we have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. By February it will be the longest economic expansion in American history, including the Second World War and World War I and the times we were fully mobilized: nearly 20 million new jobs; a 30-year low in unemployment; a 32-year low in the welfare rolls; a 25-year low in the crime rate; 20-year low in the poverty rates; the first time we've had back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. You've been a part of that. That's the America you have made because you have been given a chance to make it. And you should be very proud of yourselves for the role you played in it.

Along the way, we tried to make sure that people who worked 40 hours a week and have kids in their homes should not be poor. So we doubled the earned-income tax credit and cut taxes for 15 million working Americans, raised the minimum wage, and I hope we're about to raise it again. We passed the Brady bill, which has now kept 400,000 people with criminal or other problem histories from getting handguns, giving us the lowest murder rate in 30 years.

We fought for and won an increase in children's health coverage that will enable us, I hope and believe, over the next year or so, to cover 5 million more children with health insurance. Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases, for the very first time in our history. We've expanded Head Start, and the family and medical leave law has now enabled over 15 million Americans to take a little time off from work without losing their jobs when a baby is born or a parent's sick.

We've opened the doors of higher education with the HOPE scholarship and other tax credits and more Pell grant fundings and tax deductibility for interest on student loans. The air is cleaner. The water is cleaner. The food is safer. We set aside more land in protected areas than any administration in the history of this country, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

One hundred and fifty thousand young Americans, and some not so young, have entered the AmeriCorps program and served in their communities all across America, solving problems and working with people, helping children, dealing with natural disasters, rebuilding dilapidated housing, doing any number of things to make our country a better place. And we have made a clear commitment to building one America in the 21st century.

We've tried to reach out, I might add, in ways that are not always apparent. You know, and you've made—I like that joke about how my administration doesn't look like the one on "West Wing." I don't recognize that White House, you know? [*Laughter*] It's a cute show, but it ought to be more diverse, because America is. And our administration is. You know that. You know of the record of our appointments to the Federal bench and the efforts to increase the effectiveness of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. We've also, I might add, tried to make sure that people who have different political views than mine had their rights respected, that all Federal employees were citizens and could be citizens, that the religious convictions of Federal employees and children in our schools could have the widest possible protection. So I haven't tried just to bring into this tent of one America people who will vote for me at the next election, but all people who should feel that they have a place at America's table.

But we have made a special effort on the economic front to help people who have traditionally been left behind. We've increased by 2½ times the number of small business loans to African-American entrepreneurs, and by 2½ times the number of SBA loans to Hispanic entrepreneurs since 1992. And beneath those economic statistics that I just ran off—the 30 years, 30 years, 20 years; I wish you all could remember that and just tell everybody between now and the next election—[*laughter*—we have the lowest levels ever recorded of African-Amer-

ican poverty and child poverty, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in a generation, the lowest female unemployment rate—listen to this—lowest female unemployment rate in 46 years, and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded since we started separate statistics in the 1970's.

Now, I think the important question is, what do we intend to do with this? You know, I worked as hard as I could, and I will continue to every day for the next 430-some-odd days I have to be President, to keep this country going in the right direction, to build that bridge to the 21st century we talked about in 1996. A nation is almost like a vast ocean liner out in the Pacific somewhere. To turn it around, you can't do it on a dime; it takes time. And we've worked hard for 7 years, and the country is moving in the right direction. The question is, what are we going to do with it?

This is the only time in my lifetime that we have had this level of economic strength, free of any pressing domestic crisis or foreign threat, so that we literally can look ahead into this new millennium and say, what would we like America to be for our children and our grandchildren? Because as good as things are, we know two things. We know, number one, nothing stays the same forever, good or bad. So like all moments, this one will pass. Something will happen sometime down the road. Nothing stays the same forever. The second thing we know is, we know right now that we have some big challenges still out there. I'll mention some I won't talk about tonight in any detail, but just you ought to think about them. We know right now that the number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years, and we'll only have two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. We have to decide right now whether we're going to deal with that.

We know right now that Medicare is supposed to run out of money in 15 years and that 75 percent of the elderly people in this country can't afford prescription drugs. We know right now that we have, for the first time, a generation of schoolchildren bigger than the baby boom generation, and they're much, much more diverse. In Senator Robb's home State, just across the river from the White House, the Alexandria School District has children from 180 different racial and ethnic groups whose parents

speak 100 different languages—one school district. And we know that while we have the best system of higher education in the world, and this administration has succeeded, literally, in opening the doors of college to everybody who is willing to work for it now, no one can seriously assert that every one of our children is getting a world-class education, kindergarten through 12th grade. And we know if we really want to have one America, we have to deal with that.

We know right now that people who are connected to the Internet and are computer-literate and understand that have big economic advantages. Even poor people get big economic advantages. I learned in northern California last week that this company, eBay—I bet a lot of you have bought things from eBay, you know eBay—you know there are now over 20,000 people making a living off eBay? Not working for the company; trading through the site. Many of them, I learned from the company people, used to be on welfare. So we know that it makes a huge difference, and yet we know there's a digital divide out there. The Vice President and I have worked hard to close it in the schools.

Four years ago, we had only 4 percent of our schools and classrooms connected to the Internet. Now, 51 percent are, and we're trying to make sure 100 percent are by the end of next year. We're getting close. But there are kids out there in schools that cannot be wired because they are so old and in such disrepair. Forty percent of the schools in New York are over 70 years old. Some of them are still heated by coal. The average age of school buildings in Philadelphia is 65 years. And I could go on and on. I was in a little town in Florida not very long ago, a little town, where there were 12 trailers out behind the grade school. So this is a challenge; we know about this.

I know, and I hope that you believe, that there is really an environmental challenge that the whole world faces in this climate change business and that if we continue to warm the climate at this rate, at some time in the next century the water levels will rise as the polar ice caps melt; the sugarcane fields in Louisiana will be flooded; much of the Florida Everglades will be flooded; some island nations could disappear; and the whole quality of life in America could be changed. The distribution of agricultural opportunity could be irrevocably altered.

But we also know that you don't have to burn more greenhouse gases to get rich anymore, as a nation. It's not necessary. There are technological advances that are now available, and those that will soon be available, which will enable us to totally change that. Congressman Conyers and I went to the Detroit auto show together, and we looked at automobiles that use mixed gasoline and electrical engines that will soon become commercially available, that get 70 miles a gallon, and that can be economical even at presently relatively low gasoline prices. But we have to. We know that.

We know that in the future we'll have to deal with the challenges from terrorists and drugrunners and organized criminals around the world, and they'll increasingly work together, and they will use the very things that we're using—the Internet and technology and the openness of borders—against us. We know that. What are we going to do about it?

I say all these things not to alarm anyone, but to say that we know right now what most of the large challenges of the next 30 years will be, and right now, for the first time in my lifetime, we have the prosperity and the confidence and the coherence to deal with them. But they require decisions.

I said yesterday, when we were celebrating Ernie and the other members of the Little Rock Nine, that the things that those kids did when they walked up the steps and into the schools and they were abused and they were run off and they went through this trial is they forced everybody else to make a decision. Before that I was like everybody else; I thought segregation was a terrible thing, but I never had to really speak about it. I was 11 years old; what the heck did it matter to me? I was more worried about when recess was, or something. You know, it was just the way things were. But sometimes when people act, they change everything. And everybody had to make a decision then. Because there it was. Well, that's where we are now. Except there is no crisis, so we don't have to make a decision. We can just wander on and not deal with this.

Now, how many times in your personal life, in your family life, or in your business life, have you made a mistake because you thought things were going so well you could afford to be distracted, diverted, or indulgent? How many times? It happens to everybody. There's not a

person in this room that hasn't happened to. It is human nature.

And so I say to you, the greatest honor I could have is to know that you will work with me for the next 430-some-odd days and that you will continue to work to make sure that we do not blow this precious moment. This is an incredible opportunity and an enormous responsibility. And it's never happened in my lifetime, ever. Not once have we ever had this much prosperity, this much confidence, and the absence of a pressing, convulsing domestic crisis or foreign threat. And we will never forgive ourselves if we let our children and our grandchildren down by not looking into the future and saying, here are the big challenges facing this country, and we intend to meet them.

And I just want to mention two more. Number one is there are people in places which still have not participated in this prosperity. That's what the Vice President's employment zones and enterprise community initiative has been all about. That's why we worked hard to establish these community development financial institutions that some of you have participated in. That's why we worked so hard to enforce the Community Reinvestment Act and then to save it in this last banking legislation, because 95 percent of all the lending ever made under that 22-year-old law has happened since this administration has been in office.

And that's what this new markets initiative is all about. We will never have every single neighborhood in an employment zone; we can only pick those that have their act together and have the biggest problems and try to make the fairest judgments we can. So what I have sought to do by going around the country is to say, look, there are all these other places, and shouldn't we at least give investors in America the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Africa or Asia? I support American investment around the world. I am trying to pass right now the Africa trade bill and the Caribbean Basin initiative before this Congress goes home. But I believe that the most important markets we have are the untapped markets still in this country that need to be developed.

So I ask you to think about that. You'd be amazed—again, this is another example where doing—what the right thing to do is also good for the rest of America. You would be amazed

how much time we have spent over the last year and a half figuring out how can we keep this economic expansion going. All previous economic expansions have come to an end either because the economy gets so heated up that we get inflation—and then when you break the inflation, the medicine to break the inflation is so strong, it breaks the recovery—or because the recovery just runs out of steam.

Now, we've kept this one going, largely thanks to you and people like you. Thirty percent of it has been powered by technology; 30 percent of it, until this Asian financial collapse, was powered by exports. Traditional economic theory dramatically underestimated the impact of technology to increase productivity and underestimated the impact of open markets in holding down inflation.

So we can keep it going. But to keep it going, with unemployment at 4.1 percent, what have we got to do? If you go into a neighborhood in an inner city, if you go into an abandoned small town that lost its factory and has nothing left, if you go into a Native American reservation—Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota—there are plenty of smart people up there. I walked up and down the street with a 17-year-old girl that is as intelligent as any high school child I've talked to since I've been President. But they have 73 percent unemployment. That is wasted human potential. And if you invest there, you create new businesses, new jobs, and new consumers and new taxpayers, and you grow the economy without inflation, by definition, because you are getting both new producers and new consumers. This is the right thing to do for the people that are there. It's the right thing to do for the rest of us because we want this ride to go on just as long as it can.

The other thing I want to say is, if I could leave America with one legacy, and somebody said to me tonight, "Well, you're going to have to go now, and we'll give you one wish." You know, the genie deal. *[Laughter]* "But you don't get three wishes; you just get one," I'd still pick one America. Why? Because I think when we're getting along and when we're not just tolerating each other, but when we respect and like each other, when we've got a framework for dealing with our honest differences that enables them to be worked out without everybody falling out, the American people nearly always get it right. I mean, why do you think we're

around here after over 220 years? Look at all the stuff we've weathered. I mean, we had these Founding Fathers who said we're all created equal, and they were slaveholders. And even white guys couldn't vote if they didn't own property, never mind the women, right? We worked it out. So now we just kept on working at it, and we worked it out. But what is the signal measure of our progress? We kept finding ways to bring more and more and more people into the circle of freedom and opportunity. And then their minds figured out how to maximize the benefits of the industrial revolution, how to provide mass education, how to integrate immigrants from all over the world into the mainstream of American life.

This one America deal is much bigger than just sort of, feel good; let's all be nice; don't anybody be prejudiced or say anything at a dinner party you'd be embarrassed by. *[Laughter]* And, to be serious, it's much more than being tough on people who commit hate crimes, although I badly want that hate crimes legislation to pass. It is an understanding about the way we should live if we all want to do well. It is in the nature of the American idea and the core of what it means to be a human being.

Isn't it interesting to you—I mean, do you ever think about this? We continue to have these horrible hate crime incidents in America, and then we see these other countries convulsed by the tribal slaughter in Rwanda; the awful, terrible treatment of the Kosovar Albanian Muslims in Kosovo; the treatment of the Bosnian Muslims in Bosnia; the continuing conflict among the Catholics and the Protestants in Ireland which we're trying to bring to an end; the continuing conflict in the Middle East. What is the common element in that and the hate crimes?

It is that, for all of the wonders of the modern world, we're most bedeviled as societies by the

oldest problem of folks living together: We still have a hard time with people who aren't like us, you know, have a hard time with people that aren't like us. And yet, the truth is, when we get over it and let it go, we find that life is a lot more interesting than it used to be. I told somebody last night, the first time I went to a Cinco de Mayo celebration in San Francisco, I thought, where has this been all my life? *[Laughter]* Man, I like this. Where has this been? I like this. So, we're laughing, but there's a grain of truth here. Why do American Christians buy books by the Dalai Lama in record numbers, about the ethics of the new millennium? Because he has a very important piece of the truth, and he's very important peace inside.

So I say to you, look for the unifying vision and continue to work for it. And be clear and focused on the magic moment in which we live. Be humble enough to know it will not last forever; it is not in the nature of human affairs. And if you really want to honor what you have done and the spirit of this award, which you have so kindly given me, make the most of this moment. It is the chance of a lifetime to build the future of our dreams.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:16 p.m. in the Corcoran Ballroom at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to James F. Garrett, chair, and Weldon Latham, general counsel, National Coalition of Minority Business; Melvin E. Clark, Jr., president and chief executive officer, Metroplex Corporation; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; former Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Deval Patrick; Ernest Green, one of the Little Rock Nine; attorney Vernon Jordan, long-time friend of the President; and Miguel Lausell, chair, Hispanic Leadership Council.

Remarks at a Ronald H. Brown Corporate Bridge Builder Award Dinner November 10, 1999

I was just sitting here—out there—wondering, Michael, if I need to stand up here and announce that I'm changing parties, so that you don't lose your tax-exempt status for the founda-

tion. *[Laughter]* I'd do nearly anything for Alma and you and Tracey and Ron. I don't think I can quite get there, but—*[laughter]*.

You know, I had a feeling—the reason I asked for the children to speak—they're young adults, I guess—is that after Patrick spoke so beautifully, and then after Sol spoke so powerfully, I figured, well, what the heck, they've already heard the best speeches of the night anyway. [Laughter]

I wanted you to hear them because I think it's important that you see flesh-and-blood examples of why Mr. Trujillo and his company were honored tonight. And I think it's important that you see examples of the work of the Brown Foundation as embodied in Patrick's remarks, and the work that Mr. Trujillo has done as embodied in those two young people, because that's really what we're here about.

I want to thank all of you for being here, and many members of the administration who are here: Secretary Slater; Secretary Herman; Maria Echaveste, my Deputy Chief of Staff; Minyon Moore, my Political Director; Ben Johnson, who runs our One America office; Dave Barram at the General Services Administration; and maybe many more people. I know Fred Humphries is here, who now works for US West but once worked in my campaign. I'm glad that didn't disqualify him for employment in your company. [Laughter]

Most of what needs to be said has been said. I'd like to be very personal, if I might. I have just to the right of my desk in the Oval Office, right behind the commemorative pin that was issued for Nelson Mandela's 80th birthday, a picture of Ron Brown and me sharing a funny moment. We shared a lot of funny moments, and we're laughing. And sometimes I find myself almost talking to this picture. I confess that there are a lot of times when I just miss him terribly.

Yesterday we gave—Ernie Green is here—yesterday we gave a Congressional Gold Medal to the Little Rock Nine. And Ernie and I have been friends for more than 20 years. All the Little Rock Nine, because I was Governor of Arkansas, I've known for many years. And it was an incredibly emotional moment. And I was sitting up there on the little stage at the White House, with tears in my eyes. And one of the things I was thinking is, gosh, this is another thing I wish Ron were sitting here for. He ought to be here for this.

And I was thinking when I saw Mayor Dinkins out there, who was a great friend of Ron Brown, how we all got started in New

York in '92. You brought Nelson Mandela to meet me the first time. You remember that? And what great friends we all became. And I was thinking before I came over here tonight; I called the Speaker of the House and Senator Lott and pleaded with them—and I don't use that word lightly—to do whatever we could possibly do to pass the Africa trade bill and the Caribbean Basin initiative before this Congress goes home for Thanksgiving and Christmas. And that issue wouldn't even be on the agenda if it weren't for Ron Brown.

I was thinking about the incredible conversation I had when I talked Ron into being Secretary of Commerce. He thought it was a backwater for political appointees who wanted something else. [Laughter] And I said, "You don't understand." I said, "I made up my mind that I'm not going to give any of these political jobs to people who can't do them." And if you—one of the—I believe—let me just back up and say, I believe that when the history of this administration is written, one of the things even our critics will give us credit for is having not only a good economic policy but a good way of making economic policy.

And I discovered when I became President—we have Jim Harmon here, the head of the Export-Import Bank—that all these little orbits were out there. You had the Treasury Department here, and you had the Commerce Department there, and you had the Export-Import Bank and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation over there. You had all these things spread out. And so it was just like sort of a roll of the dice whether you had somebody who was really good and then whether that person ever got the President's ear.

And so we organized a National Economic Council. And Bob Rubin was the first leader of it, before he became Treasury Secretary, when Senator Bentsen was Treasury Secretary. And we put all these people together, including Secretary Herman's Labor Department, to make sure that working people were not cut out. And we all worked together. And Secretary Slater's Transportation Department was part of it, because that's a huge impact on our economy.

And the Commerce Department is this vast Department. And once Ron Brown got a hold of that empire, he found that he liked it right well. [Laughter] And he discovered that there were a lot of things he could do with it. And it was truly a thing of beauty, for those of us

who love public service and politics, to see Ron run the Commerce Department and to see it come alive and to see it reach out for America all around the world and to see it reach deep into America to minority business people who had been left behind and to see this great, sort of unifying vision and all this energy he had make the thing fly. It was an amazing thing to see.

And as Sol pointed out in his ungracious reminder of that basketball game in Los Angeles—[laughter]—we had a lot of fun, too. And so I really miss him in ways large and small, at the strangest times. I just do.

But tonight I come here, and I see these pictures, and I want to smile, not cry. Because if we all live to be 100, it's just a brief blink of the eye in the whole sweep of human history, and none of us knows whether we have tomorrow or not. And if we do, it's a gift. And most of us, or we wouldn't be here tonight in the first place, most of us, whatever happens to us from now on, we're going to go out of this world ahead.

And so I think the most important thing I can say to you tonight is that he'd be very pleased that we're here honoring his legacy by, number one, permitting this foundation to bring young people into politics because he thought it was good—politics and public service—and it is—and if it weren't good, we wouldn't still be here after over 220 years—and number two, because he believed in commerce, and he thought that economic growth and economic opportunity was something more than mere materialism.

The fact that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years and the lowest crime rate in 25 years, those things are not unrelated one to the other. The fact that we are moving in the right direction on all fronts is, in part, the result of the expansion of economic opportunity to the lowest African-American poverty rates and unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic unemployment rate ever recorded, and the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in a quarter century. Those things are not unrelated.

He understood the dignity of work, the dignity of enterprise, the dignity of achievement, and the importance of giving everybody a chance at the brass ring. And those of us who have been left behind have tried to carry on that work in various ways.

I just want to say one thing here. Our leader, Senator Daschle, is here, our Democratic leader in the Senate. Not a thing I have done could have been done if he hadn't been with me every step of the way—not a thing.

So we honor young people and the work of Ron Brown and this foundation. And we honor this great company because most people in America don't work for the Government, and most of the economy is not the Government. And I'm very proud that in addition to having the longest peacetime expansion in history, we have the highest percentage of jobs created in the private sector, not the public sector, in the last 50 years of any economic expansion.

But in order to make it work, we have to have corporate leaders who either have the vision, just because they do, of a unified America, or have both the vision and the personal experiences that this great leader has shared with us tonight from his own life. And that's a good thing.

So I ask you to think just about three things before we all go home tonight. We have the most prosperous time in my lifetime and the only time in my lifetime we've ever had this level of prosperity and this level of confidence and no pressing domestic crisis or foreign threat to disturb our daily endeavors. So the question I have for you—this is one time when I miss Ron and his energy—is what are we going to do with this? Because we know from the ups and downs in our own lives that nothing lasts forever. Nothing bad lasts forever. Nothing good lasts forever. Nothing lasts forever. So we have this moment, the only time in my lifetime we've ever been like this. What are we going to do with it?

I have been saying to the American people, if you sit around and think about it, how many times had you had a moment like this in your personal life or your family life or your business life, where things were just rocking along great, and then something bad happened because you didn't make the most of the moment. Instead, you indulged yourself or you got distracted or diverted, or you thought you didn't really have to deal with these things that you knew were out there.

We know what's out there for us. We know the big challenges. We know the big opportunities. These children's lives have told us some of them tonight. We know we're going to double the number of people over 65 in the next 30

years, and we haven't made sure Social Security will take care of the whole baby boom generation. We know that Medicare is going to run out of money, and 75 percent of our seniors don't have prescription drugs.

We know we've got the biggest group of school children in history, and they're more diverse than ever before. And while we've opened the doors to college to all Americans now with the HOPE scholarship, the increased Pell grants, the deductibility of student loan interests, nobody thinks that every child in America is getting a world-class elementary and secondary education, and we know they need it.

You heard that very powerful presentation by Shayla about going to the computers after school because of what you did. We had a percent of our classrooms connected to the Internet 4 years ago. We have a member of the FCC here, Susan Ness; thank you for the E-rate which allows poor schools to afford to get into the Internet. And now we're up to 51 percent. We're going to try to get to 100 percent. But there are a bunch of these kids that will never get their schools connected because the schools are so old and decrepit, they cannot be wired.

In Mayor Dinkins' hometown, 40 percent of the schools are 70 years old or older. We have schools in New York City that are heated by coal in the winter, still. So we know these things.

We know we've got a big environmental challenge in global warming. We can deny it all we want to, but we've got the technology to grow economics without burning up the environment, and we're either going to do it or not.

So what I want to say to you is, this is a moment where we have to decide. And we need people of high energy and vision to remind us that we have to decide. You ought to go home tonight and ask yourself, what do you think the no fewer than 5, no more than 10 biggest challenges are our country will face in the next 30 years? I bet if we could all gather tomorrow night, there would be 80 percent congruence in our list. We know what the big opportunities and challenges are out there. The issue is, what are we going to do about it?

Are we going to just sort of rock along and say, "Boy, this is peachy-keen, and I'm glad?" Well, I'm not going to rock along. I've got 430-some days to be President, and I'm going to hit it every day I can. But I won't be President after that. But what I want to say to you is,

in the coming election season and in the coming years of work we have here ahead of us, and in your own work, you have to decide. You know, if you just stop and think, you know what the big challenges and the big opportunities for America are. This is the only time in my lifetime we've ever had the chance to build the future of our dreams without a pressing domestic crisis or a threat to our national security. And if you believe in what Ron Brown lived for, you will do that, and you won't blow the chance.

The second thing I'd like to say is—I want to say this out of respect particularly to what Beau said when he was up here talking about his people from Montana. We now have the chance, and maybe the only chance, in our lifetime to extend economic opportunity to the people in places that have been left behind. Yes, we've got the lowest unemployment rate and the lowest minority unemployment rate we've ever recorded. That's the good news. The bad news is you know as well as I do that there are people in places that have been totally left behind.

Alma, you talked about New York. You know, if you took away New York City and the suburban counties, and you only had upstate New York, it would rank 49th in job growth of all the States in the country. That's hard to believe. You don't think that about New York. We're talking about Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Albany, places with great infrastructures of education and talented people but where a lot of the economy moved, and it's not been replenished—Hawaii, a place that we all think of as a place where we go for fun and everything is peachy-keen, the only State in the country that hasn't had economic growth in the last 2½ years because of the collapse of the Asian economies.

That's why I started this new markets initiative, to build on the employment zone program that Vice President Gore has so brilliantly run the last few years that's brought a lot of economic opportunity to discreet places in America. But what I want to do with this new markets initiative is, two things: I want to point up all these places in America that we ought to be investing in, and I want to give Americans the same incentives to invest in developing areas in America we give them to invest in developing areas in Latin America and Africa and Asia. I want you to invest overseas, but our first and biggest and best new markets are here at home.

You know, Senator Daschle and I were in South Dakota the other day, and we went to the Pine Ridge Reservation. And I was—a lot of the tour I made through the reservation I was escorted by this beautiful 17-year-old Native American girl, who was just as articulate and intelligent and very wise, I might add, because she had a very tough life. I mean, a very tough life. But I thought to myself, why shouldn't this child have the same opportunities that my daughter's had? And if she had them, what in the world could she do with them, not only for herself but for her people?

Do you know what the unemployment rate on the Pine Ridge Reservation is? Seventy-three percent. Now, the national unemployment rate is 4.1 percent. I think it's even lower in South Dakota. The female unemployment rate of the 4.1 percent is the lowest it's been in 46 years. But you still have these pockets.

And if Ron Brown were here, I know what he'd be telling you. He'd be saying, "Now, I want you to hustle up some investment for these areas, and we're going to try to get you a tax break, but you ought to do it whether you get one or not because it's a huge opportunity, in the inner cities, in Appalachia, in the Mississippi Delta, on the Native American reservations."

You would be amazed how much time we spend now with our economic team sitting around thinking, how can we keep this good ride going; how long can we push this expansion out? We know that technology gave us greater productivity than the economists know, and that's part of the reason for the expansion. We know we got 30 percent of our growth out of technology, another 30 percent out of exports. How long can it keep going?

All other economic expansions have ended in one or two ways. Things get so heated up that there's inflation; then you have to stop the inflation, and the price of breaking the inflation breaks the recovery. Or it just runs out of steam. This thing just is chugging along. How can we keep it going?

If you invest in these areas that have been left behind, you create new businesses, new jobs, and new consumers. And when you do that, you don't have any inflation because you've got new production and new consumption. This is a big deal.

The third thing I'd like to say—and I can't say it any more eloquently than Sol Trujillo already said—is—and I told the group next

door—if someone said to me, "You've got to go now. You've had a good time being President, but your time is up. And we'll give you one wish," and the proverbial genie showed up. But I didn't get three wishes. I just got one. [Laughter] I'd probably mess it up if I had three, you know. [Laughter] I got one. I would say, remember these children tonight, all three of them. Remember the powerful example of this great corporate executive and what he said about how he got his start and how many times he could have been stopped.

I would say the most important thing would be for us to genuinely build one America. Not just to tolerate one another, not just to avoid saying insensitive things, things that would embarrass you at a cocktail party or something, and on a more serious note, not even to eliminate all the hate crimes—although I dearly want to do that and I hope to pass the hate crimes legislation—but I mean an America where we looked at each other and we thought: Hey, look around this room; this is one great deal here; we're not tolerating each other; we're celebrating each other.

Do we have honest differences? I certainly hope so. It's the only way you ever learn anything. But we manage them instead of letting them drive us apart. And we actually believe that what enables us to tap the benefits of our diversity and have more fun in life is a shared understanding that our common humanity is the most important thing.

If you really strip away what everybody says about Ron Brown, everybody that really knows him just liked him because they thought he loved life. If you see somebody that loves life and loves people, it's hard to dislike them, because it's contagious.

And if I could just have my little one wish, I would say, if you look at the whole history of America, we kept on going because we kept on widening the circle of opportunity and deepening the meaning of freedom and moving closer toward one America.

When we started, we had all these guys that wrote this Constitution say, "We're all created equal, and God made it so. But, oh, by the way, we've got slavery, and it's unthinkable that women could vote, and we're not even going to let white guys vote unless they own land." We've come a long way since then, right? I mean, we started—even I couldn't have voted; my people wouldn't have been landowners.

We'd have been hired help. So we've come a long way.

But if you look around the world today, if you look at these horrible hate crimes in America, and you look around the world today, from Kosovo and Bosnia to Rwanda to the Middle East to Northern Ireland, the whole world is still bedeviled in this high technology age by the most primitive problem of human society: We're still kind of scared of one another. We don't deal with people who are different from us as well as we should. And we might rock along doing all right for years and then turn on a dime. That's what happened in Rwanda. Just turn on a dime.

So I say to you, I want you to think about this. When you go home tonight I want you to think about what it would be like in 20 years to hear Patrick standing where Senator Daschle is. I want you to think about what it would be like if Shayla headed a program that gave every single child who didn't have a computer in his or her home—every single one in the country—access to the Internet, so there was no digital divide.

I want you to think about what it would be like if Beau Mitchell were the elected president of his tribe, and they celebrated the first time in American history that all the Native Americans had unemployment rates as low as the country and incomes as high. Just think about that. And think about how much better off all

the rest of us would be, just by going along for the ride and doing our part.

I'm telling you it's the most important thing. And it's the hardest thing in life. And the reason we all felt good seeing these young people up here talking tonight is they represented our better selves and our hopes for tomorrow.

If you want to do something to honor Ron Brown, number one, keep supporting this foundation because they'll bring those kids up, and they'll give them a chance. Number two, keep supporting companies like US West because they can really change the face of the future. And number three, do whatever you can as citizens to make sure we do not squander the chance of a lifetime to build a future of our dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. in the Dumbarton Room at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Alma Arrington Brown, widow of Ron Brown, and their children, Michael Brown, Tracey Brown, and Ron Brown; Solomon D. Trujillo, chairman, president and chief executive officer, and Frederick S. Humphries, Jr., executive director of public policy, US West; Ernest Green, one of the Little Rock Nine; former Mayor David Dinkins of New York City; former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin; and dinner speakers Patrick Lepinasse, Shayla Barnes, and Beau Mitchell.

Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia

November 11, 1999

Thank you very much, Secretary West, for your eloquent remarks and your leadership and your many years of devotion to our country. Commander Smart, thank you for your leadership this year. Chaplain Cooke, Lee Thornton, thank you for always being here for our veterans.

The leaders of our veterans' organizations; Members of Congress here; Deputy Secretary Goyer and members of the Cabinet; General Ralston, members of the Joint Chiefs; General Davis and other Medal of Honor recipients. To the former POW's, the families of those still

missing in action, to our veterans and their families.

Let me begin by offering a special word of appreciation to the Army Band and Chorus for their magnificent music today and for making us feel so important. And I want to say a special welcome today to a person you may have read about in the morning papers. Captain Earl Fox is the Senior Medical Officer at the Coast Guard Personnel Command here in Washington. He also happens to be the last World War II veteran still on active military duty. Now, next week he will retire at the tender young age of 80. I think he has earned his retirement.

But captain, on behalf of a grateful nation, we say thank you for your service.

My fellow Americans, as we all know, we celebrate Veterans Day on the anniversary of the armistice ending World War I, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. Eighty years ago today, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed this a day of solemn pride in the heroism of those who died in the country's service. For 2 full minutes in the middle of that day, all traffic and business across our Nation stopped, as Americans took time to remember family and friends who fought and those who never came home from the "war to end all wars." I don't believe those men and women who were our forebears could ever have imagined that so many other times in this century young Americans would be asked again and again to fight and die for freedom in foreign lands.

When the 20th century began, the headstones that stand in silent formation on these beautiful hills covered fewer than 200 acres. Today, at century's end, they cover more than 600 acres. Hundreds of millions of people in the United States and around the world sleep in peace because more than a million Americans rest in peace, here and in graves marked and unmarked all across the world. Today we come again to say we owe them a debt we can never repay.

In a way, the young men and women who have died in defense of our country gave up not only the life they were living but also the life they would have lived, their chance to be parents, their chance to grow old with their grandchildren. Too often when we speak of sacrifice, we speak in generalities about the larger sweep of history, and the sum total of our Nation's experience. But it is very important to remember that every single veteran's life we honor today was just that, a life, just like yours and mine. A life with family and friends and love and hopes and dreams and ups and downs, a life that should have been able to play its full course.

Fifty-seven years ago this week, the eyes of America were focused on a small, sweltering island in the South Pacific. Pearl Harbor had been bombed the year before, and Japanese forces in the Pacific were capturing one island after another. The task of stopping them fell to a group of young marines in an operation called Project Watchtower, in a place called Guadalcanal. The battle was expected to last

6 weeks. It took 6 months. The jungle was so thick, soldiers could hardly walk; fighting so fierce and rations so thin that the average marine lost 25 pounds. Every night shells fell from the sky, and enemy soldiers charged up the hills. The only weapons marines had to defend themselves were Springfield rifles left over from World War I. But with the strength forged in factories and fields back home, they turned back wave after wave of hand-to-hand fighting, until at last, the Navy was able to help the marines turn the tide in the naval battle that began 57 years ago tomorrow.

That turned the tide of battle in the whole Pacific and with it the tide of American history. On that small island, in the Battle of Guadalcanal, Americans proved that our Nation would never again be an island, but rather allied with freedom and peace-loving people everywhere, as the greatest force for peace and freedom the world has ever known.

In the days and years that have followed, men and women, forged from the same mettle, in every branch of our military have built on those sacrifices and stood for the cause of freedom, from World War II to Korea, to Vietnam, to Kuwait City, to Kosovo.

On the beach at Guadalcanal is a monument to those who fought on the island. In the hills that surround us, some of the 1,500 marines and sailors who lost their lives in that battle are laid to rest. They are some of the greatest of the greatest generation.

One of those who served at Guadalcanal was a 19-year-old marine lieutenant named John Chafee. He went on to fight in Okinawa, to lead troops in Korea, to serve as Governor of Rhode Island and Secretary of the Navy, and then, for more than 20 years, as a United States Senator. He helped write the law that keeps our air clean. His fights for health care helped millions of veterans live better lives. Yet he was so humble that when he received a distinguished award from the Marine Corps Foundation last year, he hardly spoke about his wartime service. Two weeks ago, this remarkable man passed away at the age of 77. At his funeral, Hillary and I spent time with his 5 children and his 12 grandchildren. And I was proud to announce on that day that the Navy will be naming one of its most modern and capable destroyers after John Chafee.

Now, that was the measure of one man's life who fought in Guadalcanal and survived. Today,

in our imaginations, we must try to imagine the measure of all the lives that might have been, had they not been laid down in service to our Nation. What about the more than one million men and women who have given their lives so that we could be free? What would have been the measure of their lives? What else would they have accomplished for their families and their country, if only they had had the chance?

Of course, we don't have any of those answers. But because we have the question, we clearly have a responsibility to stand in the breach for them. We are not just the beneficiaries of their bravery; we are the stewards of their sacrifice. Thanks to their valor, today, for the very first time in all of human history, more than half of the nations of the world live under governments of their own choosing. Our prosperity and power are greater than they have ever been. It is, therefore, our solemn obligation to preserve the peace and to make the most of this moment for our children and the children of the world, so that those who sacrificed so much to bring us to this moment will be redeemed in the lives they could have lived by the lives that we do live.

How shall we do this? It means at least that we must continue to be the world's leading force for peace and freedom, against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It means we must keep the commitment I have had since the moment I took the oath of office, that our men and women in uniform will remain the best trained, best equipped, best prepared in the world.

In Kosovo, we had zero combat fatalities and only two planes shot down, though our pilots took heavy enemy fire every single day and put their lives repeatedly at greater risks to avoid hitting civilians on the ground. That is a tribute to the professionalism we see every day from our military forces all around the world.

Last month I was proud to sign a bill that will keep us moving in that direction, with the start of the first sustained increase in military spending in a decade and the biggest pay increase for our troops in a generation. It means we must also do more to be faithful to our veterans when their service is over. President Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Anyone good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterward."

Over the past 7 years we have opened more than 600 veterans' out-patient clinics across America. This year we expect to treat 400,000 more veterans than last year, including more disabled veterans than ever before. We will continue to make sure that all veterans receive the care they deserve. And we must continue to make a special effort to end something that must be intolerable to all of us, the tragedy of homeless veterans.

I want to commend the reigning Miss America, Heather Renee French, who is with us today along with her family—her father, a disabled Vietnam veteran; her mother; her brother; and her sister—for all the work she is doing in her position finally to bring proper national attention to the plight of homeless veterans. We thank you for what you're doing. Thank you. We must not rest until we have done everything we possibly can to bring them back into the society they so willingly defended.

And we must bear in mind the special sacrifice of the more than 140,000 veterans who were held in prison camps or interned during this century. I want to commend the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund for completing a project they launched a year ago today to create a special curriculum on the Vietnam war and send a copy to every single high school across America. Part of that curriculum focuses on the men and women who never came home. We must not forget them.

I am very proud to announce today that we have successfully recovered the remains of three more United States servicemen lost during the Korean war. They're coming home tonight. But we must not waver in our common efforts to make the fullest possible accounting for all our MIA's, for all their families to have their questions answered.

Finally, fulfilling our responsibility to lead for peace and freedom and to be faithful not only to our service personnel but our veterans, requires us to do more than prepare people to fight wars and take care of them when they come home. We must work with greater determination to prevent wars. Every American who gave his or her life for our country was, in one way or another, a victim of a peace that faltered, of diplomacy that failed, of the absence of adequate preventive strength. We know that if diplomacy is not backed by real and credible threats of force, it can be empty and even dangerous. But if we don't use diplomacy first, then

our military will become our only line of defense.

Of course, it also costs money to help struggling young democracies to stand on their feet as friends and partners of the United States, as we've tried to do from Poland to Russia to Nigeria to Indonesia. It costs money to make sure nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union are secure, for the terrorists and leaders who wish us harm do not acquire the means to kill on a more massive scale. It costs money to support the peacemakers in places like the Middle East and the Balkans and Africa, so that regional conflicts do not explode and spread.

But all of you know, better than most, that freedom is not free. And all of you know, far better than most, that the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war.

I am pleased to report to you today that the Democrats and Republicans in Congress are working together on a strong compromise that will allow us to meet some of our most urgent needs in foreign affairs, to prevent war. We're not finished yet, but there is a bipartisan center like that which has carried America for 50 years at this hopeful moment now at work in the Congress. I am grateful for it, and our children will be safer for it.

In less than 2 months, we'll be able to say the conflict and bloodshed that took so many American lives came from another century. So we gather today for the last time in this century

to dedicate ourselves to being good stewards of the sacrifice of the veterans of our country.

As we look ahead to the large challenges and the grand opportunities of the new century and a new millennium, when our country has more prosperity than ever before, and for the first time in my lifetime has the ability to meet those challenges and to dream dreams and live them because we are unthreatened by serious crisis at home and security threats abroad, let us resolve to honor those veterans, to redeem their sacrifice, to be stewards of the lives they never got to live by doing all we can to see that the horrors of the 20th century's wars are not visited upon 21st century Americans. That is the true way to honor the people we come here today to thank God for.

Thank you very much, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to John W. Smart, commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Jeni Cooke, Chaplain, Department of Veterans Affairs; Lee Thornton, master of ceremonies; Gen. Raymond G. Davis, USMC (Ret.), Congressional Medal of Honor recipient; and Miss America 2000 Heather Renee French, her father, Ronnie, her mother, Diana, her sister, Gretchen, and her brother, Jamison.

Remarks on Education Appropriations and an Exchange With Reporters *November 11, 1999*

The President. Well, good afternoon. I am delighted to be joined by Secretary Riley and by Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Adviser, and by these teachers from our area, some of whom have actually been hired through our class size initiative.

All of you know today is Veterans Day. I've just returned from Arlington Cemetery. We always discussed how best to honor the contributions of our veterans on this day. One good way is by reaching agreement on a budget that honors our values, the values for which they served, that enhances opportunity, reinforces responsibility, strengthens our community and the

future of our children. We have made important progress toward that end.

Last night, after many days and hours of discussion, Congress agreed to continue supporting our efforts to hire 100,000 new, highly qualified teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. That is truly good news for our children and for their future.

We know that school enrollments are exploding, record numbers of teachers are retiring. Research is clear that students do learn more in smaller classes with quality teachers. Every parent and teacher in America knows that a child in a second-grade class with 25 students

will not get as much attention as he or she needs and deserves.

Just this week, we learned that our class size initiative, which Congress agreed to last year, is working. Communities are using the funds from last year's agreement to hire more than 29,000 teachers and reduce average class size for 1.7 million children to 18 students a class. That's why I've made honoring our commitment to reducing class size such a high priority in these budget negotiations. The agreement we have reached has bipartisan support, and it keeps us on track to hiring 100,000 teachers by 2005.

As I said in my State of the Union Address, we don't just need more teachers, but better ones. This agreement furthers that goal as well. All teachers hired under this program must be fully qualified. The program gives school districts the flexibility to use 25 percent of the funds from this program to train and test new teachers. It also increases flexibility, with the involvement of the Secretary of Education, to get extra funds for school districts that have a high percentage of their teachers that are not certified to teach the subjects they have been hired to teach, so that they can become fully qualified in those subjects.

Through this plan, taxpayer dollars will go for reducing class size in public schools. And I want to thank Members of Congress from both parties. I'd like to particularly mention Chairman Goodling, the chairman of the House committee, for working with us on this, and Senator Patty Murray, who has been such a strong advocate for the class size reduction initiative. But there are many others, as well, who came together in this agreement. This is a victory for America's children.

In addition to reducing class size, we've made progress on other vital education initiatives, as well, more than doubling funds for after-school programs and increasing funding for computers in our schools, for mentoring to prepare our children for college, for the Hispanic education programs. We're also making progress on other vital budget priorities, from hiring up to 50,000 new community police officers, to setting aside funds to preserve natural resources and protect our environment for future generations.

I am committed to continuing this work with Congress to reach agreement on the issues still outstanding, including ensuring assistance for those who have suffered from the devastating

impact of Hurricane Floyd, to paying our dues to the United Nations. And if we can just continue in this bipartisan spirit, very soon, we will complete work on a budget that honors our values, lives within our means, and looks to our future.

Thank you all for being here today, for symbolizing what we've been working for.

World Trade Organization Talks in China

Q. Mr. President, Ambassador Barshefsky—[inaudible]—stay in China for a third day—[inaudible]—WTO negotiations. Are they getting close to a deal? How much progress have they made?

The President. I think the best thing I can say at the present is what I said yesterday: They are working, and when I know whether we've got an agreement or whether we haven't, I'll let you know. But I think the less we say now, the better. These are difficult negotiations, and they're working on them.

President's Visit to Kosovo

Q. Sir, can you tell us why you are going to Kosovo, and is the plan to winterize every home in Kosovo overly optimistic, given that many nongovernmental organizations have reported that people are living in tents and don't appear that they will have a winterized area of their home in time for the winter season?

The President. Well, I'm going for several reasons. I'm going to thank our troops and see how they're doing, to support the United Nations' operation there, and to see how we're doing in helping the peace to take hold and meeting basic human needs.

As to the last question you asked, I can't give a definitive answer because I don't know what the possibilities are. I think we have to do what is necessary to make sure that people are not too cold this winter because they exercised their right to go home.

I want to remind you that in some ways we have this problem because almost everybody who left Kosovo went home, because the world community acted more quickly here than we acted in Bosnia, where there are still hundreds of thousands of refugees who have not gone home because the Bosnian war went on for 4 years and a quarter of a million people died there. So I'm—it's a problem, but I think we'll deal with it, and I think the Kosovars know that it's a problem because they all got to go

home so fast. And we just have to work it through and find out whatever is necessary to get them through the winter.

One more. I'll take one more. Go ahead.

Africa and Caribbean Trade Legislation

Q. Mr. President, in your conversation with Mr. Lott, you have raised the African and CBI legislation. Did you get any assurance from him that there would be action on that before the end of the session?

The President. Oh, I'll tell you exactly what he said, and actually, I think he's basically right about this. He said, we've got every available resource now, all of our available resources thrown into resolving all the remaining budget issues. As you know, we stand up—Senator Lott and Senator Daschle and Speaker Hastert and Mr. Gephardt and I, we stand up and we give these talks, and we answer your questions. And for every question we answer, there are scores of people that are required to do all this work and hammer out the agreements to turn it into legislative language, to work out the mechanics of how it's going to get on the calendar and all that.

So what Senator Lott said was that he strongly supported the legislation, as do I. Senator Daschle strongly supports it. They want to know that we have—put mechanically—that we have a way to resolve all the budget issues and deal with getting it up, getting it voted on at the appropriate time next week. And if we can get this resolved, then they're going to try to get the Africa trade/CBI bill worked out. And I do think this is a completely good-faith offer on their part.

There are still some differences between the Senate and the House approach. The House bill doesn't have CBI in it. And there will, inevitably, be some disputes about some provisions of the CBI bill. I think we can work through them all. I do believe there is a majority in both Houses for this legislation. But it just takes—it's not something that can be done without some time and care. And right now, every-

one's energies are focused on resolving the budget agreement.

So I pledged to him that we would do our best to resolve the budget agreement as quickly as possible—to reach a budget agreement. And he pledged to me that if we got it done in time, if they could physically do it, he would try to hammer out an agreement on Africa/CBI that both Houses can support. And I think it's terribly important, so I hope very much we can do it.

Sales to China of Radar Equipment by Israel

Q. Sir, can you take a question on Israel? Could you tell us, sir, how it is that Israel got the notion that it would be prudent to sell radar equipment to the Chinese, and what are you doing about it?

The President. Well, we have raised it with them because we raise—whenever any of our friends sell sophisticated equipment that might be American in origin that is inconsistent with the terms under which the transfer was made, then we raise that. That has not been acknowledged yet; the facts are in dispute. So I think before I can tell you what I'm going to do about it, we have to be absolutely sure what the facts are.

Our people had questions, and they had good reason to have questions. But sometimes when you hear these things, it's not always right. So the story is accurate that we've raised the matter, but it is inaccurate to say that we know it's an actual fact that such a transfer has occurred. As soon as we do know the facts, then we will decide what is appropriate, and I'll be glad to tell you that. I just—but I don't want to say anything that I'm not sure is true. And I do not believe that the Israeli Government has confirmed this yet, and I think the matter is still in some dispute.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House upon returning from Arlington National Cemetery.

Statement on Proposed Parental Antidiscrimination Legislation *November 11, 1999*

I am pleased that last night Senators Dodd and Kennedy introduced the “Ending Discrimination Against Parents Act of 1999.” This landmark bill protects America’s working parents from unfair treatment on the job. It builds on our Nation’s longstanding commitment to equal opportunity. And it sends a clear message that parents striving to meet their responsibilities both at home and at the office should never be considered second-class workers.

This bill would, for the first time, protect parents and those with parental responsibilities against job discrimination. It does not stop employers from making hiring and promotion decisions on the basis of qualifications or job performance, but it does ensure that workers are not discriminated against simply because they are parents or exercise parental responsibilities. It would, for example, bar employers from taking a parent off the “fast track” because of un-

substantiated concerns that parents cannot perform in demanding jobs. Similarly, it would not allow employers to prefer applicants without children over equally or better qualified working parents or to refuse to hire single parents.

As more mothers enter the work force and as more families rely on the earnings of single parents, these protections are increasingly important. We cannot afford to let working parents be held captive to baseless assumptions about their ability to work.

Already, a number of States have enacted commonsense laws that prohibit or pave the way to prohibiting discrimination on the basis of parental or familial status. I urge Congress to safeguard the interests of America’s working families and give this legislation prompt and favorable consideration. Our workplaces should work for all Americans.

Message on the Observance of the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church *November 10, 1999*

Warm greetings to all those observing the International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church.

Throughout my Presidency, I have strived to promote the cause of international religious freedom. I am proud that my Administration has completed the first phase outlined in the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998. In September, we published the first annual report on the status of religious freedom worldwide; and in October, we publicly designated the most severe violators of religious freedom.

On this special occasion, we pause to reflect on the importance of religious freedom and the profound role that religion continues to play in the lives of citizens around the world. Throughout human history, religion has helped countless individuals address profound questions about life and the universe. Across the globe, in places

large and small, we have seen the resilience and depth of the human desire to worship freely.

We have also seen in our communities and in other nations around the world the violence and human tragedy spawned by hatred, intolerance, and fear born of ignorance—even ignorance of one another’s religion. But religion encourages us to recognize our capacity for forgiveness and love. On this sacred day, we pray most fervently to Almighty God to change the hearts of those who persecute others and to help us in building just communities united in understanding, compassion, and mutual respect.

Best wishes to all for a blessed observance.

BILL CLINTON

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 12.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia and an Exchange With Reporters

November 12, 1999

President Clinton. Let me say, it's a great honor for me and for all of our team to welcome President Wahid here, with the members of his government. He is now the leader of the world's third-largest democracy, and we are very encouraged by that. We have seen this peaceful transition in Indonesia. We've seen a resolution in East Timor, even though there's still the problem of refugees in West Timor. And I'm looking very much forward to this visit.

I think the American people know that a strong and stable and prosperous and democratic Indonesia is very much in our interest. That's the sort of partnership we're interested in pursuing, and I hope I can be helpful in that regard.

So I'm delighted to have you here, Mr. President. And if you'd like to make any public comment to the press while you're here—

President Wahid. Well, thank you for putting a little time for me today to visit you, Mr. President, because you know that I come from Indonesia just to make sure that we are still great friends of the United States, that we are still in good touch with you. And I think that in the future, we meet you more than before. So also that you know that although there is a shift in policy but not at the expense of the American-Indonesian relationship. This is very important to know, since you understand that this is one world, so we have to create that kind of one world.

And I'm interested in the comment you made about our religious dialog, which goes toward one world, in that sense. You see, from far away we heard that you made very nice comments on those inter-religious dialogs in Indonesia. And I hope that 2 months to come, in January, we'll have a discussion initiated by the Americans from Philadelphia, with the Foreign Minister to be a participant there, to be on the organizing committee. We will invite, of course, the chief rabbi of Israel as well as the former chief rabbi. And from here from the Catholic side and so forth, I don't know who will come. But anyway, around 50 people will come there of the three Abrahamic traditions.

And since, you know, that kind of thing is special for us in Indonesia, I would like to use this occasion to inform you about this, before anything else—economic things. Those are the troubles there.

So I'm very glad. Today I met people from the World Bank and the IMF and then from the Ex-Im Bank, in which we see the possibility of having more hands extended towards us, to help us to overcome the difficulties in the economic shape, now.

Well, you mentioned about East Timor. I think that, of course, we still have trouble, and we would like the United States to take attention to this kind of problem as well. But I would like to inform you, Mr. President, that—[inaudible]—will come to Jakarta, and I'll meet him. So I hope that will ease a little bit the situation in that area, because East Timor is, you know, our brothers.

President Clinton. Thank you very much. That's very good news.

Pardon for President Soeharto

Q. President Wahid sir, why are you inclined to be willing to pardon your predecessor, President Soeharto? And President Clinton, what do you think of the possibility of a pardon for him?

President Wahid. I think if we—we will use law, of course. And we would like to know whether he is guilty or not, according to the law. But after that, we will pardon him because of two reasons. First is that he was our President, so we have to be careful about this for the future generations. Second thing is that, you know, that it's not easy, because Mr. Soeharto still has big followers. So we have to be careful not to, let's say, topple the cart.

President Clinton. I think the decision, first of all, is one for the Indonesian people and Government to make. And I think every country has to decide how to resolve the tension between the pursuit of a particular case and the desire for the reconciliation of people, and to go forward. And I think that that's a decision that the President has to make, and we ought to support his—anything that he's trying to do

to build democracy and to take Indonesia into the future.

Yes, you had a question?

Military Assistance to Indonesia

Q. Mr. President, after this meeting will you resume military assistance to Indonesia?

President Clinton. Well, we're going to talk about that and about what kinds of things that we both can do, over a period of time, to strengthen our relationships, including the issue of military-to-military ties. And I look forward to talking to the President about that.

Territorial Integrity of Indonesia

Q. How important is the structural integrity—the territorial integrity of Indonesia? And is it more important than the self-determination of the peoples of Indonesia?

President Clinton. Well, I don't think it has to be an either/or thing. I think the—I said, at the time when Indonesia supported giving the East Timorese a vote, that I would support that, and that having given them the vote, that the vote had to be respected.

On the other hand, we support the territorial integrity of Indonesia. And I think we have to acknowledge that it's quite a challenging task to preserve a democracy so widespread and so diverse. And I hope we can be somewhat helpful in the President dealing with this challenge.

Abortion Rights and U.N. Dues

Q. Sir, are you willing to compromise on the abortion funding issue in order to get the U.N. dues paid? And where is the status of those talks concerning the budget matter?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's very important that we pay our United Nations arrears. We can hardly ask others to do their part unless we do ours. And it's a big national security issue for us.

And it's related to this whole idea of whether we're going to fulfill our responsibilities in the world. And we have negotiations ongoing. They haven't been resolved yet. And I think I should

follow the same admonition I try to give others when they're involved in negotiations around the world: the less we say, the better—until we have an agreement that we think we can all stick by. But we're working on it, and I hope we can work it out.

Deputy Press Secretary Richard Siewert, Jr. Thank you, pool.

World Trade Organization Talks in China

Q. [Inaudible]—Mrs. Barshefsky coming back tomorrow? Have you given up hope of any deal, a WTO deal before the end of the year?

President Clinton. No. You know, they're actually—I have committed not to talk about the details of the talks, and I won't. But there are a finite and limited number of issues over which there are still differences, and they're working on them. And I have not given up.

I think it would be a very good thing for the world and a very good thing for the Chinese if China were in the WTO. But the reason it would be a good thing is that it would give them participation in a rule-based system, where you could have more and more open trade on fair and balanced terms. So the entry has to be a decision that has some real integrity to it, and it makes sense in terms of everybody else's membership and everybody else's responsibilities. And we're just trying to work through that. I hope we can.

But I think it's a very, very important objective. And I'm certainly glad we've pursued it, and we will continue to do so. And I hope we'll be successful, but I don't really have anything to say. I wouldn't read too much one way or the other into developments so far. Let's wait and see where we are when we've actually run out of time.

Q. On Pakistan, do you have any information?

President Clinton. Not yet.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act November 12, 1999

Thank you, and good afternoon. I thank you all for coming to the formal ratification of a truly historic event. Senator Gramm and Senator Sarbanes have actually agreed on an important issue. *[Laughter]* Stay right there, John. *[Laughter]* I asked Phil on the way out how bad it's going to hurt him in Texas to be walking out the door with me. *[Laughter]* We decided it was all right today.

Like all those before me, I want to express my gratitude to those principally responsible for the success of this legislation. I thank Secretary Summers and the entire team at Treasury, but especially Under Secretary Gensler, for their work, and Assistant Secretary Linda Robertson. I thank you, Chairman Greenspan, for your constant advocacy of the modernization of our financial system. I thank you, Chairman Levitt, for your continuing concern for investor protections. And I thank the other regulators who are here.

I thank Senator Gramm and Senator Sarbanes, Chairman Leach and Congressman LaFalce, and all the Members of Congress who are here. Senator Dodd told me the Sisyphus story, too, over and over again, but I've rolled so many rocks up so many hills, I had a hard time fully appreciating the significance of it. *[Laughter]*

I do want to thank all the Members here and all those who aren't here. And I'd like to thank two New Yorkers who aren't here who have been mentioned, former Secretary of the Treasury Bob Rubin, who worked very hard on this, and former chairman, Senator Al D'Amato, who talked to me about this often. So this is a day we can celebrate as an American day.

To try to give some meaning to the comments that the previous speakers have made about how we're making a fundamental and historic change in the way we operate our financial institutions, I think it might be worth pointing out that this morning we got some new evidence on the role of new technologies in our economy, which showed that over the past 4 years, productivity has increased by a truly remarkable 2.6 percent. That's about twice the rate of productivity growth the United States experienced in the

1970's and the 1980's. In the last quarter alone, productivity grew at 4.2 percent.

This is not just some aloof statistic that matters only to the Federal Reserve, the Treasury, and Wall Street economists. It is the key to rising paychecks and greater security and opportunity for ordinary Americans. And the combination of rising productivity, more open borders and trade, working to keep down inflation, the dramatic reduction of the deficit and the accumulation of the surplus, and the continued commitment to the investment in the American people, research and development, and new productivity-inducing technologies has given us the most sustained real wage growth in more than two decades, with the lowest inflation in more than three decades.

I can tell you that back in December of 1992, when we were sitting around the table at the Governor's Mansion trying to decide what had to be in this economic program, the economists that I had there—who normally are thought to be—you know, you say, well, they're Democrats; they'll be more optimistic—none of them believed that we could grow the economy for this long with an unemployment rate this low and an inflation rate this low. And it's a real tribute to the American people.

So what you see here, I think, is the most important recent example of our efforts here in Washington to maximize the possibilities of the new information age global economy, while preserving our responsibilities to protect ordinary citizens and to build one nation here. And there will always be competing interests. You heard Senator Gramm characterize this bill as a victory for freedom and free markets. And Congressman LaFalce characterized this bill as a victory for consumer protection. And both of them are right. And I have always believed that one required the other.

It is true that the Glass-Steagall law is no longer appropriate to the economy in which we live. It worked pretty well for the industrial economy, which was highly organized, much more centralized, and much more nationalized than the one in which we operate today. But the world is very different.

Now we have to figure out, what are still the individual and family and business equities that are still involved that need some protections? And the long and often tortured story of this law can be seen as a very stunning specific example of the general challenge that will face lawmakers of both parties, that will face liberals and conservatives, that will face all Americans as we try to make sure that the 21st century economy really works for our country and works for the people who live in it.

So I think you should all be exceedingly proud of yourselves, including being proud of your differences and how you tried to reconcile them. Over the past 7 years, we've tried to modernize the economy, and today what we're doing is modernizing the financial services industry, tearing down these antiquated walls, and granting banks significant new authority.

This will, first of all, save consumers billions of dollars a year through enhanced competition. It will also protect the rights of consumers. It will guarantee that our financial system will continue to meet the needs of underserved communities, something that the Vice President and I tried to do through the empowerment zones, the enterprise communities, the community development financial institutions, but something which has been largely done through the private sector and honoring the Community Reinvestment Act.

The legislation I signed today establishes the principles that as we expand the powers of banks, we will expand the reach of that act. In order to take advantage of the new opportunities created by the law, we must first show a satisfactory record of meeting the needs of all the communities the financial institution serves.

I want to thank Senator Sarbanes and Congressman LaFalce for their leadership on the CRA issue. I want to applaud the literally hundreds of dedicated community groups all around our country that work so hard to make sure the CRA brings more hope and capital to hard-pressed areas.

The bill I signed today also does, as Congressman Leach says, take significant steps to protect the privacy of our financial transactions. It will give consumers, for the very first time, the right to know if their financial institution intends to share their financial data and the right to stop private information from being shared with outside institutions. Like the new medical privacy

protections I announced 2 weeks ago, these financial privacy protections have teeth. We granted regulators full enforcement authority and created new penalties to punish abusive practices. But as others have said here, I do not believe that the privacy protections go far enough. I am pleased the act actually instructs the Treasury to study privacy practices in the financial services industry and to recommend further legislative steps. Today I'm directing the National Economic Council to work with Treasury and OMB to complete that study and give us a legislative proposal which the Congress can consider next year. Without restraining the economic potential of new business arrangements, I want to make sure every family has meaningful choices about how their personal information will be shared within corporate conglomerates. We can't allow new opportunities to erode old and fundamental rights.

Despite this concern, I want to say again, this legislation is truly historic. And it indicates what can happen when Republicans and Democrats work together in a spirit of genuine cooperation, when we understand we may not be able to agree on everything, but we can reconcile our differences once we know what the larger issue is: how to maximize the opportunities of the American people in a global information age and still preserve our sense of community and protection for individual rights.

In that same spirit, I hope we will soon complete work on the budget. I hope we will complete work on the work incentives improvement act, to allow disabled people to go to work. And I know Senator Gramm has been working with Senator Roth and Senator Jeffords and Senator Moynihan and Senator Kennedy on that.

There are a lot of things we can do once we recognize we're dealing with a big issue, over which we ought to have some disagreements but where we can come together in constructive and honorable compromise to keep pushing our country into the possibilities of the future.

This is a very good day for the United States. Again I thank all of you for making sure that we have done right by the American people and that we have increased the chances of making the next century an American century. I hope we can continue to focus on the economy and the big questions we will have to deal with revolving around that. I hope we will continue to pay down our debt. I still believe in a global

economy. We will maximize the opportunities created by this law if the Government is reducing its debt and its claim on available capital. So I hope very much that that will be part of our strategy in the future.

But today we prove that we could deal with the large issue facing our country and every other advanced economy in the world. If we keep dealing with it in other contexts, the future of our children will be very bright, indeed.

Thank you very much. I'd like to ask all the Members of Congress to come up here while we sign the bill. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:37 p.m. in the Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, S. 900, approved November 12, was assigned Public Law No. 106-102.

Statement on Signing the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act *November 12, 1999*

Today I am pleased to sign into law S. 900, the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. This historic legislation will modernize our financial services laws, stimulating greater innovation and competition in the financial services industry. America's consumers, our communities, and the economy will reap the benefits of this Act.

Beginning with the introduction of an Administration-sponsored bill in 1997, my Administration has worked vigorously to produce financial services legislation that would not only spur greater competition, but also protect the rights of consumers and guarantee that expanded financial services firms would meet the needs of America's underserved communities. Passage of this legislation by an overwhelming, bipartisan majority of the Congress suggests that we have met that goal.

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act makes the most important legislative changes to the structure of the U.S. financial system since the 1930s. Financial services firms will be authorized to conduct a wide range of financial activities, allowing them freedom to innovate in the new economy. The Act repeals provisions of the Glass-Steagall Act that, since the Great Depression, have restricted affiliations between banks and securities firms. It also amends the Bank Holding Company Act to remove restrictions on affiliations between banks and insurance companies. It grants banks significant new authority to conduct most newly authorized activities through financial subsidiaries.

Removal of barriers to competition will enhance the stability of our financial services system. Financial services firms will be able to

diversify their product offerings and thus their sources of revenue. They will also be better equipped to compete in global financial markets.

Although the Act grants financial services firms greater latitude to innovate, it also contains important safety and soundness protections. While the Act allows common ownership of banking, securities, and insurance firms, it still requires those activities to be conducted separately within an organization, subject to functional regulation and funding limitations.

Both the Vice President and I have insisted that any financial services modernization legislation must benefit American communities by preserving and strengthening community reinvestment. I am very pleased that the Act accomplishes this goal. The Act establishes an important prospective principle: banking organizations seeking to conduct new nonbanking activities must first demonstrate a satisfactory record of meeting the credit needs of all the communities they serve, including low- and moderate-income communities. Thus, the law will for the first time prohibit expansion into activities such as securities and insurance underwriting unless all of the organization's banks and thrifts maintain a "satisfactory" or better rating under the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA). The CRA will continue to apply to all banks and thrifts, and any application to acquire or merge with a bank or thrift will continue to be reviewed under CRA, with full opportunity for public comment. The bill offers further support for community development in the form of a new Program for Investment in Microentrepreneurs (PRIME), to

provide technical help to low- and moderate-income microentrepreneurs.

The Act includes a limited extension of the CRA examination cycle for small banks and thrifts with outstanding or satisfactory CRA records, but expressly preserves the ability of regulators to examine these institutions at any time for reasonable cause, and does not affect regulators' authority in connection with an application. The bill also includes a requirement for disclosure and reporting of CRA agreements. The Act and its legislative history have been crafted to alleviate burdens on banks and thrifts and those working to stimulate investment in underserved communities. It is critical that depository institutions and their community partners continue efforts that have led to the highest home ownership rate in our history, including a particularly dramatic increase in recent years in minority and low-income home ownership. My Administration remains committed to ensuring that implementation of these provisions does not in any way diminish community reinvestment, and stands ready to remedy any problems that may arise.

Last May, I proposed strong and enforceable Federal privacy protections for consumers' financial information. I am very pleased that the Act provides a number of the new protections that I proposed.

Under the Act, financial institutions must clearly disclose their privacy policies to customers up front and annually, allowing consumers to make truly informed choices about privacy protection. For the first time, consumers will have an absolute right to know if their financial institution intends to share or sell their personal financial data, either within the corporate family or with an unaffiliated third-party. Consumers will have the right to "opt out" of such information sharing with unaffiliated third parties. These protections constitute a significant change from existing law, under which information on everything from account balances to credit card transactions can be shared or sold by a financial institutions without a customer's knowledge or consent, including the sale of information to telemarketers and other non-financial firms.

Of equal importance, these restrictions have teeth. For the first time, the Act allows privacy protection to be included in regular bank examinations. The Act grants regulators full authority to issue privacy rules and to use the full range

of their enforcement powers in case of violations. The Act grants new, and needed, rule-making authority under the existing Fair Credit Reporting Act. In addition, it establishes new penalties to prevent pretext calling, by which unscrupulous persons use deceptive practices to determine the financial assets of consumers. The Act will specifically allow the States to provide stronger privacy protections if they choose to do so.

Although these are significant steps forward, we will continue to press for even greater privacy protections—especially choice about whether personal financial information can be shared within a corporate family. Privacy is fundamental to Americans, and to my Administration.

The Act also streamlines supervision of bank holding companies and preserves financial regulation along functional lines. Activities generally will be overseen by those regulators who are most knowledgeable about a given financial activity, including the Securities and Exchange Commission for securities activities and State regulators for insurance activities. Given the broad new affiliations permissible under this legislation, I fully expect our regulators to work together to protect the integrity of our financial system. The bill also promotes the safety and soundness of our financial system by enhancing the traditional separation of banking and commerce. The bill limits the ability of thrift institutions to affiliate with commercial companies.

There are provisions of the Act that concern me. The Act's redomestication provisions could allow mutual insurance companies to avoid State law protecting policyholders, enriching insiders at the expense of consumers. We intend to monitor any redomestications and State law changes closely, returning to the Congress if necessary. The Act's Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) provisions fail to focus the FHLB System more on lending to community banks and less on arbitrage activities and short-term lending that do not advance its public purpose.

The Act raises certain constitutional issues with respect to the insurance privacy provisions in title V. The Act might be construed as contrary to Supreme Court decisions that hold that the Congress may not compel States to enact or administer a Federal regulatory program. I interpret section 505(c) of the Act, however, as providing States with a constitutionally permissible choice of whether to participate in such a program. States that choose to participate will

gain the powers listed in section 505(c); States that decline will not. I believe that the Congress, in giving States a choice (in section 505(c)) whether to “adopt regulations to carry out this subtitle,” intended to allow States to accept or decline all of the rulemaking and enforcement obligations assigned to State authorities under sections 501–505 of the Act. This interpretation is consistent with the explanation in the conference report that both the rulemaking and enforcement roles of State insurance authorities are voluntary not mandatory.

Section 332(b) of S. 900 provides for Presidential appointment of the board of directors of the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers (NARAB), established by the bill in the event that certain stated conditions occur. Because members of the NARAB board would exercise significant Federal governmental authority under those conditions, they must be appointed as Officers pursuant to the Appointments Clause of the Constitution. Under section 332(b)(1) of the bill, the President would be

required to make such appointments from lists of candidates recommended by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. The Appointments Clause, however, does not permit such restrictions to be imposed upon the President’s power of appointment. I therefore do not interpret the restrictions of section 332(b)(1) as binding and will regard any such lists of recommended candidates as advisory only.

The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act is a major achievement that will benefit American consumers, communities, and businesses of all sizes. I thank all of those individuals who played a role in the development and passage of this historic legislation.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 12, 1999.

NOTE: S. 900, approved November 12, was assigned Public Law No. 106–102.

Statement on Sanctions Against the Milosevic Regime in Serbia *November 12, 1999*

Today I signed a proclamation that will significantly expand the visa sanctions we impose on those who support the Milosevic regime in Serbia. The Secretary of State will now have greater flexibility to deny visas to a broad range of Milosevic’s key supporters, who are obstructing democracy, suppressing freedom of speech, and financially supporting the regime. Family members, relatives, and close associates of those on the list may also be excluded.

This proclamation sends a clear message to those propping up the Milosevic regime that Serbia faces a clear choice: It can take its rightful place in a prosperous democratic Europe

or sink further into isolation and economic decline under a dictator who has betrayed the best interests of the Serbian people. And if it chooses the latter path, those responsible will not be able to escape the consequences of their actions by leaving their country.

In this and other ways, we and our European allies are determined to support the Serbian opposition in its effort to bring true democracy to Serbia.

NOTE: The proclamation of November 12 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Statement on Proposed Legislation on Trade With Southeast Europe *November 12, 1999*

Today I instructed the Office of the United States Trade Representative to transmit to Con-

gress the southeast Europe trade preference act (“SETPA”), which would authorize expansion of

duty-free treatment to a much broader range of imports from the region for 5 years. This legislation implements in part a trade expansion initiative that I launched at the Sarajevo summit in July. This initiative is an important part of the broader Stability Pact developed by the United States, our European allies and partners, and others to speed the economic development

and democratization of southeast Europe and advance its integration into an undivided Europe. Along with trade benefits provided by European nations, these efforts can help the countries of the region achieve long-term economic growth. This, in turn, will strengthen the region's stability and reduce the risk of another destructive conflict.

Statement on Signing the District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 *November 12, 1999*

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 974, the "District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999." This Act helps to level the playing field for the young people of the District of Columbia by expanding opportunities for affordable higher education. My FY 2000 Budget requested \$17 million to improve access to higher education for D.C. residents by enabling them to attend public colleges and universities in Maryland and Virginia at in-State tuition rates. I am grateful for the bipartisan effort in the Congress to work with my Administration to build on that proposal and develop this Act.

The District of Columbia College Access Act of 1999 will allow the Federal Government, through a program run by the Mayor of the District of Columbia, to pay the difference between in-State and out-of-State tuition at public colleges and universities in Maryland, Virginia, and other States, under certain circumstances, on behalf of qualified D.C. residents. District of Columbia residents could receive up to \$10,000 per year, with a \$50,000 maximum overall, in tuition subsidies under this Act. This tuition subsidy is critical, because it will provide an opportunity for D.C. residents, like the residents of all 50 States, to attend a variety of affordable public colleges and universities. A lack of financial resources can be a roadblock to entering college, as well as a major reason why many students who enroll in college do not complete their degree programs. By providing this tuition subsidy, we are providing D.C. residents more opportunities to attend college, and encouraging families with college-bound children to remain in, or move to, the District. By assisting individual D.C. residents through these tuition subsidies, we will also be

contributing to the continued revitalization of the District of Columbia.

In addition, the Act would authorize grants of up to \$2,500 per year, with a \$12,500 per student maximum, to D.C. residents who choose to attend private colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C. area, including private historically Black colleges and universities in Maryland or Virginia. Together with the tuition subsidy for public colleges and universities, these grants would greatly expand both public and private post-secondary opportunities for D.C. residents.

Throughout the legislative development of this bill, my Administration stated its preference for ensuring that Federal resources are provided to those students with greater need for financial assistance. The Act goes a long way toward reaching that goal by providing the Mayor of the District of Columbia with the authority, in the event of insufficient appropriations, to establish priorities regarding the making or amount of tuition and fee payments on the basis of the income and need of eligible students.

The Act would also authorize financial support to the University of the District of Columbia (UDC), if it does not receive funds under the Higher Education Act of 1965 on the basis of its status as a historically Black college and university. In order to provide a range of high quality higher education opportunities to D.C. residents, this Act will ensure that Federal funds are available to support the only public institution of higher education in the District of Columbia and to help ensure that D.C. residents who choose to attend UDC will receive a solid education.

Finally, I must point out that this Act is only part of the efforts currently underway to improve higher education opportunities for D.C. students. I congratulate the private sector's outstanding efforts to prepare D.C. students to attend college, and to provide additional tuition assistance beyond that provided in this Act. The commitment of both the private and public sectors to broaden postsecondary education opportunities available to D.C. residents will have a significant impact on the education, economic well-being, and lives of many D.C. students and

their families for years to come. I look forward to working with D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams as he implements this groundbreaking new program.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 12, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 974, approved November 12, was assigned Public Law No. 106-98.

The President's Radio Address

November 13, 1999

Good morning. In recent weeks, Congress and our administration have been engaged in final budget negotiations that will set the direction our Nation takes as we enter the new millennium. This week we made good progress. Today I want to talk to you about what we achieved, why I fought hard for priorities like better schools and safer streets, and what we still must do to finish a budget that prepares for the future, continues to pay down the debt, and honors our values.

I wanted to make sure the very first budget of the 21st century puts education first. That's why I stood firm on our commitment to hire 100,000 quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. We made this promise with Congress last year, and schools around the country already are hiring more than 29,000 teachers to give 1.7 million children the chance to learn in smaller classes.

The research is clear on this. Students learn more in smaller classes where they get more attention. And as I said in the State of the Union Address, we not only need more teachers; we need better teachers. Under the plan we worked out with Congress this week, every teacher hired with these funds must be fully qualified and know the subjects he or she is hired to teach. School districts can also use some funds to better prepare their existing teachers to meet the needs of 21st century students. We need to stay on this path of hiring 100,000 quality teachers to reduce class size.

The budget agreement also more than doubles our investment for after-school programs and increases funding for our efforts to connect all our schools to the Internet, for our GEAR UP program which provides mentors to prepare at-risk children for college, and for our Hispanic education initiatives. I am pleased Congress has put politics aside and put education first in this budget.

We're making progress in other areas as well. We know America is safer. The crime rate is at a 25-year low. But it's not nearly as safe as it can and should be. We must keep the crime rate coming down. The budget agreement invests in the success of our COPS program which has already funded 100,000 community police officers, by providing the resources to hire up to 50,000 more of them over the next 5 years in neighborhoods where crime rates are still too high.

We've made progress on the efforts that Vice President Gore and I have developed to set aside funds to preserve natural areas and to protect our environment for future generations. However, we've still got some work to do on this and we must oppose antienvironmental provisions that put special interest ahead of the public interest.

With all this progress, our budget work isn't complete yet. And I'm committed to working with Congress to reach agreement before they recess this year on the issues that are still outstanding, from passing meaningful hate crimes

legislation to providing relief for families suffering under the impact of Hurricane Floyd, to paying our U.N. dues, to passing the work incentives improvement act so that people with disabilities can gain a job without losing their health care.

In addition to the budget, I urge Congress to keep working on other critical issues: commonsense gun safety legislation to keep guns out of the wrong hands; a real Patients' Bill of Rights families have been waiting for for too long; a raise in the minimum wage, which shouldn't be held hostage to special interest tax cuts that aren't paid for and don't address national needs; and finally, measures to save Social Security and Medicare for the 21st century and modernize Medicare to include a voluntary prescription drug benefit. I urge Congress to work with me in meeting all these goals.

This has been a good week for America. We're staying on the path that has brought us the longest peacetime expansion in history, the highest homeownership in history, nearly 20 million new jobs, a 30-year low in unemployment, a 20-year low in poverty rates, and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. Now we've got the chance of a lifetime to shape the future of our dreams for our children. Let's finish the job.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:15 p.m. on November 12 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 13. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 12 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Announcement of Cyprus Peace Talks *November 14, 1999*

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has just informed me that President Clerides of Cyprus and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash have accepted an invitation to start proximity talks in New York on December 3. The goal of the talks is to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem.

The talks will be held under U.N. auspices. They will go forward without precondition. They will focus on the substantive issues that divide the parties. The United States will work closely with the Secretary-General to ensure that the talks are productive.

This summer the United States took the lead in calling on the United Nations to convene Cyprus talks. Ever since, together with our European allies and the U.N., we have been intensively engaged in an effort to bring the parties back to the negotiating table after a stalemate

of more than 2 years. I am pleased that these efforts—including my meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit at the White House, Secretary Albright's conversation with President Clerides, and a month of shuttle diplomacy by my Special Envoy Al Moses—have helped to produce this result.

These Cyprus talks can bring us one step closer to a lasting peace. A negotiated settlement is the best way to meet the fundamental interests of the parties, including real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

The Cyprus problem has been with us for far too long. It will not be resolved overnight. But today we have new hope. I ask the parties to approach this opportunity with good faith and the determination to build for all the people of Cyprus a future that is brighter than the past.

Remarks to the American Embassy Community in Ankara, Turkey November 15, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Good morning. Ambassador Parris, it's hard for me to say—you may know, Mark worked for us in the White House for a long time and, you know, it's difficult for me to be sufficiently respectful of him now that he's here with this vast array of support. *[Laughter]* I do want to thank you, Mark, and all of you for the wonderful job you've done under particularly adverse circumstances. And I thank Ambassador Albright for her representation of the United States here in Turkey, after the terrible first earthquake.

China-U.S. Agreement on World Trade Organization Accession

I think I should give you an explanation for why we're running a little late this morning. We have been up late last night and early this morning, following the 11th hour of negotiations between the United States and China. And I am pleased to say that the United States and the People's Republic of China have now successfully concluded a strong accession agreement for China to enter the World Trade Organization.

This agreement is a major step forward in bringing China into the WTO and a profoundly important step in the relationship between the United States and China.

[At this point, there was technical difficulty with the room's lighting.]

The President. Somebody apparently doesn't like it very much. *[Laughter]* Have we put too much strain on the lights? *[Laughter]* Yeah, what do you say? Can you guys pick this up with this light if I go on? Okay.

The China-WTO agreement is good for the United States; it's good for China; it's good for the world economy. Today China embraces principles of economic openness, innovation, and competition that will bolster China's economic reforms and advance the rule of law. President Jiang Zemin and Premiere Zhu Rongji have shown genuine leadership in committing China to open its markets and abide by global rules of fair trade. In opening the economy of China, the agreement will create unprecedented opportunities for American farmers, workers, and companies to compete successfully in China's

market, while bringing increased prosperity to the people of China.

The trade agreement is part of a broader agreement, designed to bring China into global systems on issues from nonproliferation to regional security to environmental protection to human rights. With this agreement, the overall relationship between our countries is strengthened.

I want to thank profusely our United States Trade Ambassador, Charlene Barshefsky; my National Economic Adviser, Gene Sperling; and the entire United States negotiating team, including USTR officials Robert Novick and Robert Cassidy, for their hard work and dedication.

On the basis of this excellent agreement, I will do my best, working with other countries, to gain China's entry into the WTO and undertake an all out effort to work with our Congress to secure permanent, normal trade relations with China. This is a very good day for American diplomacy.

American Embassy

Let me say again to all of you here in Turkey, during the recent earthquake, and even in the last few days, when we have seen the terrible news of the other quake, it has been profoundly moving to me to know that our Embassy was involved with the people of Turkey on a human level, as well as on a political and diplomatic level. I am grateful for the work that Mission personnel here have done to raise money to aid victims of the quake, to organize trips, to give out food, clothing, and other supplies. I understand one of your Embassy employees, Azize Ozturk, has been particularly active in that, and I thank you very much.

I hope that the visit that we're making this week will inspire more Americans at home to join your efforts to help the people of Turkey recover from these natural disasters.

I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation for the role any of you have played in the warming of relationships between Turkey and Greece. You know, I have long supported the entry of Turkey into the European Union. I have long supported the alliance of the West with Turkey. But I have always believed that

ultimately there had to be a reconciliation between Turkey and Greece and a resolution of the major issues in the Aegean in order for the long-term success of this dream that we all share to be assured.

Every day, everything you do, in ways small and large, to build the bonds between our two people is very important. If you look at a map of the world and imagine the future in the 21st century, I think it is ironic and interesting that this country, at the center of the Ottoman Empire, played such a large role for centuries through the empire and then in the way that empire broke up after World War I and before—just before and after World War I and the way the 20th century worked out. I think if you look at the map and underlying political realities, still Turkey is going to have a great deal to do with the way the world is in the 21st century.

It is very important that we maintain our partnership and our friendship and to continue to make progress on those issues that are so important to all of us.

Finally, let me say to all of you who work here at the Embassy, both Americans and Turkish nationals, I am very proud of your work—the daily work you do, which may or may not grab the headlines. I understand that one of your employees, Sait Otus, just retired after 45 years with the United States Government, beginning with USAID in 1954, transferring to USIS in 1974. Thank you for those 45 years. We are very grateful to you.

Now, in closing, I would like to present to all of you at the United States Embassy here, the State Department's Superior Honor Award, recognizing your extraordinary efforts and accomplishments, from coordinating relief after the earthquakes to advancing our objectives in the region to preparing for this visit which, in some ways, may be the biggest headache of all. *[Laughter]*

Congratulations, Mr. Ambassador.

We are adjourned. *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Embassy. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Turkey Mark R. Parris.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony in Ankara *November 15, 1999*

Thank you very much, Mr. President, Mrs. Demirel, distinguished friends. I thank you for your reception and for the invitation to come to Turkey. I'm delighted to be here in a place I have wanted to visit for a very long time, to deepen America's ties with one of our most important partners and allies.

For most of this century, as Turkey and the United States come closer together, our relationship has been distinguished by an increasing sense of how much, together, we can do to improve the lives of our people.

The recent earthquakes have humbled us, reminding us that for all of the advances and our own capacity to shape the future, there is much in life that lies utterly beyond our control. No one could have foreseen or avoided the terrible tragedy that struck Turkey on August 17th, or the earthquake which came again just last week.

I want to express, on behalf of the American people, again, our profound sympathies and condolences to all the people of Turkey for all that you have lost. We have been honored to stand with you as you have worked so heroically to clear the damaged areas from the first earthquake and to return as best as possible to the cadence of normal life. And we pledge to work with you as you deal with this natural tragedy, as well. The United States is proud to stand with Turkey in good times or bad, against cruel natural calamities, terrorism, or other threats to freedom and democracy.

With regard to the earthquake, we have dispatched a search-and-rescue team to the area and sent tents to house 10,000 people made homeless. Our Export-Import Bank has allocated \$1 billion in lending authority to help Turkish businesses finance projects related to reconstruction. We will continue to do all we can to speed your recovery, to encourage private investment,

to help you prepare for future natural disasters. I would also like to express my appreciation for the swift response from many other nations, including Greece, to the needs of the people of Turkey at this moment.

Mr. President, over the next 5 days, I will have the opportunity to be in your nation on the longest visit ever by an American President to Turkey. I want to express my solidarity with the Turkish people and America's commitment to Turkey's future. We will work for a future in which Turkey continues to be an ally of America, a partner in the new Europe, and reconciled with others in the region, especially our friends in Greece.

I thank you for the opportunity today to meet with leaders of Turkish democracy in Ankara and the opportunity to speak to the members of the Grand National Assembly, and then for the opportunity to go to Istanbul to participate with you and 50 other leaders at the OSCE Summit. I thank you for the opportunity to go and see some of the survivors of the first earthquake, to learn about what we in America still can do to help.

Mr. President, you mentioned that it was 10 years ago this month that the Berlin Wall fell. I want to thank you again for the partnership we have had for peace and freedom with Turkey

in the years since, especially in Bosnia and Kosovo.

I thank you for sharing the lesson we are still learning in times of agony as well as joy. We are all in this together. And to me that means, in part, we must continue to fulfill a vision of a Europe undivided, democratic, in peace for the first time in history, anchored by a stable and prosperous Turkey.

Mr. President, this week I pledge to you that I will work with you to fulfill the promise of that unified, whole, free Europe. With Europe—a Europe that includes Turkey—and a partnership with Turkey and the United States that includes our commitment to freedom and opportunity for all people, we have a chance to start a new century on higher ground. And the success of our partnership will have a lot to do with that.

Thank you again for welcoming me and for being a genuine friend to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:15 a.m. on the Lawn of the Official Residence of the President. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey and his wife, Nazmiye. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Demirel.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters in Ankara *November 15, 1999*

President Demirel. Distinguished members of the press, I would like to welcome once again in your presence, the President of the United States, my dear friend Bill Clinton. Mr. Clinton is in our country for a 5-day visit.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to, in Mr. Clinton's person, express our thanks to the American people for the support and solidarity they have shown during the disasters that affected our country, one after another, in recent months.

The Republic of Turkey and the United States of America work together for peace, stability, and prosperity on a vast geography which extends from the Balkans to the Caucasus, central

Asia to the Middle East, Europe to the Black Sea, Caspian, and the Mediterranean Basin.

Earlier today we had an extensive exchange of views and opinions as two strategic partners. We discussed our contribution to regional peace, stability, and prosperity. We also reviewed areas where we can improve cooperation. We were pleased to note that both of us had the determination to evaluate new and broader avenues of cooperation between our countries.

We explained to the President our activities in the areas of economy, trade, and energy, and the importance we place on cooperation with the EU in this context. We also discussed defense cooperation and regional security issues. We evaluated our joint projects together. And

we explored new possibilities for deepening our relations even further.

And we listened to the views of the President of the United States regarding the opinion and attitude of the United States on these subjects. President Clinton shares our view that it's very important for Turkey—as a country where democracy, Islam, and secularism are proven to coexist—to become an EU member in order to realize the project of a pluralist, democratic Europe with rich diversity.

In light of these views, we reviewed Turkey's relations with the European Union on the eve of the Helsinki summit. We explained once again to the President the assessment of the Turkish Republic regarding the European Union. We also expressed Turkey's contractual rights for EU membership. And we stressed our expectation from the European Union to focus on the proper perspective on this matter this time.

President Clinton has confirmed continued support of the U.S. for Turkey's membership to the EU. I can say that the meetings between two friends and allies that have strong bonds were beneficial and productive and that we were able to review common areas of interest, attention, and action that are included in the broad spectrum of the Turkish-American strategic partnership.

Our friendship with the United States is an important guarantee for the success for our common goals and ideals. This friendship will be fruitful in the future, and joint efforts by the United States and Turkey will bring further peace, stability, and prosperity to a vast geography.

I would like to welcome Mr. Clinton once again and wish him a good time in Turkey. Thank you all.

President Clinton. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I would like to thank you, the Prime Minister, and the members of the Turkish Government for your warm welcome here today, and reiterate the profound sympathies of the American people with the people of Turkey as a result of these two earthquakes.

The President has summarized our meeting quite well, and so I will just briefly add a couple of points. We spoke about the coming OSCE meeting, which Turkey will host. It is fitting that Turkey would be the host in this final year of the 20th century, when the agenda for Europe is to build a Europe that for the first

time in history is undivided, democratic, and at peace. For Turkey is the key to meeting all the challenges that remained of that vision of Europe: the challenge of integrating Russia, of stabilizing the Balkans, of bringing a real peace to the Aegean and Cyprus, of bridging the gulf between the West and the Islamic world. In these areas and more, Turkey and the United States should be partners.

In that regard, I thank the President and the Prime Minister for the principled stand Turkey took in Kosovo and for Turkey's leadership today in bringing peace and prosperity to the Balkans.

We also had a very good conversation about the hopeful progress in cooperation between Turkey and Greece, an issue of profound importance to the United States because of our friendship with both nations and because of our strong support for Turkey's full partnership in the European Union. I expressed my hope that the coming talks on Cyprus will bring us closer to lasting peace with real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

We discussed the importance of continuing to integrate Russia with Europe as a strong, stable, democratic nation, and our shared concern that the mounting civilian casualties in Chechnya will hinder that goal.

We talked about energy security in the Caspian, and I reaffirmed America's commitment to making the Baku-Ceyhan and the trans-Caspian pipelines commercial realities, and my appreciation for the leadership of President Demirel and others toward that goal.

Finally, we discussed Turkey's progress in deepening its democracy and strengthening human rights. There has been impressive momentum in the last few years, and I hope there will be continued progress, especially in the area of freedom of expression.

In closing, Mr. President, I want to thank you for your friendship, for your commitment to our alliance. And I want to once again reaffirm my personal strong support for Turkey's European Union candidacy as it moves forward in all the areas that we have discussed today.

Thank you very much.

China-U.S. Agreement on World Trade Organization Accession

Q. Mr. President, on the WTO deal that you announced today, did China go beyond the concessions that it offered in April? And if so, could you say where and how far? And does this mean

that China will be able to have an active role in the WTO talks in Seattle?

President Clinton. The answer to the first question is that we—I think the fair answer is that we finished a lot of the matters which were left unresolved when we were meeting in the springtime in Washington. I don't think it's fair to the Chinese or to the United States to give the inference that either one made massive new concessions.

I think that there were matters that were still outstanding that we were able to resolve and work through, and I'm very grateful, frankly, for the leadership of Ambassador Barshefsky and Mr. Sperling on our side and for all those on the Chinese side. I think this is a good agreement for China and for America and for the world. I think that all of us benefit when the most populous nation in the world is now going to be part of a rule-based system that will bring shared prosperity.

The answer to your second question—the short answer to your second question is I don't know. That is, I honestly don't know how this changes the specific formal role that China might play at Seattle. But as I'm sure you know, all the developing nations have been taking various positions on these issues. And I would certainly hope that the conclusion of this agreement between ourselves and China will lead to the rapid accession of China to the WTO and would lead the Chinese to urge other developing countries to take the same sort of comprehensive approach to their participation in the world economic system, because I think that will bring the quickest benefits to them and to the rest of the world.

Allegations of Repression and Torture in Turkey

Q. A question for both of you, please. Mr. President, what do you say to allegations of repression and torture in your country? And President Clinton, do you believe these allegations; are they a serious impediment to Turkish-American relations? And I speak now partly of the Kurds, but also other dissident groups.

President Demirel. It is impossible to say that there is no torture in Turkey; there is torture. But torture is not state policy. Torture is a crime. And whoever commits this crime, no matter who that person may be, that person is investigated and is penalized accordingly. And I can say that we are doing everything we can to make sure that there is no torture.

President Clinton. Let me, in response to your question, say that we believe that there has been a renewed and clear determination of the Turkish Government to take a stand against torture and to generally increase protection of human rights. There are some non-torture areas that we hope there will continue to be progress in, like freedom of expression. But President Demirel has faithfully stated, I think, the policy of the Turkish Government. And we are encouraged that the human rights issue is moving in the right direction in this nation.

Turkey-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, I would like to ask, have you observed a rapid development in the Turkish-American relationship, especially in the last years? Can you briefly describe the current status of the Turkish-American relations from the point of view of America?

President Clinton. Well, I would say from the point of view of America, they are very good. And I could give you some specific examples: one, our partnership in the Balkans, first in Bosnia and then in Kosovo, to stand up for human rights; two, our commitment to energy security in the region, and the support of the pipelines projects I mentioned earlier; three, the improvement in relationships between Turkey and Greece, something which has always been a little bit of a limitation on our partnership, because of our ties to both countries; and four, the economic and political reforms undertaken by Turkey in the last year and several months have been very impressive to us.

So, for all these reasons, I would say that the state of our partnership is strong, and I just want the United States to be in a position to give more economic assistance and more political support as we move toward our shared objectives.

Turkey and the European Union

Q. Mr. President, could you please tell us how determined you will continue to be in supporting Turkey's efforts with EU?

President Clinton. Excuse me. Did you ask me how determined am I to do that, or in what ways will I do that, or both?

Well, let me say first of all, I am very determined to support Turkish membership in the EU for a very good reason. I think if you—any of you, including my American colleagues here—if you were to go home tonight and make

a list of the big problems you think the world could face in the next 10 or 20 years, every one of them would be strengthened if Turkey were a full partner in a Europe that respected religious and cultural diversity and shared devotion to democracy and human rights.

I might say that's one of the reasons I am so pleased by the recent improvement in relationships between Turkey and Greece and why I think it's so important to continue to make progress there, because the difficulties between the two nations are small when compared to the benefits of cooperation and European integration, both to Turkey and to Greece.

As to how I intend to express my support, I will continue to talk to the leaders of Europe.

I take every opportunity that I have to have this discussion. I feel very strongly that one of the four or five key questions to the future of this whole part of the world is whether Turkey is a full partner with the European Union. So I will continue to advocate it.

President Demirel. Thank you.

President Clinton. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 2:15 p.m. in the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey. President Demirel spoke in Turkish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks to the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Ankara *November 15, 1999*

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, distinguished members, it is a great honor for me and my family and for our delegation to appear before this body, the repository of Turkish sovereignty which, as the words behind me affirm, belongs unconditionally and without exception to the people.

I have come to express America's solidarity with the Turkish people at a time of national tragedy and to reaffirm our partnership for a common future. We have been friends for a very long time.

In 1863 the first American college outside the United States, Robert College, opened its doors to the youth of Turkey. It was the only foreign institution allowed along the Bosphorus, precisely because America had never encroached upon Turkish sovereignty. I'm very proud that Prime Minister Ecevit is an alumnus of Robert College.

Earlier in this century, the great founder of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Ataturk, captured America's imagination with his bold reforms. He was called a second George Washington. He appeared on the cover of our *Time* magazine. He corresponded with Members of our Congress. And we moved our Embassy here to Ankara, the capital of his new republic.

In 1927, in a 6-day speech before this body, Ataturk surveyed Turkey's relations with the

countries of the world. And he paid America what I believe was a compliment when he said, and I quote, "The United States is more acceptable than the rest." In an effort to remain more acceptable to you, I promise not to speak for 6 days. But I would like to review our relationship and our future.

At the dawn of the cold war, President Truman committed America's resources to protect Turkey's sovereignty. The Truman doctrine sealed our partnership and laid the basis for the Marshall plan and for America's entire post-war engagement with the rest of the world. Over 50 years now, our alliance has stood the test of time and passed every other test, from Korea to Kosovo. On behalf of all Americans, I thank you for half a century of friendship, mutual respect, and partnership.

Since the cold war ended, we have learned something quite wonderful. We have learned that our friendship does not depend upon a common concern with the Soviet Union, and that in fact, in the post-cold-war era, our partnership has become even more important. Together we are adapting NATO to the demands of a new century. We are partners for peace in the Balkans and the Middle East. We are developing new sources of energy to help the entire region. Last year our trade was over \$6

billion. It has risen 50 percent in the last 5 years alone.

Thanks to the vision of your former President Turgut Ozal, the continuing leadership of President Demirel and Prime Minister Ecevit, and the dynamism of the Turkish people, Turkey has become an engine of regional growth. In the months ahead, together we will launch new projects worth billions of dollars, mostly in the energy sector, to bring jobs to Turkey and to bring our two nations even closer.

This assembly has taken bold steps to lead Turkey into the new century. I want the American press to listen to this. Between June and September, this assembly passed a remarkable 69 laws. I'm going to tell our Congress about that when I get home. *[Laughter]* But I will say this, it is not just the quantity of those laws that count; it is the quality: landmark legislation on Social Security, an international arbitration law, banking reform, laws that took courage and vision. Now, you face a difficult budget decision that requires courage and vision. If you do pass a sound budget, it will strengthen your economy and advance the prospects of a standby IMF agreement, something the United States strongly supports.

On the edge of a new millennium, we have a rare opportunity to reflect upon our journey, two nations that started in very different places, with a shared commitment to democracy, who now must forge a partnership relevant to the new era.

In a sense, we are all here today because of Kemal Ataturk. Not only because he chose Ankara to be the capital, not only because he chose Ankara to be your capital, but because he pledged Turkey's future to the democracy symbolized by this proud assembly. Ironically, he accomplished much of what he did with no help from the Western powers, indeed, against the opposition of most of them. Many tried to carve up Turkey, to reduce it to a rump state. In the face of this, however, Ataturk responded not by closing Turkey up but by opening Turkey to the rest of the world, a decision for which we must all be very grateful.

For better and for worse, the events of that time, when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated and a new Turkey arose, have shaped the history of this entire century. From Bulgaria to Albania to Israel to Arabia, new nations were born, and a century of conflict erupted from the turmoil of shifting borders, unrealized ambitions, and

old hatreds, beginning with the first Balkan war and World War I, all the way to today's struggles in the Middle East and in the former Yugoslavia. Turkey's past is key to understanding the 20th century. But, more importantly, I believe Turkey's future will be critical to shaping the 21st century.

Today I want to take a few minutes to explain why I believe that is true, and what we can do together to realize the future we both want.

Since people have been able to draw maps, they have pointed out the immutable fact of Turkey's geography, that Asia Minor is a bridge between continents. Less than a kilometer separates Europe from Asia at the nearest point along the Bosphorus. And, in reality, there is no separation at all, thanks to the bridges you have built, to the commerce that spans Turkey every day to the communications revolution that links all parts of the world instantaneously.

Turkey's ability to bridge East and West is all the more important when another fact of Turkey's geography is considered. You are almost entirely surrounded by neighbors who are either actively hostile to democracy and peace or struggling against great obstacles to embrace democracy and peace. To the southeast, Iran is witnessing a remarkable debate between proponents of a closed and open society, while Iraq continues to repress its people, threaten its neighbors, and seek weapons of mass destruction. I thank Turkey for its support of Operation Northern Watch, which allows us to deter Saddam's aggression, protect the people of northern Iraq, and avoid another refugee crisis like the one you so courageously met in 1991.

To the south, the Middle East is still roiled with violence but blessed with an historic opportunity to build a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace. Turkey is a force for that peace, as well, through its ties to Israel and the Arab States.

To the northwest lie the Balkans, where in the last decade, seven new democracies have been born, and four wars have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. Turkish forces in NATO helped to end those wars and, thus, to end this century with a powerful affirmation of human dignity and human rights. Today, we are working side by side for an enduring peace in the Balkans, one which not only ends ethnic cleansing but builds genuine cooperation, progress, and prosperity.

To the east, 12 independent nations have emerged from the ruins of the Soviet empire.

There is no more important challenge today than helping them to develop stable, independent, democratic societies. Turkey here also has been a leader, reaching out in particular to nations that share ties of language, culture, and history.

There is still much to be done. We must help Russia to complete its momentous democratic revolution. We must be clear with Russia that its fight against terrorism is right but that the use of indiscriminate force against civilians is wrong, likely to exacerbate the very tensions Russia wants to resolve. We must keep working together to resolve the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. We must secure the region's energy resources in a way that protects the Bosphorus, helps newly free states to stand on their feet, empowers Turkey and Europe's future growth. We'll have a chance to address all these challenges when nearly a third of the world's nations gather at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul this week.

When we step back and look ahead, it is possible to imagine two very different futures over the next generation. Without too much trouble; a pessimist might foresee a dark future, indeed, a Middle East with the peace process shattered, Saddam's aggression unchecked, democracy collapsed in the Caucasus in central Asia, extremism and terror spreading across the region, more violence in the Balkans, military coups, unstoppable nuclear tensions in Pakistan and India.

But there is another vision, one that requires a strong Turkey playing its rightful role at the crossroads of the world, at the meeting place of three great faiths. It is possible to see that brighter future, one of rising prosperity and declining conflict; one in which tolerance is an article of faith, and terrorism is seen, rightly, as a travesty of faith; a future in which people are free to pursue their beliefs and proclaim their heritage; in which women are treated with equal respect; in which nations see no contradiction between preserving traditions and participating in the life of the world; a future of growing respect for human rights that protect our differences and our common humanity; and, specifically, a future in which nations that are predominantly Muslim are increasingly partners with nations that are not, acting in concert in ways, large and small, to realize the shared hopes of their people.

I hope that the next time an American President addresses a nation with a Muslim tradition, he will be able to say that the progress of Indonesia and Nigeria and Morocco, all very different nations, has helped all of us put the lie to the tired claim of an inherent clash of civilizations. As Atatürk said 75 years ago, "Countries vary, but civilization is one." President Kennedy said the same thing in Berlin when he said, "Freedom is indivisible."

All told, there are now billions of people around the region and the world whose future depends upon decisions made in this very room over the next 25 years. Each has a stake in Turkey's success in defining itself as a strong, secular, modern nation, proud of its traditions, fully part of Europe. That will require hard work and vision. You have done much of it already through Özal's reforms, through the actions of this assembly, through the thousands of ways in which the Turkish people daily are forging an energetic and responsive civil society.

The future we want to build together begins with Turkish progress in deepening democracy at home. Nobody wants this more than the people of Turkey. You have created momentum and edicts against torture and a new law that protects the rights of political parties, in the achievements and vitality of this assembly. Avenues are opening for Kurdish citizens of Turkey to reclaim that most basic of birth rights: a normal life.

But there still is far more to be done to realize the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, articulate at the very moment our two countries entered into close relations 50 years ago. That progress will be the most significant sign of Turkey's confidence in looking to the new century, and in many ways, the most meaningful measure of your progress.

We agree with something that was never said more clearly than by the founder of the Turkish Republic: Sovereignty should not be built on fear. Neither America nor Europe nor anyone else has the right to shape your destiny for you. Only you have that right; that, after all, is what democracy is all about. We raise these issues because for all the reasons I have mentioned, we have a profound interest in your success, and we consider ourselves your friends.

Keep in mind, I come from a nation that was founded on the creed that all are created equal; and yet, when we were founded, we had slavery; women could not vote; even men could

not vote unless they owned property. I know something about the imperfect realization of a country's ideals. We have had a long journey in America, from our founding to where we are, but the journey has been worth making.

And in our own troubled century, about to close, we have clearly learned that when writers and journalists freely express themselves, they exercise not only a fundamental right but fuel the exchange of ideals essential to prosperity and growth. When peaceful outlets exist to express normal human differences, the peace is preserved, not shattered. When people can celebrate their culture and faith in ways that do not infringe upon the rights of others, moderates do not become extremists, and extremists do not become misguided heroes.

A second way to shape the future lies in reducing tensions in the Aegean, something that will require hard work by both Turkey and Greece. Believe me, I appreciate how much history lies behind this troubled relationship. But people are beginning to see the possibilities that can be created by a new and better history. Prime Minister Ecevit's government has taken important strides in that direction. I agree with something he once said to me, "There is just as much as history and geography uniting you across the Aegean as there is dividing you."

Greece is also taking some risks for peace and recognizing as never before that Turkey's destiny lies in Europe. You came together to promote stability in the Balkans, something that was, in fairness, far more difficult for them to do than for Turkey or the United States. The people of both nations were movingly joined again when tragedy struck you both in the form of earthquakes, first in August and then, horribly, again last week. Every person who lost a loved one or a home to those earthquakes knows that there was no such thing then as a Turkish or a Greek tragedy. They were human tragedies, and the world will never forget the humanity each nation displayed toward the other.

We must also work hard to reach a just settlement in Cyprus, and I am very pleased that yesterday the parties accepted Secretary-General Annan's invitation to start proximity talks in New York on December 3d. Their goal is to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations, leading to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. I hope these talks will bring us a step closer to lasting peace. I believe a negotiated

settlement is the best way to meet the fundamental interests of all the parties, including real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

Finally, the future we want to build together will require foresight on the part of our other allies in Europe. The foresight to see that our vision of a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in all of history will never be complete unless and until it embraces Turkey. The United States is not a member of the European Union, but I have consistently urged European integration to move further and faster, and that includes Turkey.

There are still those who see Europe in narrower terms. Their Europe might stop at this mountain range or that body of water or, worse, where people stopped to worship God in a different way. But there is a growing and encouraging consensus that knows Europe is an idea as much as a place, the idea that people can find strength in diversity of opinions, cultures, and faiths, as long as they are commonly committed to democracy and human rights; the idea that people can be united without being uniform, and that if the community we loosely refer to as the West is an idea, it has no fixed frontiers. It stretches as far as the frontiers of freedom can go.

Ten years ago this month the Berlin Wall tumbled; a curtain lifted across Europe. The best way to celebrate that anniversary is to rekindle the feeling of liberation for a new generation. The best way to complete the unity glimpsed in 1989 is to integrate all of southeastern Europe into the idea and institutions of Europe in 1999 and the years ahead. That means democracy in Serbia. It means peace in the Aegean. It means a successful democratic Turkey fully welcomed into the European community.

At the beginning of this new century, in which we have so much hope, there is great optimism for both our countries. We have much to be proud of, but we must never forget that Turkey is built on the ruins of many ancient civilizations that once were every bit as optimistic as we are today. To avoid their fate, we must back up our words and our hopes with deeds. We must acknowledge the challenges still before us. We must not relinquish the confidence that brought us everything in this century as it becomes our history, but we must not lose the

humility that this century's great troubles leave to every thinking person.

Turkey has come so far over so many barriers in so short a time. It was, after all, only 61 years ago this week that Ataturk died. Prime Minister Ecevit was one of the schoolchildren who filed into the palace to pay their respects to the fallen leader. All of you are the youth he advised in his most unselfish mandate near the end: to continue to think for yourselves, to always reexamine your beliefs, and to reshape democracy, generation after generation after generation.

What Turkey has generated in this century is a living example of what all people can do to claim a better destiny for themselves. A new century now lies untested before us. It is an

enormous opportunity. By deepening the democratic revolution embodied by, and still emanating from, this very chamber, Turkey can do more than serve its own people well. By your example and your exertion, you can truly inspire the world.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:20 p.m. in the General Assembly Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Yildirim Akbulut and Deputy Speaker Ahmet Ibrahim; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; and United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Statement on Federal Regulations on Children's Health Insurance *November 15, 1999*

Today I am proud to announce a new rule that will make it easier for children to get health insurance coverage and tougher for noncustodial parents to avoid paying for it. This regulation, issued by the Department of Health and Human Services, streamlines the process of holding non-custodial parents to child support agreements that require them to provide for their children's health care needs. The Department of Labor also published a companion regulation today providing guidance to group health plans about this new process. With these rules, we are helping to guarantee that children get the health insurance they have been promised.

These new steps build on my administration's longstanding commitment to effective child support enforcement. Since 1992, collections have increased by 80 percent, and the number of families receiving support has increased by 60 percent. Just last year approximately 2.8 million parents delinquent in child support payments were identified, and child support enforcement measures that I signed into law are projected to increase collections by billions of dollars over the next 10 years. We all have a responsibility for the well-being of the next generation. Today's action helps ensure that parents paying child support meet that responsibility.

Statement on the Report on Implementation of the Good Friday Accord *November 15, 1999*

I am heartened by George Mitchell's interim report issued in Belfast today, stating that he is increasingly confident that a way will be found to resolve the current impasse in implementing the Good Friday accord. I look forward to the parties' statements on their positions in the next day or so.

Senator Mitchell has concluded that the pro-agreement parties and the governments share the view that devolution should occur and the political institutions should be established at the earliest possible date. He has also concluded that it is common ground that decommissioning of paramilitary weapons should occur as quickly

as possible and that the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning, led by General de Chastelain, should play the central role in achieving this, under the terms of the Good Friday accord.

I applaud the persistence that the parties have shown through the last 10 weeks of grueling

negotiations. Now the parties must move forward to implement the agreement in full and carry out their obligations as spelled out in the Good Friday accord.

I want to express my personal appreciation to George Mitchell for his remarkable work.

Statement on United Nations Sanctions Against the Taliban

November 15, 1999

Today the President of the United Nations Security Council certified that the economic sanctions against the Taliban laid out in Resolution 1267 one month ago are now in effect. These sanctions are being implemented because the Taliban has spurned the unanimous demand of the Security Council and refused to deliver Usama bin Ladin to a country where he can face justice for his acts of terrorism, including the bombing of America's Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

The international community has again spoken with one voice, and its resolve to combat the threat of international terrorism is clear. The U.N. sanctions parallel the unilateral ones that the United States placed on the Taliban in July and will result in the restriction of landing rights of airlines owned, leased, or operated by or on

behalf of the Taliban, the freezing of Taliban accounts around the world, and the prohibition of investment in any undertaking owned or controlled by the Taliban. I ask all the nations of the world to do their utmost so that these sanctions are implemented fully and swiftly.

The message to the Taliban is unmistakable: bin Ladin's training camps must be closed; the threats and operational activity must cease, and bin Ladin must answer for his crimes. The people of Afghanistan have already paid a high price in isolation because of the Taliban's continued harboring of this terrorist, and that toll will now increase. It is time for the Taliban to heed the will of the United Nations and end the threat of terrorism that emanates from within Afghanistan.

Remarks on Receiving the Order of the State of the Turkish Republic Award in Ankara

November 15, 1999

First of all, let me thank you for this beautiful Order of State award. You know, in my country, they give you these awards normally when you're one step away from death. *[Laughter]* It's quite a wonderful thing to receive one when at least you still feel quite normal. *[Laughter]* And particularly, an award that symbolizes our shared values and the long friendship between our two countries, one that goes back in many ways to the beginning of our country and, clearly, for the last 50 years, back to the beginning of the Truman Doctrine and the commitment

of the United States to the security and integrity of Turkey.

In these last 50 years, we have been partners from Korea to Kosovo, against aggression and oppression, and as we look ahead to the future, we will have many opportunities for richer and deeper partnerships.

I would just briefly observe that it is an irony of history that we are on the edge of a new millennium—which will be shaped by unbelievable advances in technology, an explosion in information, and great leaps forward in science—but the biggest problem the world has is that

everywhere people are too much in the grip of the oldest difficulty of human societies: We still are prone to fear people who are different than ourselves.

And so, all across the world, we see ethnic, racial, religious conflicts. We see people remembering old reasons for geopolitical difficulties, when new opportunities for cooperation are staring them right in the face. And it is for those of us who are moving into this new millennium to leave our children a more unified vision of human society and of human cooperation across national lines, one that gives all children, without regard to their station or birth, a chance

to live up to their dreams—boys and girls alike; Muslims, Jews, Christians alike; people who come from any part of the world.

I hope that we can be faithful, Turkey and the United States, to the ideals and dreams of our founders and, together, leave that legacy of a unifying vision of human life.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:50 p.m. in the Reception Hall at the Presidential Palace. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey in Ankara November 15, 1999

President and Mrs. Demirel, Prime Minister and Mrs. Ecevit, to the government coalition partners, the other parliamentary leaders, Mr. Speaker, distinguished Turkish and American friends.

Let me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for the wonderful reception. I am delighted to see so many friends of our two countries at a moment of great optimism for our relationship, tempered by great sadness over the tragedy of the earthquakes you have suffered.

President Eisenhower visited Turkey for a day in 1959. President Bush came for 2 days in 1991. I am proud to be spending 5 days here. Every visit seems to be twice as long as the last one. [Laughter] The good news is, our partnership is becoming more important every year. The bad news is that if American Presidents keep this up, some day one of us will not be welcome here. [Laughter]

Our relations go back to the beginning of the United States. Not long after our country was created, a high official, the Grand Senor, at what was then Constantinople, saw a ship flying the American flag sail into the harbor. Because the flag with stars on it was considered to be a lucky sign, he predicted then that the people of Turkey and the United States would enjoy a long friendship. Now, his prophecy has come to pass.

Our friendship deepened more than 50 years ago, when another ship sailed into the Bosphorus. I'm told that every citizen of your country then alive remembers the day the United States ship *Missouri* arrived to protect the peace in the uncertain days following World War II. That sent a message that America will always be there when our Turkish friends need us.

Since then, it's been equally true that each time our common interests have been imperiled, the Turkish people have been there alongside America. This fall another American vessel came to Turkey, under tragic circumstances, when the *Kearsarge* arrived to assist the victims of the earthquake. Now Turkey again has suffered natural disaster. And again I send the same simple message: Please, let us know what we can do to help, and we will be there.

How we use our friendship will do much to define the century we are about to begin. What we do together will help to determine whether peace takes hold in the Middle East, whether tolerance takes root in the Balkans, whether young democracies succeed in the Caucasus. The way we do business together will help to determine whether our people have the jobs and reliable sources of energy necessary well into the new century. What we have stood for together, most recently in Kosovo, will help to decide whether the coming century is marked

by democracy rooted in our common humanity or by tyranny feeding off hatred.

I must take a moment tonight to express my appreciation for the contributions to the United States of our citizens of Turkish descent. Just last week a remarkable Turkish-American, named Kenan Sahin, gave \$100 million to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology out of gratitude for the education he received there. Ahmet Ertegun was the son of a Turkish Ambassador to the United States who grew up in Washington. But instead of attending diplomatic events like this one, he spent most of his time going out to hear rhythm and blues musicians. When he founded Atlantic Records, he fundamentally changed the history of modern American music in ways that have greatly enriched every single citizen of our country and hundreds of millions of people throughout the world.

When we finished shaking hands with all of you tonight, the President said, "Well, I know that was a long line, but I wanted you to see the face of modern Turkey." Well, I have had the opportunity to see the face of modern Turkey, and I am confident that when it comes

to our relationship and our common endeavors, the best is yet to come.

Mr. President, we are grateful for your leadership and all you have done in your distinguished career. Fifty years ago you came to the United States to study and work among us. When we celebrated our Bicentennial in 1976, you wrote a moving essay describing how your first visit persuaded you of the importance of, and I use your words, "providing full opportunities to all citizens, regardless of birth, origin, and creed."

Mr. President, though your engineering days are over, I am proud of the bridges you have helped us to build together. I ask all of you to join Hillary, me, and our American delegation in a toast to the President and Mrs. Demirel, Prime Minister and Mrs. Ecevit, and the people of Turkey.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:05 p.m. in the Main Dining Room at the Presidential Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Demirel's wife, Nazmiye; Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey and his wife, Rahsan; and Turkish Grand National Assembly Speaker Yildirim Akbulut.

Remarks to Earthquake Survivors in Izmit, Turkey

November 16, 1999

Thank you for making us feel so welcome. I want to especially thank the Governor, the mayor, the Deputy Governors who went on tour. I want to thank the Yoldas family and the other families who took us into their tents and gave us a feeling for what your lives are like here. I want to thank the teachers and the students who took us into the schools. I want to thank the children who sang us songs and gave us their posters and gave us their little work of clay. I want to thank all of you who have worked hard to clear away the remaining damage done by the earthquake and to begin the process of rebuilding.

I know this is a time of great uncertainty for you, especially since another earthquake just hit not too far from here. I want you to know that most of the tents that you are staying in here came from the United States, and we have sent 500 more winterized tents to that province

to help the people who have been made homeless by the earthquake there. We are also working hard to help the reconstruction process and help Turkey's businesses get back in business. We want everyone to be able to go back to work as soon as possible.

The one thing I would like to say today—I know I speak for my wife and my daughter—is that we were very, very moved by having family contact with other families. And we could imagine what our lives would be like if such a thing were to happen to us, as we have seen it happen to families in the United States.

We were so impressed that a total of 87 other countries came forward to help the people of Turkey who were hurt in the earthquake. And we were very grateful that one of the countries that came forward to help was your neighbor Greece. And then, when the Greeks had their

earthquake, the Turkish people came forward to help them.

I hope the ordinary people in Greece and Turkey who have suffered from these terrible natural disasters can send a clear message to the leaders that the people of this region can get along, and they should get along, and when they do get along, our children's lives and futures are better.

Now, in the meanwhile, I want you to know that we in the United States will do everything we can to help you until your lives return to normal. And we will help those people in the

area hit by the most recent earthquake. We will stay with you and work with you. And I just want to urge you to keep your spirits up, keep the smiles on your children's faces, keep helping the people who lost their loved ones in the earthquake, and know that together we will get through this to better days.

Thank you very, very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. at the Dogukisla tent city. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Kemal Onal of Izmit Province; and Mayor Sefa Sirmen of Izmit.

Remarks to American and Turkish Business Leaders in Istanbul, Turkey November 16, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. First, to my good friend President Demirel, thank you for your remarks and for the wonderful visit that you have hosted for Hillary and Chelsea and me and our entire American party, culminating in the magnificent dinner last night and the presentation of the award, which I will treasure always. Thank you, Mr. Koc, for gathering this distinguished group of Turkish business leaders. To the American delegation here, Secretary Albright and others, thank you very much for being here.

And I want to say a special word of appreciation to Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker for her willingness to lead this group. The presence of Nancy and her husband, Senator Howard Baker, here—literally, two of the most outstanding Members of the United States Senate since the Second World War—is a great tribute to the importance of the relationships between the United States and Turkey. I am grateful for their service to our country and grateful for their leadership. And Nancy, thank you very much for your giving your time to this important endeavor. I thank you very much.

I am honored to be in this historic city of two continents and three empires, now the modern hub of Turkey's free market democracy. I am thrilled to be in this magnificent building, in this beautiful room. It's almost enough to make you miss the empire. *[Laughter]* Unfortunately, at least if we still had the empire, I'm sure I wouldn't be invited to lunch here today,

so—*[laughter]*—I think we're getting the best of both worlds.

I'm honored to be with all of you who have contributed so much to the growth and strength of this country. I thank the Turkish-U.S. Business Council and the American-Turkish Council for all they have done to promote ties between our two nations and to improve the welfare of our peoples.

President Demirel has said that Turkey is situated at the center of the world. That was true in ancient times; it was true in the 20th century, even after the end of the Ottoman Empire. It will be even more true in the 21st century. What Turkey does, and what we do together in the coming years, will help to determine whether stability takes roots in the Balkans and the Aegean; whether true and lasting peace comes to the people of the Middle East; whether democratic transformations in the States of the former Soviet empire, from the Caucasus to central Asia, actually succeeds.

Clearly, economic developments will have a lot to do with our success in all these endeavors. The steps we take together today to improve the climate for trade, investment, and jobs will help to bring this region together, to reduce tensions, to strengthen democratic governments. In turn, the strengthening of freedom and stability will do even more to spur prosperity.

There is hardly a place in the world where the intersection of politics and economics is more clearly complete. Therefore, I would like

to take just a couple of moments to make a few points about what we have been doing and where we are headed together. First, let me applaud the bold economic reforms taken by Turkey under Prime Minister Ecevit, including landmark legislation on Social Security, international arbitration, banking regulation, and the budget. These are part of a global trend of opening markets, strengthening financial stability, and imposing fiscal discipline, while working to ensure that society's most vulnerable are not left behind. These measures will improve the climate for trade and investment and will lead to more jobs and higher incomes for the people of Turkey.

Second, I am very pleased, to echo President Demirel, that trade between our two countries has reached new heights, rising 50 percent in the last 5 years alone, now surpassing \$6 billion. We are the fourth largest supplier of exports to Turkey and the second largest market for exports from Turkey.

Following the August earthquake and the pressures it put on the economy here, we have gone the extra mile to be flexible to Turkish textile exports, and recently taken important steps to further expand trade and investment between our two countries. In September, during Prime Minister Ecevit's visit, we signed a trade and investment framework agreement to cut through redtape and work through disagreements in our trading relationship. Our Overseas Private Investment Corporation will soon double its activity in Turkey to more than \$1 billion. Our Export-Import Bank will delegate \$1 billion in lending authority to 12 Turkish banks—powerful evidence of our confidence in Turkey's economy and our commitment to strengthen it. In turn, Turkey's decision to open its market to cattle imports will benefit United States ranchers and Turkish consumers. We're also on the verge of completing some major agreements: a \$30 million contract for a vessel-tracking system to help keep the crowded Bosphorus safe and protect the environment; a framework agreement for joint irrigation projects in southeastern Turkey; and a half-dozen power plants worth some \$5 billion. These projects will be good for both countries, and I hope we can conclude all of them soon.

Third, we are moving ahead, as the President said, to build energy security in the new century. We've made great strides toward the proposed Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline and the trans-Caspian

gas pipeline. These will help to diversify our sources of energy and help the newly independent countries of the Caucasus and central Asia stand on their own feet. They will put Turkey, our trusted ally, front and center in the effort to create a secure energy future.

I'll bet if you polled the citizens of the United States and Turkey, over 90 percent of them would never have heard of the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline or the trans-Caspian gas pipeline. But if we do this right, 20 years from now, 90 percent of them will look back and say thank you for making a good decision at a critical time.

Fourth, greater economic cooperation and integration is vital to the future of Turkey and its southeastern European neighbors. A central challenge, of course, is building stronger economic ties between Turkey and Greece as a part of a larger effort for reconciliation and cooperation between your two countries. I am very pleased the private sector is leading the way. But the Turkish-Greek Business Council is back in business, and both nations are talking about increasing bilateral trade and tourism.

Political and economic forces here, again, reinforce each other. In order for our two NATO Allies, Greece and Turkey, to be full partners in the European Union, bilateral relationships must improve. In order for southeastern Europe to overcome the Balkan wars in Bosnia and Kosovo and the legacy of communism in the other states of the southeast, the nations of the region must draw closer to each other, and then together draw closer to the new Europe.

Again, I say these efforts can only succeed if Greece and Turkey are leading the effort. Because of the earthquakes and the human response to them by both Turks and Greeks; because of the leadership, outstanding leadership in the Turkish and Greek Governments; because of the Cyprus talks just announced, we now have a genuine opportunity for fundamental and enduring reconciliations between your two lands. I will do everything I can to help you seize this chance. I believe seizing this chance will have enormous economic, as well as political, benefit to the ordinary citizens of Turkey well into the next century.

The last point I want to make is this: If we want strong economic growth and lasting prosperity, it is essential that we work everywhere to deepen freedom and democracy in our own countries and around the world. I applaud the

strides Turkey is making in this regard, not because the Americans or the Europeans want it, but because it's the right thing for the Turkish people. And I encourage further progress in these areas, such as freedom of expression, because it is right, and because we in America have a great stake in your stability, in Turkey's ability to reap the full benefits of the information age and the global economy, in Turkey's full integration in Europe, in Turkey's full success as a modern, prosperous, secular society bridging East and West.

I am proud that we are working as partners with you to build better lives for our citizens, and I am proud to have had the opportunity to represent the people of the United States on this historic trip.

I would like to close by asking my fellow Americans to join me in a toast to President Demirel, the leaders of this organization, and the people of our host nation, Turkey.

[At this point, the participants drank a toast.]

The President. This is a beautiful painting. Wait, I want to say this. You know, I just bought a new home. *[Laughter]* In my attempt to fulfill the last ambition of my life, I am trying to follow in the steps of Senator Howard Baker and become the husband of a United States Senator. And this will look very good in that home. Thank you very much.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:25 p.m. in the Palace Dining Hall at the Imperial Chalet. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; Mustafa V. Koc, chairman, Turkish-U.S. Business Council of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK); former Senator Nancy Kassebaum Baker, chairman, American-Turkish Council, and her husband, former Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr.; and Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Demirel.

Statement on Environmental Review of Trade Agreements November 16, 1999

Today Vice President Gore and I are taking two important steps to ensure that our efforts to expand trade reflect our strong commitment to promoting environmental protection worldwide. America has proved time and again that a strong economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. The new steps I am announcing today will help ensure that we and other nations do our utmost to protect our environment as we work together to build a growing, prosperous global economy.

First, I have signed Executive order requiring careful assessment and written review of the potential environmental impacts of major trade agreements. These reviews, with full opportunity for public input, will better enable us to fully integrate environmental considerations into the

development of U.S. positions in trade negotiations.

Second, I am issuing a declaration of principles on trade and environment to guide our negotiators in the new round of World Trade Organization negotiations that will begin later this month in Seattle. Through these principles, we will seek to ensure that trade rules continue to be support of environmental protections at home and abroad.

I urge other WTO members to work with us to advance these principles when we meet in Seattle.

NOTE: The Executive order of November 16 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Federal Labor Relations Authority

November 16, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 701 of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-454; 5 U.S.C. 7104(e)), I have the pleasure of transmitting to you the twentieth Annual Report of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for Fiscal Year 1998.

The report includes information on the cases heard and decisions rendered by the Federal

Labor Relations Authority, the General Counsel of the Authority, and the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

November 16, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Railroad Retirement Board

November 16, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Railroad Retirement Board for Fiscal Year 1998, pursuant to the provisions of section 7(b)(6) of

the Railroad Retirement Act and section 12(1) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

November 16, 1999.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iran

November 16, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared

in Executive Order 12170 of November 14, 1979.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

November 16, 1999.

Statement on the Federal Communications Commission's E-Rate

November 17, 1999

Today the Federal Communications Commission announced that the "E-rate" will help con-

nect over one million classrooms to the Internet. This is a giant step toward the goal that Vice

President Gore and I set to connect every classroom and library to the Internet by the year 2000.

Children all over the United States are now able to log on to the Library of Congress, get on-line mentoring from a scientist halfway around the world, and acquire the skills they need to succeed in the high-tech economy of the 21st century, because of the E-rate. Parents also benefit by now being able to communicate

more frequently with teachers and follow the academic performance of their children. Combined with investments that my administration is making in multimedia computers, teacher training, and high-quality educational software, the E-rate is putting the future at the fingertips of our children. It is also helping to bridge the digital divide by providing the deepest discounts to the schools and libraries that need it most.

Remarks at the Opening of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Summit in Istanbul

November 18, 1999

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. President Demirel, Chairman Vollebaek, Mr. Secretary-General, Miss Degn, distinguished leaders, it's a great honor for me to be able to say a few words on behalf of the United States.

First, I thank President Demirel, his government, and the people of Turkey for a wonderful reception and for the heroic example they have set in their recovery from the earthquakes. I thank the Norwegian Chairman-in-Office for remarkable leadership in a very challenging year.

We come together for many reasons, first, to reaffirm our commitment to the OSCE, a unique institution grounded in the principle that the root of human insecurity is the denial of human rights. Here today are leaders of more than 20 countries that were not even in existence when the Final Act was signed in Helsinki in 1975, because they were not free.

In country after country, the OSCE's ideas of human rights and the rule of law are now ascendant. A quarter century after Helsinki, the question is not whether democracy will survive but when it will be embraced in every European country and how it will work in every country.

Clearly, we must adapt the OSCE to meet new realities. The charter we've negotiated recognizes that the greatest threats to our security today are as likely to come from conflicts that begin within states as between them.

The OSCE has responded to this challenge with courage and distinction, from the Balkans to the Baltics, organizing elections, monitoring human rights, reducing ethnic and religious tensions. We must give the OSCE the tools to

respond even more effectively. I am pleased the OSCE is endorsing the REACT concept, which will enable it to deploy experts in elections, law, media, and administration rapidly to nations seeking to prevent or recover from conflict. That way, time and lives won't be lost while we organize from scratch to meet every crisis.

I'm pleased we're endorsing the achievements of the Stability Pact, and pledging to support its work, for there must be a magnet of unifying force more powerful than the forces of division and fear in order for southeastern Europe to reach its full potential.

I'm pleased we have recognized the needs to fill the gap that civilian police forces must fill between unarmed monitors and military forces, and I hope that all of us will be willing to strengthen the OSCE's capacity to meet that need.

Now, in addition to making the OSCE more operational, we have to uphold its principles in hard cases. In that spirit, I would like to say a few words about the situation in Chechnya. First of all, I associate myself with the previous remarks of the German Chancellor, which I think made the case very well. But I think I speak for everyone here when we say we want Russia to overcome the scourge of terrorism and lawlessness. We believe Russia has not only the right but the obligation to defend its territorial integrity. We want to see Russia a stable, prosperous, strong democracy with secure borders, strong defenses, and a leading voice in world affairs.

I have often asked myself, as I hope all of you have, what I would do if I were in President Yeltsin's place. I think before any of us sit in judgment, I should be able to answer that question.

Russia has faced rebellion within and related violence beyond the borders of Chechnya. It has responded with a military strategy designed to break the resistance and end the terror. The strategy has led to substantial civilian casualties and very large flows of refugees.

The first thing I would like to say is that most of the critics of Russian policies deplore Chechen violence and terrorism and extremism, and support the objectives of Russia to preserve its territorial integrity and to put down the violence and the terrorism. What they fear is that the means Russia has chosen will undermine its ends, that if attacks on civilians continue, the extremism Russia is trying to combat will only intensify, and the sovereignty Russia rightly is defending will be more and more rejected by ordinary Chechens who are not part of the terror or the resistance. The strength Russia rightly is striving to build, therefore, could be eroded by an endless cycle of violence. The global integration Russia has rightly sought to advance, with our strong support, will be hindered.

Russia's friends are united, I believe, in what we think should happen: appropriate measures to end terrorism, protection of innocent civilians, a commitment to allow refugees to return in safety, access for relief groups, and a common effort to rebuild. In other words, in order to isolate and undermine the terrorists, there must be a political dialog and a political settlement, not with terrorists but with those who are willing to seek a peaceful resolution.

The OSCE and others can play a role in facilitating that dialog, as they did once before, and that is the role the OSCE was meant to play. Meanwhile, I think we should all make it clear that we are prepared to do more, through the United Nations, through this organization, and through any other available forum, to combat terror wherever it exists.

Finally, let me say I have to respectfully disagree with my friend President Yeltsin in his characterization of U.S.-led NATO aggression in Yugoslavia. Consider Bosnia, where the world community waited 4 years, and we saw 2½ million refugees and 250,000 deaths placed on the altar of ethnic cleansing. I honor and praise

the courage of the Secretary-General and the United Nations for acknowledging just a few days ago the grievous error of the U.N. in waiting so long to act, and that wait being responsible in part for the travesty of Srebrenica.

Consider Kosovo, where the world community did not wait, but there were still thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands of refugees. But unlike Bosnia, because we acted more quickly, they are almost all home today, coming to grips with the challenge of the coming winter. So I believe we did the right thing. And I do not believe there will ever be a time in human affairs when we will ever be able to say, we simply cannot criticize this or that or the other action because it happened within the territorial borders of a single nation.

President Yeltsin, one of the most thrilling experiences of my life as a citizen of the world before I became President was when you stood up on that tank in Moscow, when they tried to take the freedom of the Russian people away, and you're standing there on that tank, said to those people, "You can do this, but you'll have to kill me first."

If they had put you in jail instead of electing you President, I would hope that every leader of every country around this table would have stood up for you and for freedom in Russia and not said, "Well, that is an internal Russian affair that we cannot be a part of." I don't think we have any choice but to try to work for common objectives across lines. And I certainly associate myself with any efforts that we can make together to fight terrorism within any nation's borders.

Let me just say this in closing. We are here in Turkey, and it's an appropriate place to say this, thinking of Chechnya, thinking of all these issues, thinking of the trouble in the Caucasus and the trouble in the Balkans. So much of the future of the 21st century will turn on developments in the vast region that lies between traditional notions of Asia and Europe, between the Muslim world and the West, between the parts of our community that are stable and prosperous and democratic and those still struggling to build basic human security and freedom.

The people who live in these crossroads face truly momentous challenges, and we're dealing with some of them today. They are trying to preserve their unique heritage and participate fully in the modern world. And there is no single, simple answer to all their problems, but

there is a guidepost: this OSCE and its principle that human differences should be resolved democratically, with respect for diversity and the basic rights and freedom of every individual. That was true in 1975. It is even more true today.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:48 a.m. at the Ciragan Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; Chairman-in-Office Knut Vollebaek, OSCE; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; Helle Degn, Chair, Foreign Policy Council, Denmark; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

Remarks on the Budget Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters in Istanbul

November 18, 1999

The President. I am very pleased that our administration and the Congress have reached agreement on the first budget of the 21st century. This budget is a victory, and a hard-won victory, for the American people. It is a victory for our children who now will have better education; a victory for our families who deserve the safer streets and cleaner environment this budget will bring; a victory for farmers, for veterans, for our soldiers in uniform. It is a victory for all who agree that America should meet our responsibilities and maintain our leadership in the world. Simply put, it's a budget that meets our priorities, supports our values, and invests in our future.

The budget makes progress on several important fronts. The first budget of the 21st century puts education first, as it should. That's why I stood firm for our commitment to hire 100,000 highly qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades. I am pleased that Congress is going to fulfill that promise, and I am also pleased that this budget doubles funds for after-school and summer school programs and supports greater accountability for results by helping communities turn around or shut down failing schools.

The budget makes America a safer place. It invests in our COPS program, which already has funded 100,000 community police officers for our streets and helped to give us the lowest crime rate in 25 years. This agreement will help to hire up to 50,000 more community police officers targeted to neighborhoods where crime rates are still too high.

It strengthens our efforts to preserve natural areas and protect our environment. I am very

pleased we successfully opposed antienvironmental riders that put special interests above the national interest.

The budget will also make it possible for millions of Americans with disabilities to join the work force without fear of losing their health care, a terrific advance in the quality of our national life.

Finally, this budget strengthens America's role of leadership in the world by paying our dues and arrears to the United Nations, by meeting our commitments to the Middle East peace process, by making critical investments in debt relief for the poorest countries of the world, by funding efforts to safeguard nuclear weapons and expertise in Russia.

When I insisted that Congress keep working until it finished the job, I hoped and believed we could make progress in all these areas. I believe we can maintain our fiscal discipline, continue to pay down our national debt, and still make the investments we must in our people and our future. That is what we have achieved, and we have done so by working together.

I want to thank the leaders of both parties for their roles in this agreement, and I want to say a special word of thanks to the Democratic leaders and the members of my party in both Houses without whom my struggle for 100,000 teachers, 50,000 police, greater investments in the environment, and paying our U.N. dues could simply not have succeeded. I thank them very much.

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Now, let me just say one other thing, then I'll answer the questions. We are

about to start the holiday season, and then we'll begin again. And in the months ahead, I think we have to stay focused on the critical business of this Nation that is still undone, from commonsense gun safety legislation to meaningful hate crimes legislation, from a real raise in the minimum wage to a real Patients' Bill of Rights, from strengthening Social Security to modernizing Medicare and adding a prescription drug benefit. I urge Congress to work with me in meeting these goals in the same bipartisan spirit it took to reach this very important budget agreement.

Thank you.

Across-the-Board Budget Cut

Q. Mr. President, just a week ago, when the Republicans were calling for an across-the-board budget cut of about a half a percent, just a tenth of a percent more than the one that you accepted, you said that it was unacceptable. What makes this one acceptable, sir, and would the budget as the Republicans have written it still, in your opinion, dip into the Social Security surplus?

The President. Well, first of all, when I remember saying it was unacceptable, they were advocating a one percent across the board which some thought would have to be 6 percent to avoid getting in the Social Security Trust Fund. This one is, I think, about a third, a little more than a third of what their last offer was on one percent.

It also is written in such a way as to preserve the management flexibility of the departments so that we can fulfill the mission. Let me give you just one example. When the Pentagon—do you remember when the one percent across-the-board proposal was made and the Pentagon said, "Gosh, we may have to lay off 38,000 uniform and non-uniform personnel?" That was on the assumption that they would have to take the across-the-board dollar amount but fulfill every mandate Congress had imposed in the defense budget.

And so now they've given the Secretaries some flexibility so that we can maintain the core responsibilities of Government. Furthermore, we now have agreements in education and in the environment and in other areas which have raised the investment level to such a point that we can take that across-the-board cut, still have a real increase, still be moving forward. So I think we're in a very different environment than

we were just a few days ago, and I'm quite pleased by this.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, President Yeltsin was pretty tough in defending his military actions in Chechnya and saying that he was going to deal with bandits and terrorists. In your private meeting, was he just as frank? I mean, could you describe the talk and tell us what happened?

The President. Yes. He was very vigorous, and so was I; and you know, we've met together many times. We have a very good personal chemistry, but it didn't stop us from our clear disagreement here.

I would never criticize anyone taking vigorous action against terrorism. I think that's very important. The real question is whether or not the nature of this uprising in Chechnya can be solved exclusively by a military strategy. And I think you could see—you can sense in this audience—it's not just the United States; it's virtually all the Europeans don't believe that an exclusively military strategy can prevail, that it will lead to greater than necessary civilian casualties and greater than necessary refugees.

So I can only tell you that he stated his position. I stated mine. But I urged them to try to listen to Russia's friends at this conference and try to find a way that we could work together and move this thing forward. And I am hopeful that you will see some progress here before we leave. I can't say for sure that you will. I hope you will.

Q. Mr. President, you made some conciliatory remarks during your speech. Does that reflect the feeling that maybe you've pushed him as far as you can rhetorically and through any kind of action the Government can take?

The President. I don't know. Everybody else here thought that I was pretty aggressive.

Q. Well, you referred to standing up to the tanks and so forth.

The President. But the point I was trying to make here—let me just say there are two separate issues here. One is—and I think this is worth taking a second. There are two separate issues here. One is President Yeltsin's view that what they're doing is right in Chechnya and the differences of opinion we have. The second is the general Russian view with which I take very strong exception that no one should, in effect, comment on or interfere with any internal affair of any other nation. And you heard

him refer to American-led NATO aggression in the Balkans.

And so I responded very vigorously about Bosnia, about Kosovo. And the point I made was, when I was very personally complimentary of him is, when he stood up on that tank to save Russian democracy, suppose he hadn't prevailed. Suppose the Russian military had taken him down off the tank, thrown him in jail, and announced they were going to execute him.

I would hope that the entire world represented around that table, that OSCE table today, would have gone into an absolute uproar of outrage about it and would have saved his life and helped to restore democracy. That's the point I was trying to make, that there are times

in the world we live in today when we are forced to make judgments about things that happen within the borders of other countries because they have an impact beyond their borders and because they violate internationally accepted norms of human rights. That's what happened in Bosnia; that's what happened in Kosovo. I think I did the right thing. And I hope it registered on the Russians, and I hope we're going to make some progress. I think we are.

I'll see you all some more in the next day or two, but I've got to go to this lunch.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. at the Ciragan Palace.

Remarks at a Signing Ceremony for the Baku-Ceyhan and Trans-Caspian Gas Pipeline Agreements in Istanbul *November 18, 1999*

Thank you very much, President Demirel, Prime Minister Bondevik, and especially to the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, for whom this day is especially meaningful.

Today is the culmination of a long effort and a new beginning. For centuries, the Caspian region has been critical to the crossroads of human events, but never more so than today. These agreements, which were just signed, are truly historic. They will advance the prosperity and security of a region critical to the future of the entire world. What happens to these lands on the ancient silk road will have an impact on everything from the future of Russia to the security of Europe to the relationship between the West and the Muslim world to the strength of the global economy and the continued growth of the American economy.

As has already been said, the United States has worked intensively with all these countries on the Baku-Ceyhan and trans-Caspian pipelines. We have done so for four very good reasons.

First, wise energy development can strengthen the independence of the newly independent states around the Caspian, helping them to stand on their feet and shape their own destiny, and it can open a commercial and political bridge

between central Asia and the West. These have been priorities of my administration since my first day in the White House.

Second, the construction of these pipelines will prove how much more countries have to gain from economic and commercial bonds rather than from political rivalries.

Third, the natural wealth of the Caspian will make our global energy supply more secure and more diversified. These pipelines will be an insurance policy for the entire world, helping to ensure that our energy resources pass through multiple routes, not a single choke point.

And finally—and this is so important; President Demirel mentioned it earlier—but through wise planning and modern technology, energy development can take place without undue risk to the environment. That means that the Bosphorus, the beautiful waterway that we are situated on today, the true lifeblood of this great nation of Turkey, will not be desecrated by oil spills because of these pipelines.

Since 1995, the United States has advocated the creation of multiple pipelines in the Caspian region to ensure energy producers have choices about how to get production to the international market. Several already are in place or under construction. I want all of you to know that we will continue to support your efforts and

our energy companies as they work with you. Our diplomats and energy experts will help to facilitate solutions that meet the needs of all the Caspian states in Turkey. Secretary Richardson's presence here today is evidence of our continuing commitment.

We understand that today represents just the beginning of the intensive commercial phase of this work. In the months ahead, our Export-Import Bank, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and Trade and Development Agency all will work with you on a commercial financing package.

Nearly 700 years ago, this part of the world was so rich in oil that a visitor to Baku described it as blazing like a fire all night. It has been many years since the people of this region had

the freedom and security to realize their vast potential. Today, they have the freedom, they have the security, and today their leaders have shown the vision that will enable this ancient crossroads once again to light the world and brighten all our futures.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:35 p.m. in the Blue Room at Ciragan Palace. In his remarks, he referred to President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway; President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan; President Saparmurat Miyazov of Turkmenistan; President Heydar Aliyev of Azerbaijan; and President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia.

Statement on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

November 18, 1999

The parties in Northern Ireland, working with George Mitchell, have taken a powerful step toward lasting peace. I warmly welcome Senator Mitchell's final report and support his conclusions fully. We should all take heart from the fact that the parties have strongly reaffirmed their commitment to the Good Friday accord. In a spirit of unprecedented mutual understanding, they have addressed issues of deep concern to one another. Together, they have

shaped the outlines of the way ahead, as described by Senator Mitchell today. I urge the parties to maintain this level of dialog with each other and with the public at large in the days ahead and to proceed with rapid implementation of the agreement. Once again, I want to express my deepest appreciation to Senator Mitchell for his dedication to bringing peace to Northern Ireland.

Statement on Assistance for Southeast Europe

November 18, 1999

I am pleased that yesterday in Brussels the international community pledged over \$1 billion in new assistance to consolidate peace and promote economic recovery in Kosovo. I am particularly pleased that our European partners committed the lion's share of this amount, with the European Commission and EU members together pledging over three-quarters of a billion dollars and additional pledges from other European states.

These contributions will not only provide a significant boost to economic revitalization and

reconstruction but also help to fund public administration, establish a civil emergency service corps, strengthen public security and the rule of law, promote market reforms, and encourage private investment. We did our part by announcing plans to provide \$157 million for Kosovo, pending final action on the budget before Congress.

Today at the OSCE summit in Istanbul, Europe demonstrated its strong leadership in support of recovery and stabilization throughout

southeast Europe. I welcome European Commission President Prodi's intention to have the EC provide nearly 12 billion euros (approximately \$12.5 billion) of assistance to the region during 2000–2006. Such a substantial package will create tremendous opportunities for those

countries and affirm in the strongest terms European support for their transformation. We are continuing our assistance programs to encourage political and economic reform and advance the region's integration with the rest of Europe.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Aeronautics and Space Activities

November 18, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit this report on the Nation's achievements in aeronautics and space during Fiscal Year (FY) 1998, as required under section 206 of the National Aeronautics and Space Act of 1958, as amended (42 U.S.C. 2476). Aeronautics and space activities involved 14 contributing departments and agencies of the Federal Government, and the results of their ongoing research and development affect the Nation in many ways.

A wide variety of aeronautics and space developments took place during FY 1998. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) successfully completed five Space Shuttle flights. There were 29 successful Expendable Launch Vehicle (ELV) launches in FY 1998. Of those, 3 were NASA-managed missions, 2 were NASA-funded/Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)-licensed missions, 8 were Department of Defense (DOD)-managed missions, and 16 were FAA-licensed commercial launches. Scientists also made some dramatic new discoveries

in various space-related fields such as space science, Earth science, and remote sensing, and life and microgravity science. In aeronautics, activities included work on high-speed research, advanced subsonic technology, and technologies designed to improve the safety and efficiency of our commercial airlines and air traffic control system.

Close international cooperation with Russia occurred on the Shuttle-Mir docking missions and on the ISS program. The United States also entered into new forms of cooperation with its partners in Europe, South America, and Asia.

Thus, FY 1998 was a very successful one for U.S. aeronautics and space programs. Efforts in these areas have contributed significantly to the Nation's scientific and technical knowledge, international cooperation, a healthier environment, and a more competitive economy.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 18, 1999.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters in Istanbul

November 19, 1999

Northern Ireland Peace Process

President Clinton. Good morning. Let me say to all of you that I'm delighted to have this chance to meet with the *Taoiseach* and talk about the Irish peace process. I want to congratulate Prime Minister Ahern, Prime Minister Blair, and clearly, Senator Mitchell and the par-

ties for the progress that has been made in the last few days. It's obvious that the parties have really worked hard to reaffirm their common commitment to the Good Friday accord, to hear each other's concerns, and then to develop a step-by-step plan to actually consummate this peace agreement. So I'm very hopeful, and I want to thank you for what you've done.

Prime Minister Ahern. Ladies and gentlemen, I want to thank the President for his interest in Irish matters this last 7 years. For the last 5 years, we have developed the Northern Ireland peace process. I particularly want to thank him for giving one of his best and trusted colleagues to Ireland, Senator George Mitchell. He has almost spent 5 years with us in one forum or another, and we thank him for that.

We particularly thank him for this third round of discussions this year, 11 weeks of intensive dialog, of comprehensive discussions, which he has chaired throughout. And can I add, I think a great part of the trust and the confidence which we could not generate earlier this year was assisted by the fact that we could use the United States Embassy in London which, I think, created a new confidence for the parties, and we appreciated that. And it allowed the parties to get away from the ordinary, run-of-the-mill activities and to concentrate their minds. So that was a great help.

The reality is now, we're within a week or two of devolution of all the things that can bring the Good Friday agreement to reality. I just hope that all of the work that's been done by Senator Mitchell concluded yesterday successfully. I will now allow it to go forward.

And from the Irish Government's point of view, working in partnership with the British Government, with Tony Blair, working with the great assistance with the President, this is an opportunity which most people thought we'd never get. We have it now. It's for us to make it work. And I believe that the partnership government, working with the new institutions, the north-south bodies, it will allow us to go forward in peace and confidence and prosperity, and we appreciate that opportunity, President.

Decommissioning of Weapons

Q. Mr. President, the IRA statement yesterday made no mention of an actual turnover of weapons. Can there be a real peace until that happens?

President Clinton. Well, that is required by the Good Friday accord, and I think the fact that they have committed themselves to a process involving General de Chastelain and the decommissioning body indicates where this is going.

My sense is—and maybe Prime Minister Ahern would like to comment, he knows more than I do—but my sense is that both sides know

what the other is going to say and do along this road and that this is the next step. And I thought it was an encouraging statement. It's certainly the most forthcoming the IRA has been as opposed to Sinn Fein, and so I think that we're moving in the right direction.

Prime Minister Ahern. What the President says is absolutely correct, and I think the IRA statement has to be read in conjunction with the Sinn Fein statement of the previous day. And the key aspect that people should remember is that last July, when Tony Blair and I tried to bring this to this stage of completion and did not succeed, it was the actions of an IRA statement. And the IRA, at that stage, had not agreed to put somebody working directly as an interlocutor with General de Chastelain. That has now been achieved.

Ulster Unionists

Q. Mr. President, Mr. Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party still has to convince his party that this agreement with Senator Mitchell is worth going ahead with. Do you have any message for the Ulster Unionists?

President Clinton. Well, I think David Trimble has provided very strong and clear leadership. I don't think that he would be doing this if he didn't believe that ultimately all the provisions of the Good Friday accord would be honored. And I hope his party will stay with him, because he has been absolutely pivotal to this. And it's taken a lot of courage for him to take some of the decisions that he's taken, but because of that, we're on the verge of successful peace. And as I said, I am absolutely confident that he would not have agreed to any of this if he didn't think the whole Good Friday accord would be honored. And so I hope that he will receive the support of his party membership. I think they should stick with them, and I hope they will.

Press Secretary Joe Lockhart. Thank you very much.

President's Visit to Greece

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of the Greek Government's decision to ban protests during your visit to Athens?

President Clinton. I don't know that that's exactly the decision they made, so I can't comment until I'm absolutely sure that's what they did. I thought what they were trying to do is to do what a lot of countries do, which is to

maintain some sort of distance between the protests and the subject of the protests. I don't believe they have banned them all.

Q. There seem to be some protests brewing there for your arrival, sir. What's your reaction to that, and—

President Clinton. First of all, I'm delighted to be going, and I'm not concerned about the protests. Greece and the United States have been great allies. They're very important to us. The Greek-American community is a very important part of our country, and the country has made absolutely astonishing progress over the last 10 years. And I would hope that this would be an opportunity for us to talk about what we have in common and where we're going.

I also think that the Greek people and the Government should be quite encouraged by this new Cyprus initiative and by the fact that I found a receptive ear here on three separate occasions when I spoke in Turkey about the necessity of the Turkish people and the Greeks being reconciled. So I know that a lot of people in Greece disagree with my position on Kosovo, and they have a right to their opinion, and I have a right to mine. I believe I was right, and I think that the facts have proved that I was right. But I don't mind. Greece is the world's oldest democracy. If people want to protest, they ought to have a chance to do it.

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, do you think President Yeltsin might be changing course now on

Chechnya by allowing an OSCE official to go and follow the political process?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's encouraging that the OSCE Chairman-in-Office has been invited there. I also think it's encouraging that this charter signing, which we're going to have in here in a few minutes, will be joined by Russia, because the charter specifically says that we do have to be concerned about internal affairs in other countries. So this is a significant move by Russia, and so these two things are encouraging.

Obviously, we've got a lot of turns in the road on Chechnya before it's resolved, but I would say that, compared to how things were when we all got here, those are two things that are hopeful.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:47 a.m. at Ciragan Palace. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces (Ret.), chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Ulster Unionist Party Leader David Trimble; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek of Norway, Chairman-in-Office, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Agreement Modifying the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty

November 19, 1999

Today I joined the leaders of 30 nations in signing an agreement that will adapt the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) to the post-cold-war world.

The original CFE treaty limited the armaments of the Eastern and Western blocs, a division that has happily been erased since the collapse of the Warsaw Pact. The adapted treaty will place legally binding limits on the armed forces of every individual country that is party

to it, from the Atlantic to the Urals. It will require nations to provide more information about their deployment of military equipment. It will strengthen the requirement that host nations must consent to the deployment of foreign forces on their territory, which speaks directly to the interests of a number of nations of the former Soviet Union including Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.

The adaptation agreement will also open the treaty to accession by other European countries, and it will preserve NATO's ability to fulfill its post-cold-war responsibilities.

In all these ways, the adapted treaty will enhance peace, security, and stability throughout Europe. Therefore, it is in America's national interest to sign it now and to lock in the commitment of other nations to its terms. At the same time, in order to reap these benefits, we

must have confidence that there will be real compliance.

Russia has pledged that it will comply with the flank provisions of the adapted treaty by reducing its forces in the North Caucasus. This must be done as soon as possible. I will only submit this agreement to the Senate for advice and consent to ratification when Russian forces have in fact been reduced to the flank levels set forth in the adapted treaty.

Statement on the Texas A&M University Bonfire Tower Tragedy

November 19, 1999

Today I spoke with Dr. Ray Bowen, president of Texas A&M University, to extend my deepest sympathies on the tragedy that occurred at the campus. This is a heartbreaking loss. America stands with the College Station community as

it joins together during this difficult time. Hillary and I offer our thoughts and prayers to the families and friends of those who were injured or killed in this devastating incident.

Remarks on Arrival in Athens, Greece

November 19, 1999

Hello. Thank you all for coming out to greet us. My family and our American delegation are very glad to begin our visit to Greece. Thank you very much.

I have come here as a philhellene, a friend of Greece. And I look forward to experiencing that wonderful quality of Greek hospitality known to all the world as *filoxenia*.

Through this visit I want the American people to see the changing face of Greece: the powerhouse of southeast Europe with the highest growth rate in the EU, a booming stock market; a nation on a fast track to join the European Monetary Union; an old democracy that is a model for the young democracies of the Balkans; the gateway to their markets; a driving force in the effort to rebuild war-torn nations and to bring them into Europe.

We look to ancient Greece for inspiration, but we look to modern Greece for leadership and partnership. Tomorrow I want to speak with the people of Greece about what we can do

together to build a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in history and about how, together, we can overcome the remaining challenges to that vision by stabilizing the Balkans and achieving lasting reconciliation between Greece and Turkey, with resolution of all outstanding issues, including Cyprus.

Our nations have so much in common. We are allies with a shared commitment to peace and security; democracies with a long tradition of impassioned political debate about issues that affect our lives and engage our convictions. Above all, we are two nations proud of our past but focused on the future.

I look forward to that future and to our partnership with confidence and hope. And I look very much forward to our visit with you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:02 p.m. at Ellinikon International Airport.

The President's Radio Address

November 20, 1999

Good morning. I'm speaking to you from Istanbul, Turkey, where we just wrapped up a successful summit meeting of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, one that focused on the global challenges of the new century. At the same time, our administration has also wrapped up our work with Congress on the first budget of the new century.

Today I want to talk to you about what we achieved and highlight a little-known accomplishment that will make a big difference to people with disabilities who want to be part of our Nation's growing economy.

This week's budget agreement is truly a victory for the American people, a victory for children because it invests in world-class education that keeps us on the path to hiring 100,000 quality teachers to reduce class size. It doubles funds for after-school and summer school programs, and it provides help for communities to turn around failing schools or shut them down. It's a victory for families and neighborhoods, because it commits the resources necessary to begin hiring another 50,000 community police officers to keep our crime rate, already at a 25-year low, coming down. It's a victory for future generations, because it protects the environment and preserves more natural areas, and it's a victory for American leadership in the world, because finally, it pays our U.N. dues and maintains our commitments around the globe to peace in the Middle East, to reducing the nuclear threat and chemical weapons threats, to helping relieve the debt of the world's poorest nations.

In short, we have delivered a 21st century budget that prepares for the future and lives up to our values. It also continues to pay down our national debt, because we walked away from that big \$792 billion tax cut that the Congress passed and I vetoed. So we got the best of all worlds.

Perhaps nothing better symbolizes just what we were fighting for than the historic progress made in the budget to open new doors of opportunity for Americans with disabilities.

Now, we're enjoying one of the strongest economies in generations. Yet even today 75 percent of Americans with severe disabilities

who are ready, willing, and able to work aren't working. One of the biggest reasons is they fear they'll lose their health insurance when they get a job. And there's a good reason for this fear.

Under current law, many people with disabilities are eligible for Medicaid or Medicare coverage. But they can't go to work and keep that coverage. Yet when they do go to work, they can't get private insurance because of their disability. So there is a tremendous disincentive to work. Let me just give you one example.

I met a man in New Hampshire not long ago who is paralyzed as a result of an accident. He wanted to take a job that paid \$28,000 a year, but he would have lost his Medicaid health coverage, which would have led to medical expenses of \$40,000 a year. Now, the taxpayers would actually be better off. We're going to pay the medical expenses one way or the other, but if he went to work, he'd become a taxpaying citizen, and more important, he would have the dignity of work. No citizen should have to choose between going to work and paying medical bills.

I'm very proud this week that Congress, on a bipartisan basis, finally agreed on the historic work incentives improvement act. It's bipartisan legislation to allow people with disabilities to keep their health care on the job. They can earn a salary, pay taxes, and be role models by proving what people can do if given a chance to live up to their God-given potential.

This will make a real difference, also, for people with potentially severe disabilities, those who are facing the early onset of diseases like AIDS, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's, or diabetes. Right now they may be able to work, but their conditions aren't deemed severe enough to qualify for Medicaid. Yet because they have them, they still can't get private health insurance. In other words, they can't get any health care until they're too sick to work.

In the final hours of negotiations, we were able to further strengthen this legislation by getting \$250 million for a demonstration program to allow these Americans to buy into Medicaid, stay on the job, and stay healthier longer. I encourage all the States to take advantage of these new health care options.

Taken together, this initiative is the most significant advancement for people with disabilities since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act almost a decade ago. It is part of our administration's 7-year commitment to tearing down barriers to work and rewarding responsibility. Along with reforming welfare, increasing the minimum wage, increasing child care assistance, and doubling the earned-income tax credit, the work incentives improvement act is another milestone on the path to opening work and rewarding responsibility for Americans.

Now, I hope we'll stay on that course and take on America's still-unfinished agenda: commonsense gun safety legislation, a real Patients' Bill of Rights, meaningful hate crimes legislation, saving Social Security, reforming Medicare,

adding prescription drug coverage, raising the minimum wage.

To Congress I say, we've done a good job for the American people by working together. Let's keep working together, build on our progress, and get the right things done for the American people.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:41 p.m. on November 19 in the Perge Room at the Conrad Hotel in Istanbul, Turkey, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 20. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Konstandinos Simitis of Greece in Athens

November 20, 1999

Prime Minister Simitis. Ladies and gentlemen, with very special pleasure, the Greek Government and the Greek people and I, personally, are welcoming President Clinton and the American delegation. This visit is confirming the historic friendship relations between the two countries and between our two people, a relationship that has been kept alive by the Greeks who have lived and are still living creatively in the United States, by the common struggles in other times, by our close relationship and partnership within the North Atlantic Alliance, political solidarity, and cooperation, our cooperation for our common goals.

With President Clinton, we had a very friendly, open, and free discussion. During our talks we covered all issues, those which under the present situation have a certain importance from our country, for going from Greek-American relations to developments in the Balkans, Greek-Turkish relations, and the Cyprus issue. We agreed, as regards Greek-American relations, that there is still considerable margin for the improvement of the cooperation between the two countries.

Greece, thanks to its economic renewal these last few years, provides new major opportunities for investments, trade relations, relations in the

field of technology, and other areas. For the Balkans, our conviction is that the present situation entails certain risks. Stability is necessary in the region, respect of existing borders, and the strengthening of initiatives for the reconstruction of the region, and above all, the implementation of the Stability Pact.

As regards relations with neighboring Turkey, we have emphasized the need of deserving international law and international treaties and conventions. Rapprochement, steps towards rapprochement have been made recently. We believe that the most substantial answer is required on the part of Turkey to the initiatives of the Greek side.

We have agreed that Turkey's European perspective will help establish closer links based on peaceful development and cooperation. However, its candidature could not be accepted unless certain conditions are met for the settlement of existing problems. As regards the Cyprus issue, we have agreed that talks that have just started should be substantive in order to lead to the settlement of this issue.

The talks with the United States political leadership are, of course, self-understood. We have had a very interesting exchange of views, as I said, on all important issues for us. And we

have also ascertained the friendly relations between the American and the Greek people, the close ties, not only at a political and economic levels but also at the levels of styles and culture where we believe our relations and cooperation should be extended. The friendship between our two peoples is confirmed by the substantial presence and role of a Greek community in the United States; successfully, it is making full use of all its rights as an American citizen.

Greece is a pole of democracy, political stability, social and political cohesion in the wider region. Its potential is much greater compared to the size of the country and its population. We have established that it is in the interest of both countries for our cooperation to safeguard and promote peace development and a network of relations in the region that would minimize tension, and this is why we will pursue and strengthen our cooperation with the United States.

This visit does not just confirm the past but also constitutes a guarantee for the future where, together, we can respond to the new challenges, the new challenges of a new era, of a new reality that is taking shape at the end of this century based on mutual understanding, equal cooperation, common resolve, and determination to face problems together, provide new answers, build on the values of democracy, freedom shared by our people, which are defended by our people, the values that we want to promote.

President Clinton. First of all, Prime Minister, let me thank you and the members of your government for the very good meeting that we had today. I think the Prime Minister has summarized the results of our meeting quite well. I would like to add just a few words.

First, the Greek relationship is profoundly important to me and to the United States because of the values and history we share; because of the large role Greek-Americans play in our national life, as the Prime Minister said. But also because of two historic transformations that have occurred in the last decade.

The first is the transformation of southeast Europe from a battleground between East and West to a proving ground for democracy and tolerance in the post-cold-war world. The second is the remarkable transformation of Greece itself into a regional leader with a booming economy, a vibrant democracy, with the ability to help

to pull its neighbors together and push them forward into 21st century Europe.

We spoke a lot today about the role Greece is playing in the Balkans, with its troops in Bosnia and Kosovo, with its support for economic development and reconstruction, with its private sector investment. Greece is carrying a heavier burden in this region than almost any other country, but the potential payoff is very large: an undivided, democratic Europe, in which wars like those we've seen in the former Yugoslavia no longer happen. And I want to pay a tribute to the Prime Minister and the people of Greece for all they are doing in the Balkans and pledge my support for the Stability Pact and the economic growth necessary for this to work.

Of course, we also spoke about the road to reconciliation and lasting peace between Greece and Turkey and the issues in the Aegean and, of course, Cyprus. I told the Prime Minister how pleased I am that the parties in Cyprus have agreed to start these proximity talks on December 3d in New York, and how determined I am that they be serious talks. The goal is to lay the foundation for meaningful negotiations toward a comprehensive settlement. We should have no illusions; there's a tough road ahead. But we will work closely with Secretary-General Annan to ensure that the talks are productive.

We talked about our growing trade and investment, about how we can strengthen our economic relationship further. Greece's economic renewal has made it one of the most attractive places in Europe in which to do business. I am very pleased that its progress in improving protection for intellectual property rights makes it possible to move rapidly toward settling our copyright case in the WTO.

Finally, let me just express the great sympathy and support of the American people to all those who lost their loved ones in the tragic earthquake last August. We will not forget the heroism of the Greek emergency teams who pulled survivors from the rubble, not only here in Athens but also across the Aegean in Turkey. I am very glad that our own Federal Emergency Management Agency has agreed with its Greek counterparts to work together to strengthen their preparedness for future disasters.

Let me say in closing, I am satisfied with the work we advanced today. We look to, as I said last night, we look to ancient Greece

for inspiration but to modern Greece for leadership and for partnership. After this visit, I believe we have strengthened that partnership.

Thank you very much.

Turkey's Candidacy for European Union Membership

Q. From what we know, you did ask while you were in Turkey for some specific move by Ankara that would match the moves Greece has done in order, also, to make her candidacy for the European Union easier. Do you have anything concrete on that?

President Clinton. Well, I didn't think that was my role. Let me tell you what I did do. I spoke both at every opportunity, publicly and privately, before the Turkish Assembly, before the business group, before the group of earthquake survivors, and in all my private meetings about the importance of resolving outstanding issues between Greece and Turkey, including Cyprus.

I specifically asked that the Halki seminary be reopened. I have pushed a lot of issues. And I came away believing that in the next few months, as all these issues are bubbling up—the start of the proximity talks, the debate over whether Turkey should be given candidacy status in the EU at Helsinki, and the continuing bilateral talks between Greece and Turkey, which I applaud the Prime Minister's government for his leadership in—that there will be an opportunity to resolve a large number of these issues.

I hope that my trip there was constructive in that regard. I believe it was. But I would not expect the Turkish leaders to let me be the conduit of their ultimate resolution of this. I think that I helped to improve the climate, and I dealt with a lot of the specific issues, and I feel good about that.

Prime Minister Simitis. Let me add two words for my part. During the meeting ahead with Mr. Ecevit and during Mr. Papandreou's meeting with Mr. Cem, we emphasized the need of certain movements and initiatives on the part of Turkey. And I believe that President Clinton's visit was important because he referred to that question, and it has helped, as well as the talks we had with the Turkish side on increasing awareness on the part of Turkey that things are not that easy. We cannot just expect for something to happen without doing or contributing anything for our part. You help yourself,

and God will help you, as we say. We have to do something for our part, as well.

Greek Protests of President's Visit

Q. Sir, the demonstrations last night included extensive arson and damage. I want to know if you're concerned by the protests, and what you say to the Greeks who oppose your visit here?

President Clinton. What was the last part of your question?

Q. What's your message to the Greeks who are protesting, who oppose your visit here?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think that we have to—especially in Greece—reaffirm the right of people to protest in a democracy. Secondly, I strongly believe the protests should be peaceful, and therefore, I deeply regret the Greeks who had their property injured and who suffered losses through these demonstrations.

But I think that the important thing is that we reaffirm the value of the relationship between our two countries. I think that—I know most Americans deeply value the relationship with Greece, notwithstanding the fact that almost all of the people of Greece disagree with our policy in Kosovo and, before that, in Bosnia. I believe I did the right thing, and I think most Americans believe that we did the right thing to stand against ethnic cleansing.

But that doesn't affect our affection for and our support for the people of Greece and the Government of Greece. And I would hope that most Greek citizens would, like the Greek Government, believe that there is value in our relationship and our partnership; and that even if we have a disagreement, we can't allow that to undermine our relationship or our partnership.

I would just say, looking toward the future, I, personally, admire very much and support very strongly the leadership that Greece is exercising in the U.N. operations in Bosnia and in Kosovo and generally in the Balkans and throughout southeastern Europe. And I believe that if we can, the rest of us, do our part to help the economy grow there and provide a magnet that enables these nations to pull together, that Greece will lead them into a very different future in the new century.

Prime Minister Simitis. May I also point Greece is a country, a democratic country where

everyone can freely express his views and opinions. But as we had emphasized before President Clinton's arrival, our Constitution provides that these expressions of opinions and views should be made in a peaceful way and within the context of legality. And I'm sorry for the fact that certain people did not observe and respect this fundamental principle of law, the fundamental principle that allows our states to operate and function.

The friendship, however, between the two people and the partnership, our partnership with the United States, will not be determined by these protests, but by our common goals, our common objectives and pursuits, our efforts to handle and face problems together. And the meeting today has shown that we share common goals and common pursuits, and we're trying together. This is the foundation of a friendship.

Turkey's Candidacy for European Union Membership

Q. Mr. President, I followed your trip in Ankara, and you seemed to be mostly the strongest supporter of Turkey's candidacy in the European Union. So do you think that the permanent conditionality of Turkey's candidacy should be, first, the solution of the Cyprus problem and, second, the acceptance of the jurisdiction of Turkey, as far as the Court of Hague is concerned?

President Clinton. I'm sorry, I'm not sure I understood the question. Could you repeat both questions again?

Q. Yes, one question actually. You seem to be the strongest supporter of Turkey's accession in the European Union. So the question is, do you believe or think that the permanent conditionality for Turkey's candidacy in the European Union should be, first, the solution of the Cyprus problem and, second, the acceptance of the jurisdiction of a Hague Court from Turkey?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I believe—I have said this already—I believe that the disputes in the Aegean between Greece and Turkey should be referred to the International Court of Justice in The Hague or to some other mutually agreed on and generally recognized international dispute resolution mechanism. It seems to me that that is the only way that either side can have a resolution of this without appearing to cave in rather than just to let a neutral party, respected, decide it.

Secondly, I strongly support a resolution of the Cyprus issue. You're right. I am probably

the strongest supporter in the West of Turkey's membership in the EU. I think I've also been the most vocal consistent supporter for 7 years of a resolution of Cyprus. I have worked as hard as I could on it and will continue to do so.

Now, when the parties meet in Helsinki, the members of the European Union—the United States is not a member—they will decide the conditions of Turkish candidacy if, in fact, they decide to grant Turkey candidacy.

But let me say, on the larger issue, my feeling is that the more Turkey is integrated into Europe and has the kind of dialog that we've seen recently with Greece, the more the climate improves, the more you can resolve these issues, the brighter the future for both countries will be. And as I told the Turks—I'm not saying anything to you I didn't say there—I do not think that bright future is achievable until there is a resolution of the Cyprus issue. These two countries need to go hand-in-hand into the future. And the festering disputes have to be resolved in order for that to happen.

Prime Minister Simitis. As I have indicated already, the Greek Government and I, personally, had a series of contacts. I have met and talked with all the Prime Ministers of the European Union member states on that issue. I have talked with them in order to determine what would be the best way that would allow us to overcome problems in the future. It would be counterproductive, I believe, if today, whilst these talks are ongoing, we were to focus on one or the other point or issue. This would not facilitate the discussion.

I believe that in the future the time will come for us to determine all these aspects. But at present, restriction to one or two or three issues is not helpful. We must have a global approach and look at the final aim of this overall effort.

Thank you.

U.S. Trade Policy and Gov. George W. Bush of Texas

Q. Mr. President, yesterday George W. Bush laid out his foreign policy priorities. Specifically on China and Russia, he said they should be viewed as competitors of the United States rather than as strategic partners. I'm wondering what your view is on that, and also, do you feel reassured that he has a view of the world that would make him an effective President?

President Clinton. You know, you guys keep trying to get me into this election. I am not a candidate. I'm not always happy about that, but I'm not.

Let me say this. I think we did the right thing to negotiate the WTO agreement with China, and apparently, Governor Bush agrees with that. I think that, as with all great countries, we are both competitors and partners. I think there is a problem with characterizing a country as a competitor if that means we know for sure that for the next 20 years there will be an adversary relationship.

We will have certain interests in common with China; we will have certain things we disagree with. We will support a lot of their domestic developments. We still have great trouble when people's free speech or religious rights are restrained.

With regard to Russia, we have a difference, as you know and the OSCE conference made clear, over the present policy in Chechnya, but we have a common interest in working together where we can. We have served side by side with Russian soldiers in the Balkans; we have seen the Russians withdraw their troops from the Baltics; we have seen a dramatic reduction in the nuclear capacity, the nuclear threat there. The Congress just gave us the funds to continue to reduce the nuclear threat with Russia. And we have worked with them on economic reform.

So I would say that in both cases there will be instances of competition, instances of partnership. But what we should be looking for is a world in which nations, including very large

nations, define their greatness by the achievements of their people and by their ability to profit in their relations with other nations by bringing out the best in them, instead of by the traditional 19th and 20th century great power politics terms of defining their greatness in terms of their ability to dominate their neighbors or coerce certain people into certain kinds of behavior.

So I think we have to imagine—I have a whole different view of this—we should imagine what would we like the world to look like 50 years from now. What major countries will have an impact on that? How will we compete with them? How will we cooperate with them? What can we do that will most likely create the world we want for our grandchildren? That's the way I look at this. So I don't have an either/or view of Russia or China. I have a both view, I suppose.

Prime Minister Simitis. May I make a philosophical comment on this? We should not be afraid of competitors. We should be afraid of ourselves when we are afraid of others.

NOTE: The President's 184th news conference began at 1:20 p.m. in the Foyer at Megaron Maximou. In his remarks, the President referred to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Prime Minister Simitis referred to Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem of Turkey; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yeoryios Papandreou of Greece. Prime Minister Simitis spoke in Greek, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks to Business and Community Leaders in Athens

November 20, 1999

President Stephanopoulos; Prime Minister Simitis, thank you for that fine speech. Mrs. Simitis, Mr. Mayor, Ministers of the Government, members of the opposition, to all the leaders of the church who are here, the dean of the diplomatic corps, distinguished citizens of Greece, it is a great honor for all of us to be here—my wife and daughter, the Secretary of State, members of the White House, two Members of the United States Congress, Representatives Kingston and Maloney.

And I should say that, as I did last night at the state dinner, I have, in my entourage here, ample evidence of the ties between our two countries. Not only the vast array of Greek-American business people who have made this trip either to hold my hand or make sure I made no critical error—[laughter]—but also a group of people who have served me so well in the White House, beginning with my Chief of Staff, John Podesta; my speechwriter, Paul Glastris, who helped to prepare these remarks

today; Elaine Shocas; and Lisa Kountoupes. Those are just four of the many Greek-Americans who have worked for me in the White House, and as I have often said, the Greek-American community has been overrepresented in the Clinton administration, and America is better for it.

Early this morning, in the wind and the rain, I had the privilege of visiting the Acropolis. I was filled with a unique sense of awe but also familiarity, perhaps because the setting has been described to me so often and so glowingly by my Greek-American friends; perhaps because I studied the history of Athens and read Plato and Aristotle as a young man; perhaps because America has been so inspired and influenced by the ancient Greeks in everything from politics and philosophy to architecture.

For whatever reason, standing there in the rain on the Acropolis this morning, I was even more grateful for the deep ties of history, kinship, and values that bind America and other freedom-loving nations to Greece, ties that prove the truth of Shelley's famous line, *Eimaste olee Ellines*, "We are all Greeks." We are all Greeks, not because of monuments and memories but because what began here 2½ thousand years ago has at last, after all the bloody struggles of the 20th century, been embraced all around the world.

Today, for the first time in human history, more than half the world's people live under governments of their own choosing. Yet, democracy still remains a truly revolutionary idea; people still fight and die for it, from Africa to Asia to Europe. Its advance is still the key to building a better global society in this most modern of ages.

Another great civic virtue has its roots here in Athens: openness to the cultural differences among us that make life more interesting. In Thucydides' account of his famous funeral oration, Pericles declares, "We lay Athens open to all and at no time evict or keep the stranger away." Two and a half thousand years later Greece is still open to the world, and we pray that everywhere in the world someday everyone will say, "We do not keep the stranger away."

Meanwhile, as all of you know, Greeks have made their way into every corner of the world, and wherever they go, they adapt to local culture yet retain immense pride in their traditions, their religion, their Hellenic identity. No nation has been more blessed by this phenomenon than

the United States, with its vital and successful Greek-American community. This is true in ways large and small. Last night at the state dinner I had the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of some of the most famous Greek-Americans, those who achieved wealth and fame and power and influence.

But what I want to say today is that I am even more grateful that Greek-Americans have enriched every single part and every single person in America. As a boy growing up in a small town in Arkansas, my very favorite place to eat with my father was the Pappas Brothers Cafe; and my very best friend for 45 years was a man named David Leopoulos who, after 45 years, still every single week sends me an E-mail about Greece and Greek issues to make sure I don't stray too far from the fold.

The Prime Minister talked about the modern world in which we are living. I think it quite ironic that in this era of global markets and modern wonders, when more than half the world's people live in democracies for the first time in history, the world is still bedeviled by the oldest of human evils: the fear of the other, those who are different from us.

The clearest manifestation in modern times is the ethnic and religious hatred we see rampant, from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the tribal wars in Africa to the Balkans. How much of our history has been shaped by the struggle between those who accept with self-confidence the interesting differences among people because they are strong enough to affirm the common humanity, which is more important, and those who live their lives in constant fear or loathing of those who are different?

My wife had, a few weeks ago, to the White House two brilliant men for a conversation. One of them was one of the founders of the Internet; the other is one of the most distinguished American scholars of the study of the human genome, the gene structure. The biologist said nothing could have been discovered about the structure of the gene without the computer revolution; but that all this high technology had revealed an interesting fact, that all of us, all human beings, genetically are 99.9 percent the same, and furthermore, that if you take different groups of people—let's take the three most prominently here discussed, the Greeks, the Turks, the Irish—me. [Laughter] And if you put 100 Greeks, 100 Turks, and 100 Irish in 3 different groups, the genetic differences among the

individuals within each group would be greater than the genetic profile between the Greeks or the Turks or the Irish.

Isn't it interesting how many bodies have been piled up over human history because of that one-tenth of one percent difference, when we should have been embracing all along the 99.9 percent. Whether we take maximum advantage of the unparalleled promise of the new millennium depends in no small measure on whether we can find a way to get beyond that one-tenth of 1 percent difference to the common humanity that unites us all.

I've been thinking a lot about what unites Greeks and Americans. In 1821, when the Greeks rose to reassert their liberty, they captured the imagination of Americans. Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Greek patriot and scholar Adamandios Korais these words: "No people sympathize more freely than ours with the sufferings of your countrymen. None offer more sincere and ardent prayers to heaven for their success."

Of course, we were still a young country then, preoccupied with our own experiment in democracy, reluctant to involve ourselves in distant, dangerous struggles. But thousands of ordinary Americans way back in 1821 sent money and supplies to Greece. A few actually sailed here and joined the freedom fighters, men like the brave Boston doctor Samuel Gridley Howe and a black former slave from Baltimore, Maryland, named James Williams. Over a century later, when fascism seemed ready to crush the last embers of freedom in Europe, it was Greece which said no and handed the Axis powers their very first major defeat in battle. America joined with Greece and the Allies and together, we won a mighty victory.

Twice since World War II, battles between democracy and despotism have again been played out on Greek soil; each time—thank God—democracy emerged victorious. I have been thinking about that history today again in both its painful as well as its proud aspects. When the junta took over in 1967 here, the United States allowed its interests in prosecuting the cold war to prevail over its interests—I should say, its obligation to support democracy, which was, after all, the cause for which we fought the cold war. It is important that we acknowledge that.

When we think about the history of Greece and the history of the United States, all the

troubled ups and downs just of the last 50 years, it is easy to understand why some of those people who have demonstrated in the last few days have done so and easy to understand the source of their passion. I can be glad as an American and as a free human being that they have the fundamental right to say their piece. If the people of every country, in the Balkans for example, had the institutions and habits of democracy, if they, too, could proudly express and settle their differences peacefully and proudly and democratically, if the fundamental human rights of all those people were respected, there might not have been a war over Bosnia or Kosovo.

I've been thinking about all this because, of all the people in the world, surely the Greeks know best that history matters. We cannot understand the present unless we know history. On the other hand, we cannot move into the future if we are paralyzed by history.

In this era of historic sweeping change, we cannot afford paralysis. That was implicit in the Prime Minister's remarks. Surely, the Greeks demonstrate this every day as you build a bustling modern economy with a booming stock market and one of the fastest growth rates in Europe, on the verge of joining the EMU. If there were Olympic gold medals for economic revival, Greece would surely get the very first one.

American companies and investors are taking notice that Greece clearly is on the right economic path. I believe we can do better, and so in the presence of all these business leaders today, I would like to make three modest proposals. First, I think we should double trade between our two countries in the next 5 years. Second, I ask Greek and American business leaders to match the money our Government is putting into the Fulbright exchange program. And third, I ask that one of these grants honor Yannis Kranidiotis, the gifted diplomat and former Fulbright scholar. He was a great citizen, a great friend of the United States, who died with his son in a tragic accident while promoting peace in the Balkans. His life and work exemplify the positive, new role Greece has begun to play in this vital region of Europe.

The whole world is beginning to see Greece in a new light, no longer as one of Europe's poorest nations but as southeast Europe's wealthiest nation, its beacon of democracy, a

regional leader for stability, prosperity, and freedom, helping to complete the democratic revolution that ancient Greece began, our long-held dream of a Europe undivided, free, and at peace for the first time in history.

And the remaining challenges to that long-held dream are all at play here in this region of Europe: the challenge of bringing stability, prosperity, and full democracy to the Balkans; the challenge of creating a lasting peace in the Aegean and genuine reconciliation between Greece and Turkey; the challenge of integrating a democratic Russia into Europe; the challenge of building bridges between and among the world's three great faiths which come together in southeastern Europe: Islam and the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity.

To finally create that Europe undivided, free, and at peace, we must help this region meet five main challenges. The first and, I would argue, most urgent is to stabilize Kosovo and the Balkans and build the democratic institutions necessary so that all the people of Kosovo can live in safety and freedom, including the Serbs of Kosovo.

I know there is still much anger and anguish in Greece about the course of action NATO took and about the leadership role of the United States in that action. I do not expect to change what many here believe. But I must say what I believe. I believe we made the right decision, because at the end of this tumultuous century, in which so much blood has been shed, at a moment when peace and democracy have triumphed almost everywhere else in Europe and increasingly throughout the world, I do not believe we could have allowed an entire people to be exiled from their homes or extinguished from the Earth simply because of their ethnic heritage or how they worship God. I believe we had a moral and a strategic obligation to act, and that in acting, we saved thousands of lives and enabled almost a million people to go home.

In Bosnia, where the world showed more reluctance and took 4 years to act, Mr. Milosevic and his allies killed a quarter of a million people, created 2.5 million refugees, and many of them still have not gone home.

In spite of our differences, I want to thank the Greek Government for staying with its NATO Allies during a crisis which was far harder on you than on any other country in our Alliance. I want to thank you for getting aid

to the civilians in Kosovo regardless of their ethnic backgrounds while the fighting raged. I want to thank you for committing resources to the reconstruction of Kosovo, just as you have contributed to the rebuilding of Bosnia and Albania.

Our work there is far from over. Together with the U.N., we must continue to build the democratic institutions that can provide safety and freedom to all the people of Kosovo. As we do, we can take pride in our troops from both countries serving together in the same sector to keep the peace holding.

Our second challenge is equally great. We have to strengthen the forces of democracy in Serbia and pave the way for Serbia's eventual integration into southeastern Europe and the European community as a whole. Greece can lead the revitalization of the economy and the political and civic life of southeastern Europe, but the work will never be complete until Serbia is a part of the process.

There is no reason this can not happen. The people of Serbia have a rich and noble history, a deep love of freedom, and a rightful place in the table of European unity. It is a tragedy they are not sitting at that table now, a tragedy that they have suffered and still suffer from fear and privation, an even greater tragedy that it might have all been so very different if not for the choices made by Mr. Milosevic. We may disagree about the best way to have responded to the action of this now indicted war criminal, but surely we can agree that the people of Serbia deserve better than to be suffering under the last living relic of Europe's dictatorial past.

That is why the international community must maintain pressure on Mr. Milosevic's regime, while also aiding the democratic aspirations of the Serbian people; why America has invested nearly \$12 million since July to promote a free press, independent labor unions, a pro-democracy network of nongovernmental organizations in Serbia, on top of the \$25 million we have devoted to humanitarian aid there. It is why we support the Serbian democratic opposition's call for early, fair, and free elections, and why we support lifting entirely the fuel oil embargo and flight ban on Serbia as soon as those free and fair elections are held.

The third challenge we face together in creating a stable, prosperous, and free southeast Europe is to help every nation in the region

build the institutions that make modern democracy thrive. As the only member both of NATO and the EU in southeastern Europe, Greece is helping to guide this truly historic transformation. The Greek military is laying the foundations for peace through its role in southeastern Europe's multinational peacekeeping force and through NATO's Partnership for Peace. Greek companies are investing in the Balkans, creating jobs and higher living standards, and the rest of us must follow your lead.

The Greek Government is leading the transformation of the region's economy, committing \$320 million for reconstruction of southeastern Europe, and the rest of us must follow your lead if the Stability Pact is to have true meaning.

You are breaking down barriers to trade and transportation through the southeastern Europe cooperation initiative and providing crucial seed capital through the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank. Thessaloniki is a city long known for its beauty and history. Now is it becoming known as the commercial hub of the Balkans. I am pleased that next month our Government will open in Thessaloniki our office for Balkan reconstruction. I have also asked the U.S.-Greece Business Council to undertake an investment mission to the Balkans.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that our two Governments will fulfill a dream of Prime Minister Simitis by giving Greek and American companies a chance to jointly apply their technical knowledge to the region's challenges, from cleaning up pollution on the Danube to wiring Balkan villages for the Internet.

Our fourth challenge is to build a genuine reconciliation between Greece and Turkey. I know how much history lies behind that troubled relationship, but people in both nations are beginning to see the possibilities of forging a new and better future. The world will never forget the humanity Greeks and Turks displayed toward one another when the tragic earthquake struck you both in August and then in Turkey again last week.

But this is more than just seismic diplomacy. For several months, Foreign Ministers Papandreou and Cem have been holding a dialog on trade, tourism, and the environment. Prime Ministers Simitis and Ecevit had an important meeting just 2 days ago. Greek and Turkish troops in NATO have joined together in a southeast Europe peacekeeping brigade. You are serving together now in Kosovo. Greece

has taken bold steps. In many ways, these steps have been harder for Greece than for Turkey, but both sides are now showing the vision necessary to move forward.

I believe it is very much in your interest to see Turkey become a candidate for membership in the European Union; for that will reinforce Turkey's secular, democratic, modernizing path, showing Turkey how much it has to gain by making progress on issues like Cyprus and the Aegean matters. It will prove to Turkey that there is a place in Europe for a predominantly Muslim country as long as it respects the rights of its people—all its people—and advances the cause of peace. For many of these same reasons, we in the United States have also strongly supported the EU's decision to start accession talks with Cyprus.

Now, I know that many Greeks are anxious that if Turkey becomes a candidate for membership, the momentum in improving its relationship with Greece and actually solving these problems will slow. Having just spoken with President Demirel and Prime Minister Ecevit, I do not believe that will happen. But I can tell you this, I will do everything in my power to encourage both countries to continue building on the progress you have made.

I am going to keep working hard to promote a just and lasting settlement in Cyprus. I am very pleased that last Sunday the parties in Cyprus accepted Secretary-General Annan's invitation to start proximity talks, to prepare the ground for meaningful negotiations that will lead to a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. I hope these talks will bring us a step closer to lasting peace. I will keep pressing for a settlement that meets the fundamental interests of the parties, including real security for all Cypriots and an end to the island's division.

The status quo is unacceptable. I will say here only what I said in Turkey at every turn—before the Turkish National Assembly, before the business group, before earthquake survivors, and in every private meeting—I think it is very good for the future of the world for Turkey to be integrated into Europe. But Turkey cannot be fully integrated successfully into Europe without solving its difficulties with Greece. We must put these behind us.

Our fifth and final challenge is to renew the old and profoundly important partnership between our two countries and our two peoples. We should promote more tourism, more cultural

exchanges. We should continue in the United States to supply our NATO Ally, Greece, with advanced weaponry. We should be working together to fight global threats that know no borders, including the scourge of terrorism. Terrorists have struck within the borders of the United States; they have struck here claiming American and Greek lives. The American people and the Greek people deserve justice and the strongest possible efforts by our Governments to end this menace. I am grateful that we are working more closely to do just that.

Let me say to you that as I have traveled this region, first in Turkey and now here in Greece, it is impossible for me, as it would be for anyone, not to feel the weight of history on the decisions all of you face today. We are human. We can never wholly forget the injustices done to us, nor can we ever escape reminders of the mistakes we, ourselves, have made. But it is possible to be shaped by history without being a prisoner to it. That, too, is a Greek idea. It was wise Demosthenes who said, "It is necessary to think of the future to enable us to set our ways straight."

Earlier this week in Istanbul, Hillary, Chelsea, and I had the honor of visiting the Ecumenical Patriarch. My heart is still moved by that experience and by the beautiful gift that His All-Holiness Patriarch Bartholomew presented to me, a magnificent piece of parchment on which is written, in Byzantine Greek lettering, one of my favorite Bible passages, the first verse of the 11th chapter of Hebrew: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen."

Elsewhere in the Bible is the marvelous verse: "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Vision is to have faith and to imagine the things you hope for, and that faith is a real thing, unseen but real and tangible, more important than all the accumulated anxieties and wounds and worries and hurts, for it allows us to be human by going forward every day and looking toward a new tomorrow. With faith and sober realism, we can imagine a wonderful future for Greece, for southeastern Europe, for this whole part of the world, one in which Greek and Turkish business people work together, from the Balkans to central Asia; one in which Bosnians work across ethnic lines for a common economic and

political future; one in which new democracies, from Slovenia to Romania to Bulgaria and, yes, to Serbia, meet the standards for entry into NATO and the European Union; one in which there is a Europe where everyone understands that being open and generous to those who are different does not diminish one's own identity but enhances it; a Europe where everyone practices an ancient Greek trait still alive in Greece today, *filoxenia*; one in which children can be raised to be proud of their heritage and proud of their faith without fearing or hatred, hating those who are different.

Soon, the world will have an opportunity to look at Greece and many to come to Greece to participate in *filoxenia*, when they see Athens throw open the gates of the city to the Olympics in 2004. By then, I want all the world to see what we know today. Greece is a force for freedom, democracy, stability, growth, the dignity of the individual—assuming yet again the ancient role of the Greeks—to inspire a more humane world.

Two thousand four isn't that far away, and we have a lot of work to do. But I have faith that we can do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the ballroom at the Intercontinental Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Konstandinos Stephanopoulos, Prime Minister Konstandinos Simitis, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yeoryios Papandreu of Greece; Prime Minister Simitis' wife, Daphne; Mayor Dimitrios Avramopoulos of Athens; Representative Carolyn B. Maloney; Peruvian Ambassador to Greece Martin Yrigoyen, dean of the diplomatic corps in Greece; Minister of Foreign Affairs Ismail Cem, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, and President Suleyman Demirel of Turkey; United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research. The President also referred to the EMU, the European Monetary Union. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Simitis.

Statement on Congressional Action on Proposed Foster Care Legislation November 20, 1999

Hillary and I are very pleased that the Congress today approved H.R. 3443, "Foster Care Independence Act of 1999." This legislation helps ensure that young people in foster care get the tools they need to make the most of their lives. It builds on proposals in my budget to empower those leaving foster care by providing them access to health care, better educational opportunities, training, housing assistance, counseling, and other support and services. We cannot let these young people walk their tough road alone.

Each year approximately 20,000 18-year-olds leave our Nation's foster care system without an adoptive family or other permanent family relationship. Without the emotional, social, and financial support that families provide, many of these young people are not adequately prepared for life after foster care. Unfortunately, Federal financial support ends just as they are making the critical transition to independence. This bill addresses that problem and will help these youth in their effort to become successful, independent adults.

I am also pleased that the Act provides additional funds for the adoption incentive payments, which are bonuses to the States for increasing the number of children adopted from public foster care. This additional funding will enable States to receive the full amount of the bonuses they have earned through outstanding performance.

Today's legislation is a fitting tribute to the late Senator John Chafee, who was a chief sponsor of the Act. A fierce champion of children, Senator Chafee paid particular attention to our Nation's most vulnerable young people. I am pleased that the bill renames the Independent Living Program in his honor.

I would also like to thank the House and Senate leadership, as well as Representatives Nancy Johnson and Ben Cardin, Chairman William Roth, Jr., and Senators Jay Rockefeller, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Charles Grassley, John Breaux, James Jeffords, Jack Reed, and Susan Collins for their hard work and dedication to this issue. I look forward to signing this bill into law.

Statement on Signing the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999

November 20, 1999

Today I have signed into law S. 468, the "Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999." I strongly support the objective of this legislation—to make it easier for State, local, and tribal governments and non-profit organizations to apply for and report on financial assistance. While different types of grant programs can and should have different applications, there is ample room for consolidation and streamlining of similar programs.

Nonetheless, I have strong reservations about some of the specific provisions in the Act. In particular, as my Administration has indicated to the Congress on several occasions, the Act does not provide resources for, nor allow sufficient time to accomplish even partially, the very ambitious overhaul of grant programs that it re-

quires. In addition, the Act anticipates a common application and reporting system for Federal grant programs, but does not amend the many program statutes that establish different application and reporting requirements for different grant programs. Furthermore, the deadlines in the Act are inconsistent with other legislation and unlikely to be achievable in practice. For example, the Act requires agencies to create a common system for electronic processing of all grant programs, but on a schedule that is inconsistent with related requirements of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998. For these reasons, even an extensive effort may yield only minimal improvements in the simplification of the grants process and the administration of Federal resources.

I remain concerned that S. 468 may create expectations that will not be fulfilled, and tarnish the success of the efforts we have already begun. My Administration will, of course, continue its long-standing efforts to streamline, simplify, and consolidate application and reporting requirements.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

November 20, 1999.

NOTE: S. 468, approved November 20, was assigned Public Law No. 106-107.

Remarks at a Dinner for the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Florence, Italy *November 20, 1999*

Thank you very much. Professor Dorsen, Dean Sexton, President Oliva, to my fellow leaders, and especially to our hosts, Prime Minister and Mrs. D'Alema. Let me say a special word of appreciation to my good friend Romano Prodi for the very good outline he has given us of the challenges facing not only the nations of Europe but the United States and all other economies more or less positioned as we are.

The hour is late, and what I think I would like to do is to briefly comment on why we're here and what exactly are the elements of progressive governance in the 21st century—what do we have consensus on, and what are the outstanding challenges facing us?—without going into any detail, in the hopes that that's what will be discussed tomorrow.

First of all, I think it's worth noting that it's entirely fitting that we're meeting here at this beautiful villa in this great city where the Italian Renaissance saw its greatest flowering, because we know instinctively that we now have a chance at the turn of the millennium to shape another extraordinary period of human progress and creativity.

There are many parallels to the Renaissance era in this time. For at the dawn of the Renaissance, Italy was a place of great economic ferment and change, rapidly expanding trade, new forms of banking and finance, new technologies and new wealth, more education, vibrant culture, broader horizons. Today, we have the Internet, the global economy, exploding diversity within and across national lines, the simultaneous emergence of global cultural movements, breathtaking scientific advances in everything

from the human genome to discoveries about black holes in the universe.

We have, in addition, a much greater opportunity to spread the benefits of this renaissance more broadly than it could have been spread 500 years ago. But there are also profound problems among and within nations. Making the most of our possibilities, giving all people a chance to seize them, minimizing the dangers to our dreams, requires us to go beyond the competing models of industrial age politics. That's why we're here. We think ideas matter. We think it's a great challenge to marry our conceptions of social justice and equal opportunity with our commitment to globalization. We think we will have to find what has often been called a Third Way, a way that requires governments to empower people with tools and conditions necessary for individuals, families, communities, and nations to make the most of their human potential.

In the United States, we have proceeded for the last 7 years under a rubric of opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. We have also recognized something that I think is implicit in the whole concept of the European Union, which is that it is no longer possible, easily, to divide domestic from global political concerns. There is no longer a clear dividing line between foreign and domestic policy. And, therefore, it is important that every nation and that all like-minded people have a vision of the kind of world we're trying to build in the 21st century and what it will take to build that world.

I think there is an emerging consensus which you heard in Romano Prodi's remarks about

what works and what challenges remain. There is also a clearer consensus that no one has all the answers.

So let me briefly give you an outline of what I hope we will discuss tomorrow and in the months and years ahead. First, I think there is an economic consensus that market economics, fiscal discipline, expanded trade, and investment in people and emerging technologies is good economics. In the United States, it has given us an unparalleled economic expansion, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest unemployment among our women in the work force in 46 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, and the first back-to-back surpluses in our budget in over 40 years. But there are problems. I will get to them.

On social questions, I think there is an emerging consensus that we should favor equal opportunity, inclusion of all citizens in our community, and an insistence upon personal responsibility. In addition to low welfare rolls through welfare reform in the United States, it has given us the lowest crime rate in 25 years and unprecedented opportunities for women, racial minorities, and gays to serve in public life and to be a part of public discourse.

We have also worked particularly hard to reconcile the competing religious concerns of our increasing diverse communities of faith in the United States. The challenges to this economic and social policy are, it seems to me, as follows, and this is where we have to close the gap.

Number one—what Mr. Prodi talked about quite a lot—the aging of all of our societies. In the next 30 years, the number of people over 65 in our country will double. I hope to be one of them. *[Laughter]* Now this is a high-class problem. In all the advanced economies, anyone who lives to be 65 today has a life expectancy of 82. Within a decade, the discoveries in the human genome project will lead every young mother—including Mrs. Blair—*[laughter]*—within a matter of years, young mothers will go home from the hospital with their babies with a little genomic map. And it will tell these mothers and the fathers of the children what kinds of things they can do to maximize the health, the welfare, and the life expectancy of their children. Many of our best experts believe that within a decade, children born in advanced societies will have a life expectancy of 100 years.

Now, this is a terrific thing; but in the short run, it means that within 30 years, more or less, all of our societies will have only two people working for every one person retired—challenge number one.

Challenge number two, in spite of unprecedented economic prosperity in many places, there are still people and places that have been left behind. I'll give you the most stark example.

In America, we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, 4.1 percent. On the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the home of the Lakota Sioux, the unemployment rate is 73 percent. And in many of our inner cities, in many of our rural areas, this recovery simply has not reached because of the lack of educational level of the people or because of the digital divide or because of the absence of a conducive investment environment. But every advanced society that seeks social justice and equal opportunity cannot simply rest on economic success in the absence of giving all people the chance to succeed.

Number three, there has, by and large, in all of our societies with heavy reliance on the market, been an increase in income inequality. I'm happy to say it is moderating in the United States. In countries that have chosen to make sure that did not happen, very often there have been quite high levels of unemployment, which people also find unacceptable and which is another form of social inequality.

The next problem, with more and more people in the work force, both women and men, and more and more children being raised in homes that are either single-parent homes or two-parent homes where both the parents work, it is absolutely imperative that we strike the right balance between work and family. In this case, I think virtually every European country has done a better job than the United States in providing adequate family leave policies, adequate child care policies, adequate supports.

But let me just put it in this way. If most parents are going to work, either because they have to or they want to, then every society must strive for the proper balance, because if you have to choose between succeeding at home and succeeding at work, then you are defeated before you begin. The most important job of any society is raising children; it dwarfs in significance any other work. *[Applause]* Yes, you may clap for that. I appreciate that. It does.

So if people at work are worried about the children at home or in child care, they're not going to be so productive at work. That means that either the economy or the social fabric will suffer. It is a profoundly important issue that will only grow more significant in the years ahead.

The next big issue, I believe, is the balancing of economic growth and environmental protection. And because of the problem of global warming, we will have to prove not only that we can maintain the quality of the environment but that we can actually improve it while we grow the economy. I want to say a little more about that later, but it's a very important issue.

Finally, I would like to put another issue on the table. There is a political problem with achieving this vision, and I'll give you just three examples involving all of us here. In order to pursue this economic and social vision, if you start from a position of economic difficulty and you believe that fiscal discipline is a part of your proposal that is necessary, then you're going to have upfront pain for long-term gain. And the question is, will we be able to develop a progressive governance that will be able to sustain enough support from the people to get to the gaining part? Because everybody likes to talk about sacrifice, but no one likes to experience it. Everyone likes to talk about change, but we always want someone else to go first. And I have seen it. In our country, I was elected in 1992, and in 1993 I implemented my economic program, and in 1994 the public had not felt the benefits of it, and that's one of the big reasons we got a Congress of the other party.

Chancellor Schroeder is facing the same sort of challenges. President Cardoso is facing the same sort of challenges. So it's all very well for us to come here when—as in my case—that things are rocking along well in our country and the public is supporting us. But I think it's important that we acknowledge, if we believe in these ideas they will often have to be pursued when they are controversial in the knowledge that these difficult changes have to be made in order to have results over the long term.

And so one of the things I hope we'll be able to frankly discuss is how we can develop and sustain political support for like-minded people in all countries who are determined to pursue this approach that we all know works and has to be pursued in order to create the

kind of future we want for our children and grandchildren.

Now let me just say a word about global politics. I believe there's an emerging consensus that it's good for the world to promote peace and prosperity and freedom and security through expanded trade; through debt relief for the poorest nations; through policies that advance human rights and democracies; through policies in the developing countries that expand the rights and opportunities of women and their daughters; through policies that stand against terrorism, against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and against the spread of ethnic, racial, and religious hatred.

What are the specific challenges to this consensus? I'll just mention a few. How do you place a human face on the global economy? We're going to have a WTO ministerial in Washington State in a few days. There will be 10 times as many people demonstrating outside the hall as there will be inside. And I understand more than half of them may not even be from the United States.

I personally think this is a good thing. Why? Because the truth is that ordinary people all over the world are not so sure about the globalization of the economy. They're not so sure they're going to benefit from trade. They want to see if there can be a human face on the global economy, if we can raise labor standards for ordinary people, if we can continue to improve the quality of life, including the quality of the environment. And if we believe—we, who say we believe in social justice and the market economy, really want to push it, we have to prove that the globalization of the economy can really work for real people. And it's a huge challenge.

Number two, we have to deal with the fact that about half the world still lives on less than \$2 a day, so for most of them, most of this discussion tonight is entirely academic, which is why debt relief is so important. We have to deal with the fact that while we talk about having smaller, more entrepreneurial government, the truth is that in a lot of poor countries, they don't have any government at all with any real, fundamental capacity to do the things that have to be done. Even in a lot of more developed countries, they have found themselves blindsided by the financial crisis that struck in 1997.

So we have to acknowledge while we, who say we are developing a Third Way—and in our case, we've been able to do it with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years—we have to acknowledge the fact that some countries need more government. They need capacity. They need the ability to battle disease and run financial systems and solve problems, and that it is fanciful to talk about a lot of this until you can basically deal with malaria, deal with AIDS.

You look at Africa, for example, AIDS consuming many African countries. But Uganda has had the biggest drop in the AIDS rates of any country in the world because of the capacity of the Government to deal with the problem. And I think we have to forthrightly deal with that.

Let me just mention a couple of other issues a little closer to home. We're going to have to deal with the conflict between science and economics and social values. Example: the conflict between the United States and Europe over genetically modified seeds and the growing and selling of food; the conflict between Britain and France over the sale of beef.

Listen, this is hot stuff now, but you can see that there's going to be a lot more of this. And we have to find a way to manage this if we're going to be in a global society with a global economy, where there are honest differences and real fears. We have to find a way to manage this that has integrity and that generates trust among ordinary people.

Another problem that I think is quite important is, all of us will have to decide how we're going to cooperate and when we separate in an interdependent world. I think, for example, our Congress did a very good thing to finally pay our U.N. dues and to enable the United States to participate in the global debt relief movement. And I think they made a mistake to defeat the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. But every one of us will have to deal with these kinds of questions, because there will always be domestic pressures operating against responsible interdependence and cooperation.

And finally, I'll mention two other things. I believe that the biggest problems to our security in the 21st century and to this whole modern form of governance will probably come not from rogue states or from people with competing views of the world in governments, but from the enemies of the nation-state, from terrorists

and drugrunners and organized criminals who, I predict, will increasingly work together and increasingly use the same things that are fueling our prosperity: open borders, the Internet, the miniaturization of all sophisticated technology, which will manifest itself in smaller and more powerful and more dangerous weapons. And we have to find ways to cooperate to deal with the enemies of the nation-state if we expect progressive governments to succeed.

The last and most important point of all, I believe, is this. I think the supreme irony of our time, as we talk about a new renaissance—by the way, that would make New York University the successor of de'Medici—[laughter]—I think—consider this: The supreme irony of this time is that we are sitting around talking about finding out the secrets of the black holes in the universe, unlocking the mysteries of the human gene, having unprecedented growth, and dealing with what I consider to be very high-class problems: finding the right balance between unemployment and social justice, dealing with the aging of society. Isn't it interesting to you that, in this most modern of ages, the biggest problem of human societies is the most primitive of all social difficulties: the fear of people who are different from us? That, after all, is what is at the root of what Prime Minister Blair has struggled with in Northern Ireland, at the root of all the problems in the Balkans, at the root of the tribal wars in Africa, at the root of the still unresolved, though hopefully progressing problems in the Middle East.

A few weeks ago, Hillary invited two men to the White House for a conversation about the new millennium. One was one of the founders of the Internet; the other was one of our principal scientists unlocking the mysteries of the human genome. And they talked together. It was fabulous, because these guys said, number one, we would not know anything about the gene if it were not for the computer revolution because we couldn't have done the complex sequencing. And then the scientist said, now that they had done all this complex sequencing, the most stunning conclusion they had drawn is that all human beings were 99.9 percent the same genetically, and that the differences of individuals in any given ethnic group, genetically, were greater than the genetic differences of one ethnic group to another.

So if you had 100 west Africans and 100 Italians and 100 Mexicans and 100 Norwegians,

the differences of the individuals within the groups would be greater than the composite genetic profile differences of one group to another.

Now, this is in an age where 800,000 people were slaughtered by machetes in 90 days in Rwanda a few years ago, when a quarter of a million Bosnians lost their lives and 2½ million more were made refugees.

So that's the last point I would like to make. We need a little humility here. What we really need to be struggling for is not all the answers, but a unifying vision that makes the most of all these wonders and relishes all this diversity which makes life more interesting, but proceeds on the fundamental fact that the most important thing is what it has always been: our common humanity, which imposes on us certain responsibilities about how we live, how we treat others who are less fortunate, how we empower everyone to have a chance to live up to his or her God-given potential.

If you ask me one thing we could do, it would not be all the modern ideas. If I had to leave

tonight and never have another thing to say about public life, I would say if we could find a way to enshrine a reverence for our common humanity, the rest would work out just fine.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 p.m. in an outdoor tent at the Villa La Pietra. In his remarks, he referred to Norman Dorsen, professor, and John Sexton, dean, New York University School of Law; Oliva L. Jay, president, New York University; Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy and his wife, Linda; European Commission President Romano Prodi; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom and his wife, Cherie; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president for Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Remarks at Morning Session One of the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Florence

November 21, 1999

Well, first of all, let me say that I think, Prime Minister D'Alema, the morning session is well named. We are concerned about equality and opportunity in the new economy.

Let us begin with the proposition that the new economy is powered by a revolution in technology, especially in information and telecommunications, and exponentially enhanced by the growing global trade. The new economy does best in a highly entrepreneurial environment where people with new ideas have access to capital and low barriers to establishing a growing business. More than in any previous time of economic expansion, job growth is disproportionately higher in the private, as opposed to the public, sector.

Now the good news is that there is an extraordinary potential for the growth of jobs, businesses, and wealth. We have in the United States been blessed, for example, with a stock market that has more than tripled in the last

7 years. But this is not free of challenges, both within and among nations.

Even though, for example, in our country we have the lowest poverty rate in 20 years and the lowest poverty rate among households headed by single parents, principally women, in over 40 years, we know that there are the following problems with the new economy if you just have a laissez-faire policy.

Number one, the skill gap among people with high levels of education and low levels will lead to even more dramatic income inequality.

Number two, in a highly volatile environment where lots of jobs are being created and lots of jobs are being lost, it requires a special attention to the transition assistance needed to give people the skills and other support they need to move from one job to another.

Number three, there will be people and places that are completely left behind; I mentioned this in my remarks last night. The United States has the lowest unemployment rate we've

had in 30 years, but if you look at some of our inner-city neighborhoods, the remote mountain places in Appalachia, for example, the Mississippi Delta, the Native American, the American Indian reservations, you find unemployment rates anywhere from 3 to 12 times the national average.

So if you wish to promote equality and opportunity, there must be a strategy, first, to close the skills gap, which means that there's a role for Government here. We have to spend more money, not less, than ever before on education. It needs to start sooner; it needs to last for a lifetime. And it needs to be focused much more rigorously on results, so that it's not just a question of spending money, but you're actually getting a higher return for the money that's being spent. Number two, there needs to be a system of lifetime learning for people in transition. You have people at the age of 50 changing jobs now. They can still do quite well, but they have to have help and support. Number three, there needs to be a system for getting capital to those people and places that are left behind.

Let me just give you an example. One of the big debates we're having in America now is how long we can keep this economic expansion going. It is already the longest peacetime expansion in our history. In February, it will be the longest economic expansion in American history, including World War II. I believe that this is happening—I'd like to tell you it's because of my policies—I believe it's happening because we have underestimated the productivity gains of technology and underestimated the power of open borders and open trade to restrain inflation, which permits these economic expansions to go on if you have good policies.

Now how can we continue to grow the economy? You can bring investment to the places that are left behind. So I have before the United States Congress, now, a proposal essentially to set up the equivalent in America of our Export-Import Bank and our Overseas Private Investment Corporation to give American investors the same incentives to invest in the poorest areas in America we give them to invest in the poorest areas of Latin America or Africa, not to take away the foreign incentives but to mirror them in the very poor areas of our country. I think this is something that all advanced countries should look at.

Finally, let me say there is a big problem with the so-called digital divide—the people who

have access to the Internet and technology have enormous advantages—and it has to be closed. We are now hooking up all of our classrooms to the Internet, and we should finish next year. But I think we should shoot for a goal in the developing countries—the developed countries, of having Internet access as complete as telephone access within a fixed number of years. It will do as much as anything else to reduce income inequality.

Last point I want to make: There are not just problems in this economy dealing with equality and opportunity; there are opportunities, too, and let me just mention two.

Number one, technology has permitted us to say, for the first time since the industrial revolution, it is no longer necessary to grow an economy to burn more greenhouse gases to burn up the atmosphere. It is now possible to grow an economy and actually use less greenhouse gases and put less strain on the economy. That opens up the opportunity not only to save the environment but to create literally millions of new jobs around the world.

Number two, the Internet itself offers opportunities for people who don't have access to traditional jobs to make money. There is an American company that perhaps some of you have used, called eBay, and it's basically a place on the Internet where you can buy anything. It's like a great international market on the Internet. There are now over 20,000 people, including a lot of people who are on welfare, who are making a living on eBay—making a living on eBay.

So there are opportunities as well as problems in this economy. We should not be depressed about it. We should just realize that governance requires new policies.

Mr. Prime Minister, you asked us to talk about the domestic issues first, and there are a whole lot of global issues I'd like to deal with, but this is what I would like to say about the domestic issues. We have to deal with more investment in education, more investment in transition aid, a strategy to get capital to people in places left behind, a strategy to close the digital divide. And we have to make the most of the new technologies, especially in the environmental areas, and the new opportunities for isolated people and places to make money because of the Internet, not in spite of it.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Room of Five Hundred at the Palazzo Vecchio.

In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy.

Remarks at Afternoon Session One of the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Florence *November 21, 1999*

So many wise things have been said, I feel ill equipped to compete with lunch. But I would like to very briefly, and in summary fashion, address two subjects which we have discussed: first, how we are dealing with this new economy among ourselves. I agree with what Lionel Jospin said. We are here because we affirm the importance of the nation-state as necessary to provide the conditions of community and humanity in this very different world. The question is what Tony Blair always says: We have to do to what works. We have to do something that enables us to fulfill our traditional mission in a very different world.

Now, let me just make a couple of very specific suggestions for where our work might go. I don't think we have studied enough what each other has done and how it might relate to our own experience. For example, in the countries here represented, taking Brazil to the side a moment—just let's take the EU and the U.S. and Canada. We all take somewhere between 30 percent and 45 percent of national income for government purposes. But we spend this money in very different ways.

Now, we know that if you look at France and Germany, you can achieve quite a high level of growth with GP expenditures in the public sector above 40 percent. You can still have high growth. But we haven't looked enough—the right will say, “Well, the more you spend, the worse it is.” What we should do is to analyze how this money is spent. I would like to know, for example, more than I know about how the unemployment support system in Germany differs from the unemployment support system in France or Britain. I think these things would help us a lot.

We're sitting here in this wonderful medieval building, built in the late 13th, early 14th century. I would like to know why northern Italy has the highest per capita income in Europe and whether it has anything to do with the com-

bination of creativity and cooperation in business that is rooted in the medieval guilds that flourished in Florence hundreds of years ago and that are replicated now in many of the business practices here.

We don't know enough about what is actually going on in our own countries and how it compares with other countries to make the best decisions about what the way forward is. And I think we ought to make sure that when we leave here, we have a strategy of finding that out.

Now, let's go to the global issues and the issues represented here by Brazil. And I would like to talk very briefly about, one, international institutions; two, what the emerging economies, themselves, have to do; and three, what the rich countries ought to be doing.

First, on the international institutions, I completely agree that the IMF, the World Bank, the multilateral development banks were inadequate to the financial crisis of the 1990's and particularly the Asian financial crisis, which collapsed Russia as well and which have terrible effects on totally innocent bystanders, especially in Latin America and particularly Brazil.

Now, what caused this? Number one, as Tony Blair pointed out, you can't run a modern economy without a global financial system that moves money around, a lot of money in a hurry. The volume of currency trades every day is roughly 15 times the volume of trade and goods and services, over \$1 trillion every day. We have to do that. The system won't work without it.

Now, what caused the problem? A lot of loans were made which should not have been made because there was not an honest system of risk assessment. And then, when those loans went bad, two things happened. One, market panic—so it's like the old phenomenon of, once a cat gets burned sitting on a hot stove, it won't sit on a cold stove either. So if we lost money in a developing economy in Russia, or in Asia,

then we better take our money out of central Europe and Latin America.

The second thing that happened, which has been less analyzed, is that a lot of these loans were highly leveraged, through derivatives and other mechanisms, so that people who lost their money in Russia, let's say, had to cover their losses, when they had only put up 10 percent of their losses. So they were very often liquidating their investments in Latin America through no fault of Latin America, but because they had to have cash to pay off their debts.

Now, in the last 2 years the truth is that all of our nations have worked very hard to deal with this. The IMF and the World Bank, we have made some substantial changes in policy; not everything we need to do, but I think that a lot of reforms have been made.

Now, the question is, can domestic economies—can Henrique do things that would help this? Chile had a capital control system that worked pretty well, to try to regulate radical movements of money in and out of the country. But the only reason it worked well is, Chile had a system that was recognized as having integrity and effectiveness, so that people still wanted to put their money there even if there was some control on how rapidly it could move in and out. The same with Malaysia in the Asian financial crisis—people thought you could make money in Malaysia, so they would put up with the capital controls. On the other hand, if when the Russians tried to control money—even the Russians were sending money out of Russia, in record amounts, because they didn't believe at the moment that the system would work.

So should we continue to reform the IMF and the World Bank and the multilateral development banks? Absolutely. But we should not minimize the fact that you've got to move a lot of money around every day.

Second thing: domestic systems matter. Governments have to have good, honest financial systems, because you can't make people put their money in a place they don't want to spend it, and you can't make people keep their money in a place they no longer have confidence in. And governments have to have greater capacity; this is something the old—the so-called old left and the new left ought to agree on. The truth is, in most developing countries, governments are too weak, not too strong.

Why is Uganda the only country in Africa that can drive the AIDS rate down? How can—

why shouldn't we be out there promoting a system where once a country in a developing area of the world solves a problem we more speedily make sure that is done everywhere else, and we help people do that. This is crazy. I mean, just—AIDS is just one example, but—I mean, it's convulsing African countries—but here's Uganda proving that you can get the rate down, and, oh, by the way, they have economic growth at 5 percent or 6 percent a year. So national policies matter.

The third thing is, what are we going to do to help? Very quickly. One, we ought to support everybody, from the Pope to Bono, who's recommending debt relief for the poorest countries in the world. It's insane to keep these poor countries spending all their money making interest payments. They can't even pay off the principal. They'll never be able to grow, and they have no money to buy our products. So the G-8 initiative on debt relief is right. We should do that. Two, we ought to vigorously support economic empowerment initiatives that work in developing nations. I have been in Sao Paulo and Rio, two of the largest cities in the world, two of the most wonderful places on Earth. But there are millions of children there that will have no future unless their families can make a decent living.

Now, the United States, this year, funded 2 million microenterprise loans, mostly to poor urban and rural village women. We know what works in poor developing economies. I wish we were funding 20 million loans. I think the rich countries should be funding literally 2 or 3 hundred million microenterprise loans a year. If you wanted to do something useful at an average of \$50 or \$100 apiece in Europe—I mean, in the poor countries of Latin America and Asia and Africa, and even the poorest countries of Europe, that would make a huge difference.

Three, we ought to do everything we can to get more cell phones and computer hookups out there. The people in Africa are no different from the people in America. If you give people access to technology, a lot of smart people will figure out how to make a lot of money. And the more you can make dense the availability of cell phones and computers in poor countries, the bigger difference it would make.

Four, we ought to all ratify the child labor convention and do more to protect the interest of women and young girls. Get the girls in school, end child labor, put women in the work

force. Example: in Pakistan—we worked with Pakistan to put thousands of their children back in school who were making soccer balls. And they discovered that, when they got the kids back in school, they made thousands of jobs for poor village women who were dying to go to work, and began to sustain their families. The rich countries of the world ought to ratify the child labor convention and do more to help women and to get little girls in school.

And finally, I think the WTO coming up ought to lead to more open markets. We ought to buy products from these countries. If we—you know, it's politically sensitive, but if you want to help these poor countries, they have to make a living. We've got to buy more of their stuff.

Last point before we go to lunch. Gerhard Schroeder said something that I want to reemphasize. The liberal left parties in the rich countries should be the parties of fiscal discipline. It is a liberal, progressive thing to balance the budget and run surpluses if you're in a rich country today. Why? Unless you have total deflation like Japan, you should always be running a balanced budget.

Why? Because it keeps interest rates down for your own people, which creates jobs and lowers costs. The average American has saved \$2,000 in home mortgages, \$200 in car pay-

ments, and \$200 in college loan payments since we cut the deficit.

Two—this is the most important point for Henrique—if all the rich countries in the world were running a surplus in times of growth—just when we're growing—then we not only would lower the cost of capital for our own business communities, we would make it so much cheaper for Henrique to get money in Brazil. It's the number one thing we could do to get money to poor countries at affordable rates is to start running surpluses.

I am trying to convince both parties in my country, before I leave office, to make a common commitment to pay off the public debt of America over the next 15 years for the first time since 1835. This is now a liberal thing to do. It helps poor people; it helps working families; it helps the poor countries of the world. If we could embrace that goal, I think it would be a very good thing to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. in the Room of Five Hundred at the Palazzo Vecchio. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil; Pope John Paul II; Irish musician and peace activist Bono; and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany.

Remarks at Session Two of the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Florence

November 21, 1999

Well, first let me—excuse me. I would like to compliment Professor Meny on his paper, which was presented to this conference, and on his remarks.

I think I should begin by noting that he quoted that wonderful section from Machiavelli, where he says something to the effect that there is nothing so difficult in all of human affairs than to change the established order of things. The next part of the quote is also very important, where Machiavelli goes on to say that is so because the people who will gain from the change are uncertain of their benefit, but the people who will lose are absolutely sure of the

consequences and will go to any lengths to avoid them. So that calls for a little humility here in our enterprise.

But let me say the points that Yves Meny made were the following: Democracy is an unfinished business, still to be perfected. I agree with that. Democracies will be different, depending on the circumstances they face and their cultural and historical differences. I agree with that. We need transnational civil society institutions to bring mutuality and interdependence and responsibility to the fore. I certainly agree with that. And we will have to have

through all these differences a reaffirmation of fundamental rights, and I agree with that.

Let me say what I think we know about all this. First of all, I think it is not an accident that we have the flourishing of a new economy that is based on knowledge and individual entrepreneurialism and creativity at the very time when, for the first time in history, more than half the world's people live under governments of their own choosing. I think there is a connection between the primacy of the citizen and the equality of individuals, and the way this economy works so well in successful democracies.

Secondly, I think the fact that we now have democracies makes it even more important that we be committed to universal education and not just technical education but the kind of education that makes for good citizenship, the liberal arts, education in logic and reasoning and judgment, understanding different cultures, and making reasoned arguments. If you're going to have democracies make good decisions in difficult times—not just when everything is going well—the importance of universal education and not narrowly defined education is greater than at any time in all of human history.

Thirdly, I very much agree with the point which was made about the need for transnational institutions. I say all the time in the United States that we are very fortunate that at this moment in history we have a lot of prosperity, and we have a lot of influence.

But we should make no mistake, nothing lasts forever. We should be humble; we should be responsible; and we should recognize that we live in an increasingly interdependent world, where it is important that we both assume and receive obligations and cooperation.

The last point I would like to make is that when we talk about the perfection of democracy and when we talk about the different cultures, one of the things that I think we have to reaffirm is that, in the world in which we live, democracy is far more than majority rule; it is also majority rule within given restraints of power which recognize minority rights and individual rights, whether they are religious rights, whether they are the rights of women as well as men or given ethnic groups or homosexuals or any other discrete group in society.

It seems to me that if you look at all the troubles in the world we're having over racial and ethnic and religious and tribal turmoil, the most effective democracies that will do best with the modern economy are those that not only have majority rule but very clear, unambiguous, and passionate commitments to the protection of the rights and the interests of minorities.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the Room of Five Hundred at the Palazzo Vecchio. In his remarks, he referred to Yves Meny, director, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute in Florence.

Remarks at the Closing Session of the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Florence

November 21, 1999

First of all, Prime Minister, I want to thank you and the Government and the people of Italy for hosting us here in the city of Florence and all the people who have done so much to make this a wonderful stay.

I don't know that I can add anything to what I have said and what the others have said. I would like to begin by saying I feel deeply privileged to have been here. I respect and admire the other leaders who are here on this panel and those who are in the audience who have participated. And I think we are all fortunate

to serve at this moment in history when, really for the only time in my lifetime we have the chance in the absence of external threat and dramatic internal turmoil, to forge the future of our dreams for our children and to give people in less fortunate parts of the world the chance to live out their God-given capacities. So I think we should come here with gratitude and humility.

Now, let me also say that for—at a certain level, this is about politics. What we want to do is to find a way to, first, explain the world

in which we live in a way that makes sense to the people we represent and the people we would like to reach; and then to propose a course of action that will draw people together, move people forward and touch their hearts, so that elections will be one and decisions can be implemented; and so that we can work together to actually change the things that we're concerned about and maximize the opportunities that are manifestly there.

Now, we have called this the Third Way or—in Lionel Jospin's wonderful characterization—we'll say yes to the market economy but no to the market society or—in the shorthand usage in America—we say we're for opportunity, responsibility, and community. But at bottom, what we're striving for is to replace a divided way of looking at politics and talking about our common life with a unifying theory.

For up to the present moment, mostly you were for the economy or for protecting the environment; you were for business or you were for labor; you were for promoting work or for promoting family life; you were for preventing crime or for punishing criminals; you were for cultural diversity or for universal identity; you were for the market society or for social values. We come and say, "Well, we're for fiscal responsibility and full employment; we're for personal responsibility and social justice; we're for individual and group identity and the national community."

Now, let me just say that I don't think these are just words. I think life is more satisfying when people are animated by personal and civic philosophies that are unifying, that give us a chance to strive for true integrity, putting our minds and our bodies and our spirits in the same place, and treating other people in the way we would like to be treated, and giving other people those opportunities and shouldering those responsibilities.

So if I might, let me just comment briefly on three things that were mentioned earlier: first, the representative of the green movement and then the question you posed to Tony Blair. I have been very convinced for years that it is no longer necessary to choose between growing the economy and preserving, and even improving, the environment. But it is quite necessary to abandon the industrial age energy use patterns.

The reason I am for the broadest possible use of energy emission-trading permits is not

so the United States—the world's worst emitter of greenhouse gases—can get out of cutting our own emissions but because I want to spare the Indians and the Chinese and others of the burden of growing rich in the way we did. Because global warming means we can't afford for people to do what we have done, which is you pollute and you get rich—Japan, the United States, Europe—and then you turn around when you're rich and you get richer by cleaning up your pollution. That would work, except with global warming you keep making the greenhouse gas factor worse.

So I urge you to all read a book—I'll hawk a book here—"Natural Capitalism," by Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins. It basically proves beyond any argument that there are presently available technologies, and those just on horizon, which will permit us to get richer by cleaning, not by spoiling, the environment. So we can have a unifying vision here.

The second issue you raised, about the genetically modified organisms and food production and all these food fights we see—food fights between Britain and France, food fights between America and the European Union—I think there what we have to do is to try to give people the choice of pursuing their prejudices, even if they're blind, by having absolute honest and full labeling. And then we have to have complete—no one should have an interest in keeping anyone ignorant of the source of food or how it was grown.

And then whether it comes to whether the food should be admitted to the market in the first place, I think it's important that the Europeans—and Tony mentioned this—develop sort of the equivalent of the American Food and Drug Administration on a European-wide basis, so that you actually have confidence when someone says to you, this food is safe; you don't think that the people who did the analysis and voiced the opinion were either incompetent or in the back pocket of the economic interest who benefit from the decision. And I think that's very important, so that you can have safe food and open trade.

The third thing I would like to mention is the lady who talked about cultural diversity. I think we think about culture in two different ways. One is popular culture, you know, not just art and theater, but movies and music. My view is that countries should preserve their popular culture but not shut out other countries'

culture. But in the deeper sense that you mentioned, it seems to me that we're not seeing the abolition of culture, but what we are in danger of is either people losing their culture or protecting it in an exclusive way that leads them into hostility with others. That's what you see in Kosovo or Bosnia.

And what I think we have to find a way to do is to actually preserve in multiethnic, multiracial settings the language, the culture, the history, the uniqueness of people in a way that is unifying, not divisive. I said this last night. I will close with this: People crave coherence in life. We want to believe that we can work hard and provide in a material sense for our families and still be animated by higher impulses. We want to believe we can be proud of being Irish or Brazilian or French or whatever and still know it's more important that we're members of the human race.

And I think the answer is not to get rid of cultural diversity but to extol it, to protect it,

to preserve it, to celebrate it as a particular manifestation of our common humanity. I still think—and I will end with this—that's our most important responsibility.

We haven't talked much about that, but it seems to me that the real essence of what we're saying is if you want a unifying approach to politics, then every person who advocates that has a far higher level of personal responsibility for citizenship than we on the left of the political equation have traditionally acknowledged. And the good news is that we'll have more fulfilling lives if we can pull it off.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. in the Room of Five Hundred at the Palazzo Vecchio. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy; Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Statement on the 1999 Uniform Crime Report *November 21, 1999*

The preliminary 1999 uniform crime report released by the FBI today shows that we are making enormous progress in our national strategy to fight crime. America continues to experience the longest continuous decline in crime on record. Overall crime fell another 10 percent in the first 6 months of this year as compared to the first half of 1998, twice as much as any other 6-month period over the last decade. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years. We have the lowest homicide rate in over 31 years. In every region of our Nation, neighborhoods are safer now, and American families are more secure than they have been in a generation.

But to keep crime rates down we must remain vigilant. Since I took office, my administration has focused on a simple but effective crime-fighting strategy: 100,000 more police officers

and fewer guns in the hands of criminals. Today's report shows that our strategy is making a difference. That is why I am pleased that the budget agreement reached last week will extend our successful COPS initiative into the 21st century, helping put up to 50,000 more police officers on our streets, creating new community prosecutors, and providing more resources for crime-fighting technologies. Congress must now do its part to reduce gun violence and crime, by making the passage of commonsense gun laws the first order of business when it reconvenes.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 19 but was embargoed for release until 6 p.m., November 21.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Petar Stoyanov of Bulgaria in Sofia November 22, 1999

President Clinton. Good morning.

Q. How are you, Mr. President?

President Clinton. I'm fine. I'm delighted to be here, very pleased.

Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, the events in Chechnya in the last 2 days, has that raised doubts about the Russian commitment to a political dialog?

President Clinton. Well, I think they made clear that they were going to try to continue their military offensive. What we've done at the OSCE is it got them to agree that the internal affairs of Russia or any other country is a proper subject of world discussion and world opinion. We got them to agree to take the OSCE mission there. I think it's very important to do that. And I hope that we've gotten an increased amount of concern for civilian casualties. So we'll have to see, but I think it's very important we follow up on the commitments made earlier at the OSCE meeting in Istanbul.

Q. Mr. President, Bulgarian national television. Are you going to discuss with our President different ways for compensating Bulgaria for our losses during the embargo against Yugoslavia and Iraq, about \$10 billion?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, let me say I'm very grateful for the support we received, the Allies received during the conflict in Kosovo, and for the direction taken by Bulgaria under this President and this Government. And we are committed to supporting Bulgaria over the long run, economically, politically, militarily. And I think we will be doing it for many years, and I'm looking forward to that.

Situation in Kosovo

Q. Mr. President, in Kosovo tomorrow, will you urge ethnic Albanians to stop their reprisal attacks against Serbs?

President Clinton. In Kosovo tomorrow I will make a very strong statement about the impor-

tance of everybody getting over this ethnic hatred and going beyond it. And we have all made a big commitment to Kosovo as an economic and political reconstruction. But I think it's very important that Kosovo, in effect, not become the mirror image of Serbia. It's hard not to, but it's important not to. And we'll keep working on it.

But I wouldn't overreact to the stories, you know, and the facts—a lot of good things have happened there since the end of the war. And it hasn't been very long, and there is a long, long history in Kosovo and throughout Serbia, throughout the Balkans, that we're trying to get beyond.

Again, I'd say Bulgaria is a very good example of the direction we ought to take, and I hope we can have a positive impact in Kosovo. I think we can.

President Stoyanov. It's important that we, through the American people, through the eyes of the American President, the American people will realize that the Bulgarian people have embarked upon a new road and chosen a new policy, that of democracy, of respect for human rights and that, also, through its wonderful relations with all its neighbors and its excellent ethnic—the absence of ethnic problems whatsoever, Bulgaria will be an example of stability on this continent and will continue to be so.

NATO Bases in Bulgaria

Q. Will you inform us if you discuss the issue of NATO bases in this country?

President Stoyanov. We'll inform you about anything with pleasure, with the greatest of pleasure.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11 a.m. in the Anteroom at the Presidency. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ivan Kostov of Bulgaria and an Exchange With Reporters in Sofia

November 22, 1999

Prime Minister Kostov. I have just asked the President to say a few words before he goes out of the Council of Ministers. He was kind to respond, and I thank him for that.

President Clinton. Well, first, I want to say again how pleased and honored I am to be in Bulgaria and how strongly I support and admire the political, economic, and military reforms that the Government has undertaken and how grateful I am for the support that Europe and the United States received during the recent difficulties in Kosovo.

I think it is very important for the United States to support Bulgaria's aspirations for political, economic, and military integration into the West and to support the Stability Pact and the economic and political revitalization of all of southeastern Europe.

I would like to make one other point, which is that I am especially grateful for Bulgaria's policy and history of tolerance and cooperation among different groups of people within this

country. If that had been the policy of Serbia in these last 10 years, we would be living in a very different and better time.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Clinton. No, that did not come up. But we talked generally about the importance of doing things that would be economically beneficial to Bulgaria. I would remind you, my Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Daley, was here just a few weeks ago for an economic conference. And we are moving ahead with a whole set of plans, which I hope will be highly beneficial to Bulgaria economically. But we did not discuss the specific question you asked.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:50 p.m. at the Council of Ministers Building. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to the People of Bulgaria in Sofia

November 22, 1999

Dober den.

President Stoyanov, Prime Minister Kostov, Mayor Sofianski, the people of Bulgaria, I thank you for this wonderful, wonderful welcome. I also want to thank this young student, who must have been so nervous, Boryana Savova. If she is a representative of the young people of Bulgaria, your future is in very good hands.

I am honored tonight to be here with my daughter, three Members of the United States Congress, and a distinguished group of Americans. We thank you for this welcome. We thank all the musicians who performed, all the people who worked so hard to put this wonderful crowd together.

And I would like to say a special word of thanks to the young woman who sang so magnificently both the national anthems of Bulgaria and the United States.

I am very proud to be the first American President to visit Bulgaria—a free Bulgaria. I am proud to stand in this place where voices were silenced for too long. Here are these tens of thousands of people, exercising your freedom with dignity and pride.

We are here tonight because of what you did 10 years ago this month, when change swept through Nevsky Square. Students, never before allowed to express their opinions, demanded free elections now. Writers, imprisoned just a few weeks before, led chants of *demokratiya*. Grandparents, never allowed to worship with their children, said prayers in public, in the shadow of this great cathedral. What a wonderful moment that was. What a wonderful thing it said to the rest of the world about the heart of Bulgaria.

Even before 1989, communist rulers tried to keep you down with violence, but you struggled peacefully. They fed you lies, yet you sought the truth. They tried to smother your spirit, yet you were able to come together here and demand to be citizens, with rights and responsibilities of your own.

When the cold war ended, it took much longer for the ground here to thaw. You endured one false spring after another. Now that democracy is beginning to truly take root, some here must feel left behind, while others race ahead. I ask you to remember what you left behind: a police state, with no room for disappointment, because there was no hope for improvement; when nobody felt left behind because no one was allowed to get ahead; when there were no dreams and some Bulgarians were even robbed of their very identities, forced to change their names. The struggle for your constitutional democracy was waged not for paradise but for possibility, not for a perfect world but for the chance to build a better world.

In my own country, we have struggled now for more than 200 years to build what our Founders called "a more perfect Union," never completely perfect but always advancing the cause of freedom and responsibility, of individual opportunity and a stronger national community. In those 223 years, we have had to overcome slavery and civil war, depressions and World Wars, discrimination against women and ethnic and religious minorities. We have overcome these things through the free choices of free people. I came here to say to you, the people of Bulgaria, that through freedom you, too, shall overcome, and you will not have to wait 200 years to do it.

In just the last 10 years, from Poland to Hungary to the Baltics, those who have chosen open societies and open markets started out with sacrifice but ended up with success. The only difference between them and Bulgaria is that they had a head start. Now you, too, are on your way.

Today America and Bulgaria have reached agreements that will encourage more American companies to do business here, to create jobs for both our countries. We are taking steps to help you crack down on corruption once and for all. And let me say to people in the United States, Europe, and all over the world who will see this tonight on television: This is a wonderful

country. Come here and help Bulgaria help build the future.

And let me add this: The cold war was fought and won by free people who did not accept that there could be two Europes in the 20th century. Now we must not, we will not accept that there could be two Europes, separate and unequal, in the 21st century. If you stay the course, Bulgaria will be a place where young people can make their dreams come true, and Americans and Bulgarians together will help to build a Europe that is undivided, democratic, and at peace for the first time in all human history.

When that vision of the future was threatened by President Milosevic's brutal campaign in Kosovo, you stood with NATO. I know it was very hard for you to do. But I ask you to think about what would have happened if we had not stood up. This entire region would have been overwhelmed by refugees. And a message would have been sent to the rest of the world: Stay away from southeastern Europe, for here dictators still hold power by exploiting human differences and destroying human lives. I thank you for standing your ground with us against that evil and sending a very different message to the rest of the world.

And I also want to thank you for setting a very different example here in Bulgaria. You have preserved a multiethnic society. As President Stoyanov has said, you chose to stand with and for civilization 2 years ago. But you also made that choice 50 years ago when you helped Bulgaria's Jewish community to survive World War II and the Holocaust. On behalf of American Jews and Jewish people everywhere, I thank you for that. All of you know the famous line from the monk Paisii Hilendarski: "You, Bulgarians, do not hesitate to be proud." When you saved Bulgaria's Jews, it was one of the proudest moments in your history. And tonight, as you stand for freedom, it is one of the proudest moments in your history.

But now we have work to do. We must help all of southeastern Europe choose freedom and tolerance and community. We must give all the people in this region a unifying magnet that is stronger than the pull of old hatreds that has threatened to tear them apart over and over again. Your neighbor Serbia should be part of that bright and different future.

I am told that during the recent war you could actually hear some of the bombs falling

in Serbia from this square. Tonight I hope the people of Serbia can hear our voices when we say, "If you choose as Bulgaria has chosen, you will regain the rightful place in Europe Mr. Milosevic has stolen from you, and America will support you, too."

Already, we are aiding the forces of democracy in Serbia. And for all the people of this region, we strongly support the Stability Pact for southeast Europe. We encourage the expansion of the European Union to this region. And we must and will keep NATO's door open to those democratic nations here who are able to meet their obligations.

During the conflict in Kosovo, we learned something very important about Bulgaria and its democratic neighbors: Because you know how it feels to be insecure, you know what it means to sacrifice for common security; because you know how it feels to lose your freedom, you know what it takes to defend freedom. And so, even though you paid a great price and you are not yet in the heart of Europe, you have Europe and its values in your heart.

Earlier today, I had the opportunity to meet some of Boryana's classmates at the American University in Bulgaria. They were from Bulgaria and from other countries throughout this region. And they were profoundly impressive to me in their intelligence, in their compassion, in their determination to build a brighter future.

So I would like to close my remarks tonight with a word to the young people here. In America, Thomas Jefferson was only 32 years old when he wrote the Declaration of Independence, and Martin Luther King was only 26 years old when he led our crusade for civil rights for African-Americans. As I look out among you, I see a generation of Bulgarians who have come of age knowing not the unchanging conformity of communism but the constantly changing challenges of a democratic society.

I know that it may seem hard now. But some day you will look back on this time and say, "When we were young, we brought Bulgaria back to freedom. We brought Bulgaria forward to prosperity, security, and unity in Europe." And I am determined that you will also be able to say, "When we marched into the new millennium, America stood with us, and we changed the world."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 5:50 p.m. in Nevsky Square. In his remarks he referred to President Petar Stoyanov and Prime Minister Ivan Kostov of Bulgaria; Mayor Stefan Sofianski of Sofia; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Stoyanov.

Statement on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Announcement of New Board-Certified Teachers

November 22, 1999

Today the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards announced that 2,965 more teachers met the teaching profession's highest standards and achieved National Board certification. I want to congratulate them and commend all who applied for certification, for their personal commitment to high-quality education. These teachers represent all regions of the country; public and private schools; rural, urban, and suburban districts; and every grade from kindergarten through high school. Teachers who pursue these standards set a sterling example for their students and for our country.

We all know that one of the most important factors behind a child's educational success is having a caring, competent, and committed teacher. That's why my administration has strongly supported the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which has now certified nearly 5,000 of our most talented teachers. With today's announcement, we are on the way to meeting the challenge I have set: making sure we have a Board-certified teacher in every school in the Nation by 2006.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Petar Stoyanov of Bulgaria in Sofia

November 22, 1999

President Stoyanov, Mrs. Stoyanov; Prime Minister and Mrs. Kostov; distinguished government leaders; citizens of Bulgaria; our American friends. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking you for your warm welcome. This is a day that I will remember for the rest of my life. You gave my wife a memorable day here not so long ago, and our daughter and I had a wonderful time today in so many ways, a few of which I would like to mention.

But first let me begin with the time President Stoyanov came to the White House. Hillary and I welcomed him there a couple of years ago, and I was very interested in this young President of Bulgaria, so I read up on him.

He was only a little younger than me. He looks much younger, but he's only a little. [Laughter] He studied the law. His wife studied law. He's a father who likes to jog. He likes to read. He grew up listening to rock and roll, just like me. [Laughter] The only difference I could find from our biographies is that he liked John Lennon, and I liked Elvis. [Laughter]

Earlier today on Nevsky Square I had the opportunity to speak to a vast and immensely impressive throng of Bulgarians about the new partnership we are forging for democracy, peace, and prosperity.

Mr. President, as you pointed out in your remarks, the relationships between our two countries and our mutual admiration goes back quite a long while. Perhaps the best symbol of this is the American college here, which I learned, as I prepared to come, was actually first opened in the year Abraham Lincoln was elected President of the United States, 1860.

During the dark days after World War II, the college was closed. The war first brought its closure and then afterward, in the communist era, its grounds were turned over to the secret police. But Americans and Bulgarians never lost faith that it would open again one day, because we never lost faith that Bulgaria would be free again one day.

A few years after the school reopened, our Ambassador at the time, Ambassador Bohlen, took a trip to the famous Rila Monastery, and

right before she left, the abbot came up to her and said, "I have a secret to show you." They walked to a basement, and there in a hidden place was the entire library of the American college, preserved for 50 years by the same monastery that helped to preserve Bulgarian language and culture for 500 years.

Just as those books were hidden deep in the heart of Bulgaria for half a century, there was an energy and creativity hidden deep in the heart of Bulgarians through all those same years. More than 100 years before the Renaissance began, Bulgarian thinkers and artists were already shaping the world.

Now the energies and creativities of the Bulgarian people have been liberated again, and from now on, you will always be masters of your destiny, neither vassals nor victims to anyone. Now you're on a road that is often hard but with a very happy destination. I believe it will lead you to prosperity, to peace, to security, to being part of a Europe that is whole and free.

Tonight I come here again to reaffirm the friendship and the partnership of the United States, our gratitude to you for being a symbol of freedom and determination. I come to offer a toast of respect and thanks.

I toast Bulgaria, its President, and its leaders for casting your lot with freedom in spite of the pain of transition, for standing strongly with humanity in reversing ethnic cleansing, in spite of the sacrifices imposed, and having the courage to follow your dreams and the vision to achieve them. May Americans and Bulgarians always be friends and partners.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Kempinski Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Petar Stoyanov of Bulgaria and his wife, Antonina; Prime Minister Ivan Kostov and his wife, Helena; and former U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria Avis T. Bohlen. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Stoyanov.

Remarks at Ganimet Terbeshi Elementary School in Ferizaj, Kosovo November 23, 1999

The President. Thank you. I want to begin by thanking you for your wonderful welcome. I thank Ramadan for his introduction. I think maybe some day he will be an elected official if he speaks so well from now on. I thank Luljeta for her equally fine introduction of Secretary Albright. And I thank your principal, Shafije Hajdari, for welcoming us here. We are honored to be here with all of you today, especially with the schoolchildren.

When I was introduced, Ramadan said—he thanked me for making it possible for you to come home. There are some other people who were largely responsible, and I would like to introduce them, as well. We have four Members of the United States Congress: Representative Peter Deutsch of Florida; Representative Eliot Engel of New York; Representative Jack Kingston of Georgia; Representative Carolyn Maloney of New York. They voted for the funds that enabled our military to come here and end this terrible ethnic cleansing. I'd like to ask them to stand up. Please stand. [*Applause*]

In addition to Secretary Albright, whom I know you know because you gave her such a wonderful reception, was the strongest advocate of the stand we took in Kosovo; I want to thank Sandy Berger, my National Security Adviser, and Larry Rossin, who is the Chief of Mission for the United States Government in Pristina, and ask them to stand. [*Applause*]

And finally, I want to thank all the members of our Armed Forces and our Allies who are serving here with the U.N. and those who were here previously in the NATO campaign. And I would like to introduce the Commander of all of our NATO forces, General Wes Clark, and thank him for what he has done.

I know with all these people here and all the children here, it is difficult to listen to a long speech, but I hope you can listen to a short speech.

Mr. Milosevic wanted to keep control of Kosovo by getting rid of all of you, and we said, no.

Audience members. Clin-ton! Clin-ton!

The President. Now he has lost his grip on Kosovo, and you have returned. No more days

hiding in cellars, no more nights freezing in mountains and forests.

I know that for those who have lost their homes, perhaps homes where your parents and grandparents were born, this is still a difficult time. I know it is hard for children to feel a sense of security and happiness when they have seen too much killing and hatred. But I know this, too: The United Nations troops and international organizations who have come here to help will stand with you every step of the way, and the coming winter in Kosovo is going to be a lot better than the last winter was.

There is still a lot of work to do, but it is important that the world know what has already been done since you came home a few short months ago.

Audience members. Clin-ton! Clin-ton!

The President. Thank you.

We are preparing houses for the winter, fixing schools, bringing in police officers. KLA fighters are returning to civilian life. Radio stations and newspapers are operating. The U.N. is doing a good job under tough conditions. And last week, the international community pledged another one billion American dollars to help Kosovo, to fully fund the U.N. operation next year.

With all the problems that remain, we should remember, Kosovar children are going back to school, learning in their language in communities that answer to their parents. That is in some ways better than it was before. And we can do better still.

I want to make one last point, more important than anything else I have to say to the children and to the parents. You can never forget the injustice that was done to you. No one can force you to forgive what was done to you, but you must try. And let me tell you why.

First of all, all the schoolchildren will soon be learning in their biology classes that all the people in the world—all the people in the world—in terms of their genetic makeup, scientifically, are 99.9 percent the same: the Serbs, the Albanians, the Irish, the Africans, the Latins, the Asians. Children are not born hating those who are different from them, and no religion teaches them to do so. They have to be taught

to hate by people who are already grown. But all over the world—not just here in Kosovo, all over the world—it is children who bear the burden of their parents' blind hatred.

I have been in Africa with a young man who lost his arm to someone of a different ethnic group, who cut it off with a machete simply because of his family heritage. I have been in Israel with schoolchildren staring at the pictures of their classmates who were blown up in buses simply because they were Jewish. I have been in Ireland with a beautiful, beautiful 16-year-old girl playing and singing to me, but her eyesight was gone because she was blown up in a bomb just because of the religious differences in Ireland. We owe the children in Kosovo a better future than that.

Audience members. Clin-ton! Clin-ton!

The President. Now you cheered for us when we came in because when you were being oppressed, we stood by you, and we exercised military power to defeat the aggression of Mr. Milosevic. We won the war. But listen: Only you can win the peace.

The time for fighting has passed. Kosovo is for you to shape now. The international community will stand by you. But you must take the lead. What will you think about? Will you be

focused on hatred and past wrongs and getting even? Or will you be thinking about good schools for your children, new homes for them, new businesses, the effort to create genuine self-government to eradicate corruption and violence and give your children the joys of a normal life?

I beg you who are parents to teach your children that life is more than the terrible things that are done. It is how you react to them. Do not let the children's spirits be broken. Do not let their hearts harden. The future we fought to save for you is the future we see here today, smiling, cheering, happy children. Give them the tomorrow they deserve. The American people have been honored to stand with you, and we will stand with you every step of the way.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Sports Pavilion. In his remarks, he referred to students Ramadan Ilazi and Luljeta Haliti; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro). The President also referred to the KLA, the Kosovo Liberation Army.

Remarks to American Troops at Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo November 23, 1999

The President. Thank you. Hello.

Audience members. Hello!

The President. From the reception you gave my daughter, I thought he was going to say I was Chelsea's father, too. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

I want to thank all of you for making us feel so welcome. I want to introduce the people who came with me: our Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright; our NATO Commander, General Wesley Clark; my Chief of Staff, John Podesta; National Security Adviser Sandy Berger; and four Members of the United States Congress, Representative Jack Kingston from Georgia, Representative Peter Deutsch from Florida, Representative Carolyn Maloney from New York City, and Representative Eliot Engel from New York City; and Chelsea.

Let me say that we are honored to be with you. We thank you for your service. We're looking forward to eating a big, early Thanksgiving dinner with the men and women of Task Force Falcon.

I want to salute some of the troops for what they have done at Camp Bondsteel and Camp Monteith. And also I want to thank those from other nations in our multinational Brigade East. I want to visit you now, at this season of Thanksgiving, not only because you're doing a hard job a long way from home but because here we've got a lot to be thankful for.

Thanks to you, we have reversed ethnic cleansing. We have a successful military mission which was brilliantly executed, with no combat casualties. And now, we have a chance, not a guarantee but a chance, to work with these folks

to build a lasting peace in the Balkans. Now that Operation Allied Force is over, there is a new struggle underway, and Camp Bondsteel is on the frontlines. Operation Joint Guardian will protect and deepen the peace we are working so hard to make permanent.

You certainly haven't wasted any time. The story of Bondsteel reads like something out of the settling of the Old West. Not long ago, this was a hayfield. Soon after NATO came into Kosovo, it became a beehive of activity. Between the Army Engineers and the Navy Seabees—

[At this point, audience members interrupted the President with cheers and laughter.]

The President. Yeah. Well, anyway, somewhere—*[laughter]*—somewhere between the Army Engineers and the Navy Seabees, you move over a half a million cubic yards of earth. You brought enough gravel to lay a two-lane road all across the State of Missouri. In less than 5 months, you built 160 sea huts, a chapel, a gym, a hospital, mess halls, a PX, a barber shop, and an aviation area.

I want to salute a few of the responsible units. Don't be shy: the Headhunters of the Engineer Brigade 1st Infantry Division; the Blue Devils of the 3504 Parachute—I just want to note for the press that the Blue Devils of the 3504 Parachute Infantry Regiment are also known as "devils in baggy pants"—the Steel Tigers of the 177 Armor Battalion; the Bone Crushers of the 2d Platoon Bravo Company; the Blue Spaders of the 126 Infantry Regiment; the Hellcats of the 299th Forward Support Battalion; the Eagles of Task Force 21 Aviation Regiment; the Spartans of the 793d Military Police Battalion; the Dagger Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division; the Navy Seabees of Battalion 3.

[Unit members cheered as they were mentioned.]

The President. You did pretty well.

Let me say to all of you, I know that a lot of your assignments are still dangerous. I appreciate the hard work you have done to protect all the people of Kosovo, including the Serbs. I appreciate your pursuit of local thugs, like the mad mortar-man. I appreciate your constant mediation between people who have a long way to go toward reconciliation.

I'm told that children routinely say, "We love you, United States." Well, they love the United States because they love you, because we gave them their freedom back; we gave them a

chance to go home; we're giving the children a chance to have a different life than their parents have lived.

But let me just say this—I say this every time I speak to a group of American service men and women overseas—the biggest problem in the world today, with all the modern technology, all your fancy computers, everybody getting on the Internet, all the new discoveries in science, the biggest problem in the world today is the oldest problem of human society. People tend to be afraid of people who don't look like them and don't worship God the way they do and come from a different place. And when you're afraid of somebody, it's just a short step to disliking them. If you dislike them, it's a short step to hating them. If you hate them, it's a short step to dehumanizing them. And once you do that, you don't feel bad about killing them. Now that's what this whole deal is about.

And you see this problem in our inability to solve the peace in the Middle East, although we're getting there. But it's been a long time coming. We may be about to have a final breakthrough in the Irish civil war—been 30 years coming. Almost 800,000 people were killed in 100 days in Rwanda by people of 2 different tribes, one hacking the others to death with machetes; they hardly had any guns at all.

And if you strip it all away, the number one problem in this old world today is the problem of Bosnia, the problem of Kosovo: It's racial and ethnic and religious hatred and dehumanization.

All you've got to do is look around the room today, and you see that our military is a stunning rebuke to that. This is the American idea in flesh and blood, all of you. You come from all different backgrounds, all different races, all different religious faiths, all different walks of life. And you're here working together as a team. You can appreciate your differences. You can even make fun of them. You can even make jokes about them because you know that your common humanity and your shared values are even more important than your differences.

Now, the most important thing you can do, besides keeping these people alive and having security, is to teach that to the children and to their parents by the power of your example and your own testimony. Because I am telling you, what they're going through here today is an example, but by no means the only example,

of the worst problem the world faces on the eve of the new millennium. And it violates everything we in America stand for. And the power of our weapons could win the military battle in Kosovo, but the peace can only be won by the human heart.

And every day they see you, every day these little old kids see you working together—even if they don't speak our language, even if they never met any African-Americans or Hispanics before, even if they don't know any Asians before—they can see; they have eyes; they'll get it. You just show up, and you be yourself, and you do what you're supposed to do, and you treat them right. The power of your example will show them that they do not have to be trapped in the pattern which led to the slaughter of a quarter of a million people in Bosnia, 2½ million refugees there, almost a million refugees here, though we acted quicker, and because we acted quicker, they all came home.

But now that they came home, they've got to learn how to win the peace. And I say that to the other nations who are here represented. I want people to see Americans working with you. I want these children to know that the world is a better place when people are proud of their own race and ethnicity and religion, but respectful of others; when they are secure enough in who they are that they don't have to put anybody else down, hurt anybody else, torch anybody else's church or mosque just to feel that they matter. This is the most important issue in the whole world today.

And just by getting up every day, going to work, keeping the kind of morale that you manifested today with your cheers and your pride,

you are a rebuke to the biggest problem in the world, and the power of your example can do more than anything else to help us to win the peace.

Thank you, God bless you, and Happy Thanksgiving.

[At this point, a gift was presented to the President.]

The President. You all know I have an important job, because I'm your Commander in Chief, right? [Cheers] Well, tomorrow, because I'm also the President and I have broad executive authority—I get home at 10 o'clock tonight, we're all dog-tired, but I've got to get up and go to work tomorrow because I have to do something that every President has been doing since the 1920's: I have to pardon the Thanksgiving turkey. And they bring me a big turkey, and we let one go so we can eat all the others. [Laughter] And they put this turkey in a petting zoo for children to see in the Washington area. Anyway, it's always a great deal. I'm just saying, when I go into the office tomorrow to pardon the turkey, I'm going to take the falcon and put it on my desk so all of America can see, when my desk is on television, what you're doing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:13 p.m. in the base theater/festival tent. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Craig Peterson, USA, Commander, Task Force Falcon, who introduced the President; and Gen. Wesley K. Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Remarks to American Troops Following Thanksgiving Dinner at Camp Bondsteel

November 23, 1999

Thank you. Well, the people at my table said that the speech I gave to the other troops was piped in here, which means it either was or it wasn't. And if it was, you heard it, and if it wasn't, you get relieved of hearing it. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you how very grateful I am for your service here and for the power

of your example here. As I said to the other troops, NATO won the military victory, but now the people of Kosovo have to win the peace, and you have to help them win it, not only by doing your jobs but by setting a good example.

This was a war caused by a man's determination to drive a whole people out of a country

because of their ethnic and religious background. It's the opposite of everything we believe in, everything we live by, and everything the United States military stands for.

And you just look around this room today. We just celebrated Thanksgiving with, I bet you, conservatively, 25 different ethnic groups represented among the American military forces here in this room—maybe 50, maybe it's more. We are interested and proud in and proud of our background, and we should be, but we know that our common humanity and our shared values are more important. That's the message that the children need to get here in Kosovo. And the more you work with people and the more you let children see you working together, having a good time, being proud of what you're doing, doing your job, living the American creed, you will also be fulfilling your mission by doing that.

Kids are not brought up hating each other because they're different; they have to be taught to do that. They've taught generations of people on this land, good people in both communities, to do that. And now they've got to stop, and you've got to help them. And I can't think of a better Thanksgiving present that you could give to them.

Let me also say that I was very honored—I've got four Members of the Congress here who voted for this, but I was very honored to sign the legislation which raised the pay and improved the retirement of members of the military. But let me also say that we are well aware that in this good economy, with the training you've gotten in the military, that you're not serving for the money, but we think you ought to be properly compensated and have a good retirement, and it ought to be an incentive for you to stay if you're so inclined.

But we honor your service; we need you. And on Thanksgiving, those of us who came here will be home, and you will be a long way from home. But you will be in our hearts, and I hope you know that what you're doing is a great, great gift to your country.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:30 p.m. in a dining tent. In his remarks, he referred to President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000, Public Law 106-65, approved October 5.

Remarks at the Thanksgiving Turkey Presentation Ceremony and an Exchange With Reporters

November 24, 1999

The President. Please sit down, everyone. Welcome to this annual day-before-Thanksgiving ritual here at the White House. I want to welcome particularly the Boys and Girls Clubs from Greater Washington, Horton's Kids, the people from the National Turkey Federation, and especially Chairman Jim Rieth and the president, Stuart Proctor.

I also want to say a special word of welcome to Representative Peter Deutsch from Florida and his family, who are here. This is a triumph of human stamina, because Peter just made the trip with me to Bulgaria and Kosovo. We got back very late last night, so he promised to come so there would be two jet-lagged people standing here together, and we're glad to see them.

I want to thank, as always, the National Turkey Federation for donating this year's tom turkey. It traveled here all the way from Minnesota. Minnesota may be the second biggest turkey-producing State in our country. Sometimes I wonder if it's really a match for Washington, DC. *[Laughter]*

Tomorrow we celebrate the last Thanksgiving of this century. A hundred years ago, on these very grounds, President William McKinley reflected on the last turn of the century. He said, "Seldom has this Nation had greater cause for profound thanksgiving." Those words ring even more true today.

Today we count among our national blessing a time of unprecedented prosperity, with expanding economy, low rates of poverty and unemployment among our people, limitless opportunities for our children and the future. We are also very grateful for the peace and freedom America continues to enjoy, thanks to our men and women in uniform—many of whom I saw yesterday—a very long way from home at Thanksgiving.

As we gather around our dinner tables tomorrow with family and friends, let us give thanks for all these things that hold us together as a people: the duty we owe to our parents and our children; the nurturing and education of our families, especially our children, and for many, our grandchildren; the bounty of our earth; and the strong spirit of community we enjoy here in the United States.

We also know as we celebrate our blessings that there are still too many people who are hungry at this holiday season, both beyond our borders and around the world and, sadly, even here in the United States. That's why it's so important that we not only give thanks but also give back to our communities.

Before coming out here, I asked some of our staff members what they were thankful for this holiday season. One of my staff members said, "Today I'm thankful that I'm not a turkey." [Laughter] I know that one turkey doesn't have to worry about that. This fine-looking bird from the State of Minnesota. At over 50 pounds, he is the namesake of Harry S. Truman, the President who began the tradition of keeping at least one turkey off the Thanksgiving dinner table. Harry, the turkey, will get his pardon today.

So before I feast on one of the 45 million turkeys who will make the ultimate sacrifice, let me give this one a permanent reprieve, and tell you all that he will soon be on his way to the wonderful petting zoo at Fairfax County, Virginia, where he can enjoy his golden years.

I want to say a special word of appreciation for the people who run this petting zoo and who give, therefore, a lot of children the opportunity to see animals and to touch them in a way that they never would.

Just before we came out here—or before we started the ceremony, Stuart reminded me that this turkey is a little more calm than the one we had last year. One of the most interesting things I've discovered in the 7 years we've done this is that turkeys really do have personalities,

very different ones. And most all of them have been quite welcoming to the President and to the children who want to pet them. On occasion, they're as independent as the rest of Americans. [Laughter]

So, Harry, you've got your pardon. Ladies and gentlemen, Happy Thanksgiving.

Vieques Island

Q. Mr. President, on Vieques, how are you going with reaching a compromise with Governor Rosselló with regard to Vieques?

The President. Well, we're working very hard on it, and the Defense Department and the Government of Puerto Rico have been working together. And here's a case where I believe there are two legitimate issues here. There's the legitimate concerns of the people of Puerto Rico, which I think are quite real, particularly the people on the island. And then there's the absolutely legitimate concern of sending all of our units out combat-ready. So we're working hard through that.

I have spent a lot of time on it myself, and I hope that in the next few days, we'll have something to say about it. We're getting there.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Q. What did you think of your wife's emphatic statement, Mrs. Clinton's emphatic statement yesterday regarding the Senate race? And did you advise her to do that?

The President. Well, I think—first of all, I thought it was a good statement. I thought she did well yesterday. And what told—what she said in public is what she's been telling me for weeks and weeks, and I think she just thought that, even though, for a lot of good reasons, she thought she should wait until next year to make a formal announcement, I thought it was a wise thing for her to do, to decide that—to make it clear that she had no doubt that she was going to do it.

Q. Are you, in a sense, prepared to not have a First Lady here? Are you prepared to do many of the things, in a sense, that she might do?

The President. Well, I want her to do this if she wants to do it—and she does—and if a lot of people in New York want her to do it—and they do. And I think that we'll have to make accommodations. She'll be here and do some things, and some things that she might otherwise do she won't. But I'm excited for her,

and if I can help her in any way, I will. I think it's wonderful.

Q. Did she sense that many people in New York were concerned, many Democrats especially in New York were concerned about her veracity—that's the only word—

The President. You mean about whether she was serious about running?

Q. Whether she was serious.

The President. Well, I think that there are a lot of people who kept saying that, and apparently there was some concern, so I thought it was a good thing to clear it up. I always think if there's any doubt and you can resolve it, you ought to do it. So I think she did that, and I'm proud of her.

Vieques Island

Q. Mr. President, how soon will you hear from Secretary Cohen on Vieques? Today or Friday?

Q. What kind of a race do you think she'll have? Do you think it's going to be tough?

The President. I don't know. We've worked hard on this. I think largely the timing will be determined by the facts, that is all the issues that are out there that we're still working through. Because I feel very strongly that the people of Puerto Rico have some legitimate concerns, not only just on the facts here but on the whole relationship since 1983 with the military. I think that Secretary Cohen and Secretary Danzig were very concerned about it. They've been extremely responsive, and I think everyone has worked hard in good faith here.

I must say, I've been very impressed by the work of—and the approach that Governor Rosselló and Congressman Romero-Barceló have had, and also the people at Defense. We've really worked hard on this in a good spirit. And like I said, I've spent an awful lot of time on it myself. And I hope we can get it worked out. I'm not sure—I can't say for sure we will, but we're making real headway, and we're working hard.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Q. What will be your role in your wife's campaign?

The President. Well, I don't have any idea yet. I think—I'll try to do for her what she's always done for me. I'll try to give her good advice. But I've got a job here, and I'm going to do it. And I also think that in the beginning

of the campaign the people want to see her. They want to know what she's going to do and how she's going to do it and what she can do if the New York citizens decide to put her to work for them. But if there's some way I can help, I'll be happy to.

I think she's got a lot to offer and I think—

Q. Have you established your residency in terms of where you're going to—

The President. Well, I suppose that is, strictly speaking, a legal question. But we have a home there, and we're working on getting it furnished. Then she'll have a place to be when she's up there campaigning and not here in the White House. So I think we're on our way to doing that. But I'm excited about the house; it's a pretty house.

Drug Enforcement Agency Practices in Mexico

Q. Mr. President, with Mexico—the DEA agents in Mexico were intercepted by narco-traffickers, and they found guns in their car. That is an illegal matter in Mexico, DEA agents carrying guns in Mexico. Are you concerned with the security of those agents working in Mexico, and what are you doing to resolve these kinds of violations of international problems with Mexico?

The President. You know, I just got back from a 10-day trip. I haven't been briefed, and I don't think I can comment now. I'm sorry.

President's Possible Visit to India

Q. Mr. President, are you ready to travel to India now, after traveling the whole world? And the Ambassador of India here in Washington said that now it's overdue for President Clinton to travel to India.

The President. I've always planned to go there, and I hope I can.

Q. The First Lady, when she visited there, said that "I'll bring my husband."

The President. Yes. Well, I certainly intend to go, and I hope we can work it out.

Colombia and Narcotrafficking

Q. For the first time in over 9 years is a citizen of Colombia and nationality to the United States—President Pastrana—do you feel this is a good step? Will this help you—

The President. It's a very, very good step, and a courageous step on his part, and real evidence that we're committed to working together to fight the narcotics trade. I think you

will see early next year, on a completely bipartisan basis, an effort by the United States to do more to assist Colombia across a whole broad range of issues. Colombia is already the third largest recipient of American assistance, but it's a very large country with a very old tradition and a lot of profound challenges. And I think you will see next year that we'll be out there together—Republicans and Democrats alike—trying to be good partners with the people in Colombia that are trying to build a safe, decent, harmonious society.

Q. Happy Thanksgiving, Mr. President.
The President. Happy Thanksgiving.

Seattle Round

Q. Going to Seattle, sir, are you disappointed that other leaders aren't going?

The President. Originally, it was just supposed to be a ministerial, and I thought—just almost at the last minute, I thought, well, since I'm going to be out there a day and a half or a day, that if anybody wants to come, other people who are interested in this, I ought to give them a chance to come. But I think we decided to do it so late, it was just more of a logistical problem than anything else. So, no.

Q. Did you try to talk—

The President. No. No, we just explored whether they wanted to come because I was going to be there. But it was just something done, literally, at the last minute. It was originally supposed to be a ministerial, and I thought, well, gosh, I don't want them to think that I'm out there, and they're not welcome. That's all.

President's Visit to Turkey and Southeastern Europe

Q. Are you dead tired? Are you dead tired?

The President. No, I had a nice—good night's sleep last night. It was a wonderful trip for America. You know, what we did—I think we made some real progress with Greece and Tur-

key. I think that the pipeline that we signed is a great insurance policy for democracies everywhere, including the United States. I think the fact that we got an agreement for a new charter for the OSCE, where the Russians acknowledged the legitimacy of all nations being concerned about internal affairs within countries, I think is good. I think the fact that we got an agreement on military forces in Europe which will get the Russian forces out of Georgia and Moldova, and also give them the security of knowing there are certain limits on how many foreign forces can be established in other countries, I think all those things are quite good.

So this was a big trip for the United States; long term, our security was substantially advanced. And I hope and pray and believe that we really made some progress on helping Greece and Turkey to work out their differences and moving Turkey toward membership in the European Union. That's what I hope.

Q. The Russians out of Chechnya—do you think the Russians—

DEA Practices in Mexico

Q. [*Inaudible*—an agreement to allow the agents to carry weapons?

The President. I just told this gentleman, I just got back last night, and I got back very late, and I haven't been briefed on a lot of this. So I think, before I comment on that, I should have a chance to talk.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Rieth, chairman, and Stuart Proctor, Jr., president, National Turkey Federation; Gov. Pedro Rosselló of Puerto Rico; and President Andres Pastrana of Colombia. The President also referred to Kidwell Farm at Fryling Pan Park in Fairfax County, VA, future home of the turkey. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

The President's Radio Address November 27, 1999

Good morning. On this holiday weekend, when we count our many blessings, Americans are also busy buying gifts for the next holidays,

right around the corner. Today I'd like to speak with you about the remarkable rise of the Internet as a destination for holiday shopping and

about how we can ensure that on-line commerce will live up to its enormous promise.

On Thanksgiving, beyond our family's personal blessings, my family and I gave thanks for the enormous prosperity America is carrying forward into the 21st century. One of the key reasons our economy continues to thrive, with the longest peacetime expansion in history, is that we're making the most of new technologies. Especially, the Internet and other information technologies are revolutionizing our economy, powering one-third of our economic growth.

As the Vice President will make clear in a report he'll soon release, few applications of information technology have more potential than electronic commerce. During the holiday season alone, on-line shopping could exceed \$9 billion, doubling or even tripling the on-line totals for the same period last year.

About 4 million American families will buy some of their gifts on-line for the first time this holiday season. I intend to join them, because on-line shopping has significant benefits not just for consumers and large, established retailers. On-line commerce also opens a world of opportunity for local artisans and small entrepreneurs.

As with shopping in stores, when consumers shop on the Internet, they must take basic precautions to ensure that what they see is what they get. To help familiarize on-line consumers with these precautions, the Federal Trade Commission has prepared a useful check list. You can find the complete checklist at www.consumer.gov.

But today I'd like to emphasize at least some of the essentials. First, in the on-line world, you must pay close attention to details. Carefully check for shipping and delivery dates, for extra fees, warranties, return policies, and phone numbers to call if you run into a problem. Second, always buy with a credit card. With credit cards you are protected by Federal law against

unauthorized charges. Third, guard your privacy at all times. Look for the unbroken key or padlock symbols on the order page to ensure that your credit card information will be transmitted securely. Don't share passwords with anyone, and be sure to read the merchant's privacy policy to see what information is being collected about you and how it will be used.

I'm pleased to announce that, thanks to the leadership of Vice President Gore, many leading companies and organizations, including the Better Business Bureau's OnLine, American Express, MasterCard, Dell, Get Netwise, eBay, America OnLine, and Amazon.com, all are joining with us to protect and educate consumers this holiday season. Many are distributing guides to help people shop on-line safely and wisely. Some are offering financial guarantees that go above and beyond Federal law. If we want Internet commerce to continue to grow, we all must work together to make sure that shopping on-line is just as safe as shopping in a mall.

I'd like to close today by asking all of you to think not only about using the Internet to buy gifts for friends and family but also to give more lasting gifts to our community and our future. As I discovered during the philanthropy conference we held at the White House last month, charitable websites, like Helping.org, have made signing up to contribute time or money in your community as easy as checking on the weather. So this holiday season, let's use every avenue possible, including the Internet, to give something back to our communities.

Enjoy the rest of your Thanksgiving weekend, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:17 p.m. on November 26 at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Ulster Unionist Council Vote on the Northern Ireland Peace Process

November 27, 1999

I welcome this historic step toward lasting peace in Northern Ireland and congratulate

David Trimble on his leadership in bringing about a successful vote in the Ulster Unionist

Council. The Ulster Unionist decision today, which follows critical decisions by all the pro-agreement parties over the past several weeks, is an important move forward to full implementation of the Good Friday accord in all its aspects. Beginning next week, government in Northern Ireland is being put back directly in

the hands of all the people. I welcome this progress and urge all parties to continue working together on building the foundations for lasting peace. I pledge the support of the United States to all those who are helping to make possible a brighter future for Northern Ireland.

Remarks on Signing Consolidated Appropriations Legislation for Fiscal Year 2000

November 29, 1999

Thank you. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I want to welcome the Members of Congress who are here, members of the Cabinet, the police officers and teachers who are shielding me from the cold wind—[laughter]—and who represent the big winners in this year's budget. I would like to say a special word of thanks to Jack Lew, Sylvia Mathews, Larry Stein, and Martha Foley for the work that they did on this budget. And I know that many Members of the Senate and the House who are here brought their staff members who worked on the budget. I want to thank them for their work, as well.

Last January, in my State of the Union Address, I asked our Congress to use this truly historic time of peace and prosperity to meet our generation's responsibilities to the new century: to extend our economic prosperity, improve our education system, make our streets safer, protect our environment, move more Americans from welfare to work, prepare for the aging of our Nation, and strengthen our leadership in the world. The first budget of the 21st century was a long time in coming, but it goes a very long way toward fulfilling those historic responsibilities.

Though it leaves some challenges unmet, it represents real progress. It is a budget for a Government that lives within its means and lives up to the values of the American people. We value prosperity, and this budget will help to extend it. It maintains the fiscal discipline that has turned deficits into surpluses and gives us what will be in February the longest economic expansion in the history of the United States.

It avoids risky tax cuts that would have spent hundreds of billions of dollars from the Social

Security surplus and drained our ability to advance education and other important public purposes.

The budget keeps us on track toward paying down the debt so that in 15 years, our Nation will be debt-free for the first time since 1835. This will mean lower interest rates and greater growth for a whole generation of Americans.

We value education, and this budget truly puts education first, continuing our commitment to hire 100,000 highly qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades, which common sense and research both tells us leads to improved learning.

The budget also helps to fulfill another promise I made last winter, to encourage more accountability for results in our Nation's schools. Under this budget, for the first time we will help States and school districts turn around or shut down their worst performing schools, schools that year after year fail to give our most disadvantaged students the learning they need to escape poverty and reach their full potential. And the budget provides further help for students to reach higher standards by doubling funds for after-school and summer school programs, which will enable us to reach hundreds of thousands of more students, and by increasing support for mentoring programs, including the GEAR UP program to help students go on to college.

We value the safety of our families, and this budget will make America a safer place. It invests in our COPS program, which already has funded 100,000 community police officers and helped to give us the lowest crime rate in 25 years. This agreement will help to hire up to 50,000 more community police officers, targeted

in neighborhoods where the crime rates still are too high.

We value the environment, and this budget protects the environment and preserves our precious natural heritage. It includes our historic lands legacy initiative to set aside more of our magnificent natural areas and vital green spaces, and does not include destructive antienvironmental riders.

We value quality health care, and this budget includes historic investments in biomedical research, mental health, pediatric training, and other areas. And it ensures that hospitals and other medical providers will have the resources they need to provide the 39 million elderly and disabled Medicare beneficiaries with the quality health care they need and deserve.

Finally, we value America's role of leadership in the world, and this budget strengthens that role, with greater investments in our Nation's strong defense and our Nation's diplomacy, by paying our dues and arrears to the United Nations, meeting our commitments to the Middle East peace process, providing debt relief for the poorest countries of the world, and funding efforts to safeguard nuclear weapons and expertise in Russia.

Let me thank the leaders of both parties for their roles in this agreement. We had a lot of late night, long phone calls which led to it. I thank the leaders of the relevant committees and subcommittees for their special efforts in this regard. And, of course, I want to say a special word of thanks to the leaders and members of my party in both Houses who strongly supported my efforts for the 100,000 teachers, the 50,000 police, the investments in the environment, and paying the U.N. dues.

As we celebrate what we have accomplished, I ask us all to be humble and mindful of what we still have to accomplish. To give all Americans in all health plans the protections they need, we still need a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. To curb gun violence and keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and children, we still need sensible gun safety legis-

lation to close the gun show loophole in the Brady law, to ban the importation of large ammunition clips, to include the requirement for child trigger locks in a juvenile Brady bill. To build one America with freedom and justice for all, we should pass the hate crimes prevention act. To meet the challenge of the aging of America, we must extend the life of the Social Security Trust Fund well beyond the years of the baby boomers' retirement, lift the earnings limitations, and alleviate poverty among older women on Social Security. To ensure the health of our seniors in the years to come, we must secure and modernize Medicare, including a voluntary prescription drug benefit. To make sure hard-working Americans have a place at the table of our prosperity, we must pass a new markets initiative to give Americans the same incentives to invest in poor areas they have to invest in poor areas around the world. We must raise the minimum wage and increase our support for quality child care.

In the weeks and months ahead, we can achieve these vital goals if we keep in mind that the disagreements we have are far less important than our shared values and our shared responsibility to the future. With this budget, we have helped to begin that future.

Again, let me thank the leaders and the Members in Congress in both parties that contributed to a budget that passed with large majorities in both Houses and both parties. I am proud to sign a bill that I believe will give us a stronger, better America in the 21st century.

I'd like to now invite the Members of Congress to come up and stand with me, and then I'd like to ask the police officers and the teachers to come in behind the Members of Congress, and we'll sign the budget.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. H.R. 3194, approved November 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106-113.

Memorandum on Facilitating the Growth of Electronic Commerce

November 29, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Facilitating the Growth of Electronic Commerce

The rapid growth of the Internet and its increasing use throughout the world for electronic commerce holds great promise for American consumers and for the Nation. Consumers will have significantly greater choice and convenience and will benefit from enhanced competition for their businesses.

It is essential for consumers and the health of the economy that government facilitate not only retail activity, which has increased substantially, but also the movement to the online environment of other categories of transactions. We must update laws and regulations developed before the advent of the Internet that may have the unintended effect of impeding business-to-business and business-to-consumer online transactions. Impediments may include regulatory or licensing requirements and technical standards and other policies that may hinder electronic commerce in particular goods or services. While some of these legal restrictions are the subject of pending legislation, other potential barriers are outside the scope of those legislative proposals.

Under the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, Federal agencies are addressing issues regarding electronic transactions within the Federal Government and between the Federal Government and other parties. We should provide for similar consideration of laws and regulations governing electronic commerce in the private sectors.

In adapting laws and regulations to the electronic environment, it is critical that consumers and the public at large be assured of a level of protection in electronic commerce equivalent to that which they now enjoy in more traditional forms of commerce. Any disparity in protection may undermine consumer confidence in electronic commerce and impede the growth of this important new trade medium. At the same time, we must recognize that different media may require different approaches and that public interest protections designed for the physical world may not fit in the electronic commerce arena.

We should attempt to develop an equivalent level of protection, recognizing that different means may be necessary to accomplish that goal.

The United States Government Working Group on Electronic Commerce (the Working Group) shall establish a subgroup, led by the Department of Commerce, to: (1) identify Federal, State, and local laws and regulations that impose barriers to the growth of electronic commerce, and (2) recommend how these laws and regulations should be revised to facilitate the development of electronic commerce, while ensuring that protection of the public interest (including consumer protection) is equivalent to that provided with respect to offline commerce. This subgroup shall carry out the responsibilities identified below on behalf of the Working Group, with the exception of reporting to the President.

Within 60 days of the date of this memorandum, the Working Group shall invite the public to identify laws or regulations that may obstruct or hinder electronic commerce, including those laws and regulations that should be modified on a priority basis because they are currently inhibiting electronic commerce that is otherwise ready to take place. The Working Group also shall invite the public to recommend how governments should adapt public interest regulations to the electronic environment. These recommendations should discuss ways to ensure that public interest protections for online transactions will be equivalent to that now provided for offline transactions; maintain technology neutrality; minimize legal and regulatory barriers to electronic commerce; and take into account cross-border transactions that are now likely to occur electronically.

The Working Group shall request each Federal agency, including independent regulatory agencies, to identify any provision of law administered by such agency, or any regulation issued by such agency, that may impose a barrier to electronic transactions or otherwise impede the conduct of commerce online or by electronic means, and to recommend how such laws or regulations may be revised to allow electronic commerce to proceed while maintaining protection of the public interest.

The Working Group shall invite representatives of State and local governments to identify laws and regulations at the State and local level that may impose a barrier to electronic transactions or otherwise to the conduct of commerce online or by electronic means, to discuss how State and local governments are revising such laws or regulations to facilitate electronic commerce while protecting the public interest, and to discuss the potential for consistent approaches to these issues.

The Working Group shall report to the President in a timely manner identifying:

- (1) laws and regulations that impose barriers to electronic commerce or that need to be amended to facilitate electronic commerce, and
- (2) recommended steps for addressing the barriers that will facilitate the growth of electronic commerce and will ensure continued protection for consumers and the public at large.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on Signing Consolidated Appropriations Legislation for Fiscal Year 2000

November 29, 1999

I have signed into law H.R. 3194, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for FY 2000. I am pleased that my Administration and the Congress were able to reach agreement on the first budget of the 21st Century—producing a hard-won victory for the American people.

This legislation makes progress on several important fronts. It puts education first, honoring our commitment to hire 100,000 qualified teachers to lower class size in the early grades and doubling the funds for after-school and summer school programs.

It makes America a safer place. The bill provides an acceptable funding level for my 21st Century Policing Initiative, which builds on the success of the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) program. To date, the COPS program has funded more than 100,000 additional police officers for our streets. This bill funds the first increment of the 21st Century Policing initiative, which will place an additional 30,000 to 50,000 police officers on the street over the next 5 years, while expanding the concept of community policing to include community prosecution and law enforcement technology assistance. I appreciate the Congress' efforts to forge a bipartisan commitment to the program, which will build upon our successful efforts to reduce crime in our communities.

The bill strengthens our effort to preserve natural areas and protect our environment by its support of my Lands Legacy Initiative. I am very pleased that the bill does not include most

of the environmental riders that would have put special interests above the national interest.

This budget agreement also strengthens America's leadership role in the world by paying our dues and arrears to the U.N.; by meeting our commitments to the Middle East peace process; by making critical investments in debt relief for the poorest countries, by enhancing the security of our overseas personnel; by providing for new, critical peacekeeping missions; and by funding efforts to safeguard nuclear weapons in Russia.

Labor/Health and Human Services/Education Bill

Specifically, I am pleased that the legislation provides \$1.3 billion for the second installment of my plan to help reduce class size in the early grades. The Republican proposal did not guarantee funding for the teachers hired last year and would have instead allowed Class Size dollars to be used for virtually any activity, including vouchers. The final budget agreement supports the over 29,000 teachers hired last year plus an additional 2,500 teachers.

The bill appropriately includes several other high priority education initiatives. One million students will continue to be served by the Reading Excellence Initiative and 375,000 more students than last year will have access to 21st Century Community Learning Centers. By providing \$145 million for Public Charter Schools,

approximately 650 more schools than last year will receive startup funding.

I commend the Congress for providing increases to several programs in my Hispanic Education Agenda that address the disproportionately low educational achievement and high dropout rates of Latino and limited English proficient students. The Hispanic Education Agenda includes programs such as Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Adult Education, Bilingual Education, the High School Equivalency and College Assistance Migrant Programs (HEP/CAMP), Hispanic-serving Institutions, and support services to promote the graduation of low-income college students (TRIO).

I am disappointed, however, that this legislation does not provide any of the funding that I specifically requested for Troops to Teachers. This lack of funding jeopardizes this program, which would have provided 3,000 new teachers in high-need subject areas and school districts.

I am pleased that the bill funds most of my major proposals for job training, worker protection programs, and grants for working with developing countries to establish core labor standards. For example, \$1.6 billion is included for dislocated worker assistance, enabling the program to provide training and re-employment services to 858,500 dislocated workers. Since 1993, my Administration has succeeded in tripling funding for, and participation in, programs that help dislocated workers return to work.

As authorized in the bipartisan Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Congress has provided \$140 million to expand services to job seekers at One-Stop centers.

I am pleased that the bill provides the funds I requested for major youth job training programs. Specifically, the bill includes the \$250 million I requested for Youth Opportunity Grants to finance the second year of the 5-year competitive grants that provide education, training, and support services to 58,000 youth in Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. In addition, the bill provides the \$1 billion for Youth Activities Formula Grants to provide training and summer employment opportunities to an estimated 577,700 youth. Also it includes \$55 million for the final year of Federal funding for the School-to-Work initiative. The bill provides \$1.4 billion for the Job Corps program, including financing for enhanced follow-up services for graduates, completion of a

four-center expansion initiated in FY 1998, and construction of Head Start child care facilities on five Job Corps campuses.

The bill provides \$83 million, or 8 percent above the FY 1999 enacted level, for labor law enforcement agencies, funding key initiatives to ensure workplace safety, address domestic child labor abuses, encourage equal pay, assist in complying with pension law, and promote family leave.

I am especially pleased that this legislation includes critically needed changes to the Welfare-to-Work program's eligibility requirements. We have worked closely with the Congress to ensure these changes were enacted this year. By simplifying eligibility, this legislation will allow the Welfare-to-Work program, within existing resources, to serve more effectively long-term welfare recipients and noncustodial parents of low-income children. The bill also establishes an alternative penalty that is tough, but fair, for States that have not implemented certain child support enforcement requirements.

This legislation fully funds my request for Head Start, adding up to 44,000 new slots for low-income children and continuing on the path to serve one million children by FY 2002.

Unfortunately, the bill reduces the Social Services Block Grant by \$134 million below the FY 1999 level, undermining programs serving our most vulnerable families.

The bill includes historic investments in biomedical research, mental health, pediatric training, and a number of other critically important public health initiatives. It also makes an essential downpayment on my Safety Net proposal, which is designed to provide financial and technical support to those providing a disproportionate amount of care to the uninsured. Lastly, it provides payment restorations to hospitals, nursing homes, and other providers serving the 39 million elderly and disabled beneficiaries.

It also provides a \$34.5 billion investment in health programs, 11.7 percent above the FY 1999 enacted level, including an historic increase of \$2.3 billion for the National Institutes of Health. These new initiatives will strengthen the public health infrastructure, provide critical prevention and treatment services to individuals with mental illness, and invest in pediatric training programs. Specifically, the bill provides \$40 million to support graduate medical education at freestanding children's hospitals, which play an essential role in the education of the Nation's

pediatricians; \$67 million above the FY 1999 funding level for the Mental Health Block Grant, a 23 percent increase over FY 1999 and the largest increase ever; \$30 million for health education, prevention, and treatment services to address health disparities among minority populations; and an additional \$62 million over FY 1999 funding levels to provide critical immunizations to children nationwide. The \$239 million for the Title X Family Planning program will enable family planning clinics to extend comprehensive reproductive health care services to an additional 500,000 clients who are neither Medicaid-eligible nor insured. In addition, the \$25 million for the Health Care for the Uninsured Initiative will support the development of integrated systems of care and address service gaps within these systems.

It provides \$25 million, a full down payment on our proposed \$1 billion investment to develop integrated systems of care for the uninsured. It also dedicates an additional \$15 million to identify the best ways to deliver health care coverage to this population. I am pleased that the bill includes a \$73 million increase in funding for HIV prevention activities to help stop the spread of this disease; an increase of \$183 million in the Ryan White CARE Act, which helps provide primary care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS; and an estimated \$300 million in additional funds for AIDS-related research at the NIH. The bill also includes \$80 million in funding to the Minority AIDS Initiative, which utilizes existing programs to reach African-Americans, Latinos, and other racial and ethnic minorities that are disproportionately impacted by HIV/AIDS, as well as an additional \$100 million to fight AIDS internationally. Finally, the Administration helped protect local authority over HIV prevention activities, successfully removing language from the District of Columbia appropriations bill that would have tied the hands of community health agencies in their ability to use needle exchange programs as part of their overall HIV prevention strategy.

The bill includes \$264 million to expand HHS' bioterrorism initiative. It provides \$52 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) national pharmaceutical stock pile and \$123 million for CDC to expand national, State, and local epidemiologic, laboratory, and surveillance planning capacity, as well as to conduct a vaccine study. The bill also fully funds my request to expand the number

of Metropolitan Medical Response Systems that can respond to the health and medical consequences of a chemical, biological, or nuclear incident, and to enhance smallpox and anthrax vaccine research and development. I am particularly pleased that the bill funds the creation of a new national electronic disease surveillance system, which will also help detect outbreaks and strengthen the public health delivery system.

I commend the Congress for providing funding for my Nursing Home Initiative, including resources for more rigorous inspections of nursing facilities and improved Federal oversight of nursing home quality, and for funding the 31-percent increase in Home-Delivered Meals that I requested.

Finally, the bill also includes the Balanced Budget Refinement Act of 1999, which invests \$16 billion over 5 years to address the flawed policy and excessive payment reductions resulting from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. It lifts caps on therapy services, increases payments for very sick nursing home patients, restores teaching hospital funding, and eases the transition to the new prospective payment system for hospital outpatients. It also includes provisions to limit cost-sharing requirements for Medicare beneficiaries and extends coverage of important immunosuppressive drugs. Unfortunately, it includes provisions that are not justifiable, such as a \$4 billion payment increase to managed care plans that are already overpaid according to most experts. This is troubling because any excess payments from the Medicare trust fund put the program at greater risk.

Commerce/Justice/State Bill

Regrettably, the bill does not contain a needed hate crimes provision that was included in the Senate version of the bill. I urge the Congress to pass legislation in a timely manner that would strengthen the Federal Government's ability to combat hate crimes by relaxing jurisdictional obstacles and by giving Federal prosecutors the ability to prosecute hate crimes that are based on sexual orientation, gender, or disability, along with those based on race, color, religion, and national origin.

I am pleased that we were able to secure additional funds for the Legal Services Corporation. Adequate funding for legal services is essential to ensuring that all citizens have access to the Nation's justice system. Similarly, through

negotiations with the Congress, the funding level for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) was increased above the FY 1999 enacted level. The additional funds will assist the EEOC in its continued progress in reducing the backlog of employment discrimination cases.

The bill funds my requested \$13 million increase for the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. These funds will support law enforcement actions related to hate crimes, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and fair housing and lending.

The legislation contains adequate funding for the decennial census, and includes a compromise on language requiring the Census Bureau to allocate funds among eight functions or frameworks. With the decennial census approaching, I am confident that this language will not inhibit the Census Bureau's ability to actually conduct the census.

The United States has recently entered into the U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Agreement. The Agreement ends years of contention between the U.S. and Canada regarding expired fishing harvest restrictions and provides for improved fisheries management. I am pleased that legislative riders that would have hindered implementation of this important Agreement have been modified or removed from the bill. In addition, additional funds have been provided for implementation of the Agreement and for other salmon recovery efforts. These funds will allow us to work cooperatively with our partners—Canada, a number of western States, and Treaty Tribes—to implement the Agreement and to restore Pacific coastal salmon runs.

The bill does not provide additional requested funding to the Department of Justice for tobacco litigation, but does not preclude the expenditure of funds for this purpose. We will identify existing resources to pursue this important case. Smoking-related health expenses cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year through Medicare, veterans' and military health, and other Federal health programs. The \$20 million I requested is needed to represent the interests of the tax-payers, who should not have to bear the responsibility for these staggering costs.

Critical funds were added to help our Nation's 24 million small businesses. The bill now includes \$16.5 million for my New Markets Initiative to invest in targeted rural and urban areas. Also, funding levels were increased for the Small

Business Administration's (SBA) operating expenses and disaster loan program. These funds will enable the SBA to provide critical services, including a fast and effective response to Hurricane Floyd.

I regret that a provision is included that would amend the recently enacted Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2000, that could limit the access of Federal government employees to contraceptive coverage.

Foreign Operations Bill and Other International Affairs Appropriations and Authorizations

I am pleased that we were able to reach bipartisan agreement with the Congress on a level of funding for international affairs programs that supports our continued engagement on key global issues. Most notably, we were able to agree to meet our obligations to the United Nations, which will allow us to keep our vote in the General Assembly. We also obtained additional funding for international peacekeeping efforts seeking to redress the instability and suffering caused by conflicts in East Timor, Kosovo, and Africa.

The bill includes my full request for the Wye River Agreement, which will support our partners in the Middle East as they accelerate their historic attempt to secure a permanent peace. We gained bilateral funding for the new Cologne debt reduction initiative, as well as agreement from the Congress to allow the International Monetary Fund to use existing resources to finance its portion of the initiative, allowing us to begin to lessen the crushing debt burden that many of the world's poorest nations face as they try to implement difficult economic and democratic reforms.

Unfortunately, the bill also includes a provision on international family planning that I have strongly opposed throughout my Administration. This is a one-time provision that imposes additional restrictions on international family planning groups. However, I insisted that the Congress allow for a Presidential waiver provision, which I have exercised today.

I have instructed USAID to implement the new restrictions on family planning money in such a way as to minimize to the extent possible the impact on international family planning efforts and to respect the rights of citizens to speak freely on issues of importance in their countries, such as the rights of women to make

their own reproductive decisions. As I have stated before, I do not believe it is appropriate to limit foreign NGOs' use of their own money, or their ability to participate in the democratic process in their own countries. Thus, I will oppose inclusion of this restriction in any future appropriations bill.

The bill takes a step in the right direction in terms of paying our dues and our debts to the United Nations and other international organizations. The bill includes most of the funds requested for U.N. arrears, as well as the United Nations Reform Act, which authorizes payment of these arrears contingent upon certain U.N. reforms. My Administration is committed to making sure that all of our debts are paid, and, while doing so, pressing for reforms that will make the U.N. more efficient and effective.

International peacekeeping activities in this bill are funded at a level of \$500 million, \$300 million above the level in the bill that I vetoed. This additional funding is crucial and will support the United States' response to emergent peacekeeping requirements in Kosovo, Asia, and Africa. In each of these places, the United States has worked with allies and friends to end conflicts that have claimed countless innocent lives and thrown whole regions into turmoil. This funding will help America do its part to make and keep the peace in troubled regions.

On a number of other critical foreign policy priorities, we were able to achieve bipartisan agreements that will directly affect the lives of Americans and others alike. We fully funded a new initiative that will significantly expand our efforts to stem the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. We significantly increased funding for programs aimed at reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union and elsewhere. We agreed to a significant package of assistance to Kosovo and Southeastern Europe that will help to solidify the fragile peace that we and our NATO allies have secured. We initiated new programs that will help to provide alternatives to the child labor practices that are still too prevalent in much of the world. I am particularly pleased the bill provides my full request for embassy security to protect the men and women who serve our country abroad.

There are still important commitments and goals that were not adequately addressed in this bill. I am disappointed that we did not achieve all of the funding that we need to fully imple-

ment the multilateral portion of the Cologne debt initiative, and that we were not able to meet our commitments to provide multilateral environmental assistance through the Global Environment Facility. However, in total, this bill demonstrates that the bipartisan consensus that America must remain engaged in global affairs, which has guided our interaction with the rest of the world since the end of the Second World War, is still very much alive and well, and I am hopeful that it will continue to guide our foreign policy into the 21st Century.

I continue to believe that various provisions prohibiting implementation of the Kyoto Protocol in this bill are unnecessary, as my Administration has no intent of implementing the Protocol prior to ratification. Furthermore, I will consider activities that meet our responsibilities under the ratified U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change to be consistent with this provision. Finally, to the extent these provisions could be read to prevent the United States from negotiating with foreign governments about climate change, it would be inconsistent with my constitutional authority. Accordingly, I will construe this provision as not detracting from my authority to engage in the many activities, both formal and informal, that constitute negotiations relating to climate change.

This legislation includes a number of provisions in the various Acts incorporated in it regarding the conduct of foreign affairs that raise serious constitutional concerns. These provisions would direct or burden my negotiations with foreign governments and international organizations, as well as intrude on my ability to maintain the confidentiality of sensitive diplomatic negotiations. Similarly, some provisions would constrain my Commander in Chief authority and the exercise of my exclusive authority to receive ambassadors and to conduct diplomacy. Other provisions raise concerns under the Appointments and Recommendation Clauses. My Administration's objections to most of these and other provisions have been made clear in previous statements of Administration policy and other communications to the Congress. Wherever possible, I will construe these provisions to be consistent with my constitutional prerogatives and responsibilities and where such a construction is not possible, I will treat them as not interfering with those prerogatives and responsibilities.

District of Columbia Bill

With respect to the District of Columbia bill, I am pleased that the majority and minority in the Congress were able to come together to pass a version that I can sign. While I continue to object to remaining riders that violate the principles of home rule, some of the highly objectionable provisions that would have intruded upon local citizens' right to make decisions about local matters have been modified from previous versions of the bill. My Administration will continue to strenuously urge the Congress to keep such riders out of the FY 2001 D.C. Appropriations Bill.

I commend the Congress for providing the Federal funds I requested for the District of Columbia. The bill includes essential funding for District Courts and Corrections and the D.C. Offender Supervision Agency and provides requested funds for a new tuition assistance program for District of Columbia residents. The bill also includes funding to promote the adoption of children in the District's foster care system, to support the Children's National Medical Center, to assist the Metropolitan Police Department in eliminating open-air drug trafficking in the District, and for drug testing and treatment, among other programs.

Interior and Related Agencies Bill

With respect to the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies bill, I commend the Congress for agreeing on an acceptable version—one that does not include most of the highly objectionable provisions that would harm the environment and benefit special interest groups by allowing the inappropriate use of national forests and other public lands and resources.

In particular, we have reached a fair compromise on millsite claims under the 1872 Mining Law. Hardrock mining operations under existing approved plans of operations, as well as applications for new mining plans filed by the date of the Interior Solicitor's Opinion of November 7, 1997, would go forward without the Department of the Interior applying the five-acre-per-mining-claim millsite limitation. The Department of the Interior would impose this limitation on plans for new hardrock mining operations filed after November 7, 1997; it would also impose the limitation on amended plans

of operations filed after November 7, 1997, that add millsite acreage.

Our agreement also will allow final rules to take effect in the near future that will provide a fair return to the taxpayers for the development of Federal oil resources; and will ensure more effective environmental protection in hardrock mining on Federal lands.

This bill provides two-thirds of the funds I requested for my Lands Legacy initiative and represents a significant improvement over prior-year funding, allowing us to protect such irreplaceable national treasures as the Baca Ranch in New Mexico, the Everglades in Florida, wilderness lands in the California Desert, and Civil War battlefield sites that are threatened by urban sprawl. There is also adequate support given to the Clean Water Action Plan. I am especially pleased with the additional funding for the Forest Service and for abandoned mine lands reclamation, which would make significant progress in addressing acid mine drainage and watershed problems in the Appalachian region. I look forward to working with the Congress next year to provide full and permanent funding for my Lands Legacy proposal, including full Federal and State funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

My Administration has also been able to secure additional funding for energy conservation, the single largest component of my Climate Change Technology Initiative, which will help us to form the partnerships with industry that are vital to the development of a new generation of ultra-efficient cars, more efficient and affordable housing, and more efficient, less-polluting industrial processes. This progress will help us to address the threat of global warming economically and practically.

I commend the Congress for the historic \$157.2 million increase for Indian health, which is only slightly below the \$172 million increase the Administration sought for the Indian Health Service. This funding increase represents a continuing demonstration of the Federal commitment to improve the health status of Native Americans and Alaska natives. I also commend the Congress for the removal of an objectionable rider that would have infringed on tribal sovereignty, and for providing specific funding to accommodate new contracts with tribes.

Although I am disappointed that the Congress has failed to increase funding for the National Endowment for the Arts for the eighth straight

year, I am pleased with the generally positive debate and the first increase in 4 years in funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The bill also contains language on the American Heritage Rivers initiative. I believe that the congressional language is unnecessary and unfortunate. I will direct the Departments funded by this bill, within existing laws and authorities, to continue to support and undertake community-oriented services or environmental projects on rivers I have recognized as part of the initiative.

By increasing critical funding for land conservation efforts and removing harmful environmental provisions, the legislation represents a step forward in efforts to protect the environment and manage Federal lands and resources responsibly.

Disaster Assistance

I am pleased that the bill includes over \$500 million in additional funds for our Nation's farmers, ranchers, and rural communities to help them recover from natural disasters, particularly this year's hurricanes. These funds will help farmers clear their streams and fields for next year's crop, just as the \$2.5 billion in loans provided in the bill will help them secure the financing they need for planting. Vitally needed funds are included to help low-income rural families and farm laborers repair and replace housing damaged by Hurricane Floyd, and low-interest loans will be available to repair and replace farm structures and equipment lost in the storm. In addition, \$186 million is included for additional crop loss payments across the country, including areas in the East that suffered through one of the worst droughts in memory. The bill also provides funding to implement the mandatory livestock price reporting authority included in the Agriculture Appropriations Act, which will make the livestock market more transparent and particularly help small producers get a fair price for their livestock in the market.

Authorization Bills/Other Issues

The bill also includes a provision that would delay the Department of Health and Human Services's Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network Final Rule for a minimum of 42 days from the bill's effective date. This Final Rule is in response to my Administration's belief that the current organ allocation policies by the

Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network are inequitable because patients with similar severities of illness are treated differently, depending on where they may live or at which transplant center they may be listed.

The Satellite Home Viewer Improvement Act—part of the Intellectual Property and Communications Omnibus Reform Act of 1999—will increase the ability of satellite companies to compete against cable companies, and will result in more customer choice, lower prices, and increased access to local news and information. This Act puts the TV remote control back into consumers' hands and competition at their fingertips. In addition, the patent reform legislation that the Administration has fought for will help meet the needs of America's inventors and entrepreneurs. It strengthens protection in a number of ways: it extends the term of a patent when there is an administrative delay in the patent process; it requires the timely domestic publication of patent applications that are also filed abroad; and it reinvents the Patent and Trademark Office as a performance-based organization to better serve America's entrepreneurs and innovators.

Unfortunately, the Congress did not fund my additional request to protect the Nation's critical computer and information based infrastructures from a growing threat of cyber attack from hostile nations, terrorists, or criminals.

In order that \$68 million in interest accrued by the Abandoned Mine Land Fund (to be transferred to the United Mine Workers of America Combined Benefits Fund—designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement) not be scored against the discretionary spending caps, I hereby designate that amount as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended. I will shortly be designating other funds in this legislation as emergency requirements.

Finally, there are several provisions in the bill that purport to require congressional approval before Executive Branch execution of aspects of the bill. I will interpret such provisions to require notification only, since any other interpretation would contradict the Supreme Court ruling in *INS vs. Chadha*.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House
November 29, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 3194, approved November 29, was assigned Public Law No. 106-113. This statement

was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 30.

Remarks on a Parental Leave Initiative and an Exchange With Reporters November 30, 1999

The President. Hello. Thank you. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. The people here with me at the podium are, obviously, Secretary Herman, but also Katie and Eric Banks and their son, Collin, of Fairfax, Virginia; Jonathan and Teresa Graham, and their two children, from Baltimore; Darsie Cahall and James Baker, and their three children, from Takoma Park, Maryland. I'll say a little more about them in a moment. You can see this is a family event. [Laughter] We've orchestrated the children.

Before I leave for the World Trade Organization meeting on the west coast, I want to talk a little about how we're using the strength of our economy to help strengthen working families.

Yesterday I signed a budget that maintains the fiscal responsibility that has given us what will be in February the longest economic expansion in our history and at the same time lives up to the values of the American people. We have no higher value than family, but too many of our families are having trouble balancing the demands of home and work. Today I'm using my Executive order—authority—to give these parents new tools to succeed at home and on the job.

The surging technology and soaring prosperity we currently enjoy are the result of a lot of hard work and very long hours by the American people. In fact, today many working parents are forced to make the unacceptable choice between being good workers and good parents. Too often, in our round-the-world, round-the-clock economy, there just don't seem to be enough hours in the day for parents to do what they need to do. That's why we've worked hard to help parents balance work and family.

Last May I asked Secretary Herman to develop new ways to address this problem. Today I'm announcing a proposed Labor Department rule that lets States use their unemployment insurance to offer paid leave to new parents. This initiative is totally voluntary for States. It

helps them empower more working parents, like the ones standing with me today. With this act, the United States joins the rest of the world's advanced economies, all of whom already have some form of paid leave for parents.

When little Collin was born, his mother, Katie, was working as a waitress; his dad was working as a head electrical technician for a small company. Unfortunately, he was born ill and had to be in intensive care for several weeks. Katie took unpaid leave and eventually quit her job to be with her son. Collin's dad, Eric, wanted to take leave but couldn't afford to do so. Once Collin was well enough, Katie looked for and, fortunately, landed another job. But both Katie and her husband would have and should have been able to take paid leave to care for their son. That's what this parental leave initiative is all about.

I believe giving States the flexibility to experiment with paid employment leave is one of the best things we can do to strengthen our families and help new mothers and fathers meet their responsibilities both at home and at work.

State flexibility and the voluntary nature of this effort are key to its success. In our strong economy, we hope States will take advantage of this new option, and we believe those that do will balance this new benefit with the imperative of maintaining a fiscally sound unemployment insurance program.

This effort builds on our commitment to giving working families more tools to help them adapt to the new economy, from expanding the earned-income tax credit to our welfare-to-work efforts, from increasing funding for child care to HOPE scholarships.

In the budget bill I signed yesterday, we fought for and won a doubling of resources for after-school programs to give young people a safe place to study between the end of their school day and the end of their parents' work day.

I'm especially proud that the first bill I signed as President, in 1993, was the family and medical leave law. Since then, millions of Americans—we believe well over 20 million—have used it to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a newborn or sick relative without losing their jobs. The importance of this benefit has been confirmed by the testimony of experts and parents at the first-ever White House Conference on Early Childhood Development, in 1997, and from groups like the American Academy of Pediatrics. They all reinforce what we already know from common sense, giving parents and primary care givers time to bond with children leads to healthy development including boosting critical language and literacy skills.

But the current law meets just a fraction of the need. And the number one reason families give for not taking advantage of family and medical leave is that they simply can't afford to take time off without a paycheck. The actions we take today will go a long way toward alleviating that burden if the States take up the challenge. I believe it will strengthen parents' bonds with both their children and their jobs.

As I've said, on the eve of this new century, we ought to set a goal that all parents can take time they need for their families, without losing the income they need to support them. The new State authority will move us in the right direction and gives another tool in our national efforts to both strengthen our families and reward the dignity of work.

Thank you very much.

Seattle Round

Q. Mr. President, what do you hope to achieve in Seattle at the WTO?

The President. Well, I hope we'll get a new round launched that will slash tariffs and other trade barriers in agriculture and other areas. I hope that we will agree to keep E-commerce free of unusual burdens and that we will lead to more transparent and open rules among nations so that they believe the trading system is fair.

I also strongly, strongly believe that we should open the process up to all those people who are now demonstrating on the outside. They ought to be a part of it. And I think we should strengthen the role and the interests of labor and the environment in our trade negotiations.

This is not going to be easy to do, partly because some nations, particularly a lot of devel-

oping nations, see our concern for the environment and labor standards as a way to sort of keep them down. But that is not true. What we want to do is to make sure that when we open the trading system, that ordinary Americans benefit.

In our country, about 30 percent of our growth has come from expanded trade. We have kept inflation down because we've kept our markets open and other people have been able to sell good quality products at lower prices in our markets. So we've had this huge growth with low inflation. I just want to make sure that ordinary people everywhere are benefited by the trading system and that the economy is not damaged by trading rules that could put short-term economic considerations over long-term environmental considerations.

So I'm very sympathetic with a lot of the causes being raised by all the people that are there demonstrating. And since this has now become a global society with global communications, as well as a global economy, I think it was unrealistic to assume that for the next 50 years, trade could be like it's been for the last 50, primarily the province of business executives and political leaders. I think more people are going to demand to be heard, and I think that's a good thing.

Deaths Due to Medical Errors

Q. Mr. President, yesterday a report documented the problem of medical mistakes, and said that 44,000 Americans, at least, are killed every year because of these medical mistakes. What's your reaction to that, and is there anything that your administration is planning to do about it?

The President. Well, you may remember that we had a task force a couple of years ago, headed by Secretary Herman and Secretary Shalala, which issued, in fact, two reports: One of them recommended the Patients' Bill of Rights; the other set up a quality commission to deal with problems like this.

If you looked at it, to me, one of the most interesting things was that a lot of these hospitals, which are very overcrowded and have people coming in all the time and have doctors seeing all kinds of patients in rapid successions, have people lose their lives because of improper prescriptions of medicine, not knowing about a patient's allergy or not knowing about what other medication they're taking. That's a—and

I think that we have an opportunity here to work with the public-private partnership which the task force set up to use modern technology, information technology, and to also do some basic old-fashioned changes in procedures that will save a lot of these lives.

I'm convinced we can do that. I talked yesterday, on the Patients' Bill of Rights, to one of the leading managed care providers in the country and suggested that they ought to be helping, too, and they agreed with that. We've all got to get together. No one has an interest in seeing these kinds of mistakes made. And we know that otherwise competent people are making a lot of these mistakes. So we've got to work through how we can use technology and how we can maybe even slow some of the actions to make sure that mistakes like this aren't made.

But I think we need—this is a very welcome report; we need to study it very carefully. And in order to get something done on it, it's going to take a partnership of everybody involved in health care.

Russia

Q. Mr. President, there's been yet another case of espionage from Russia. Are you concerned that there's some sort of epidemic of spying going on? And what does this say about U.S.-Russian relations?

The President. From where? From Russia? Well, I think what we should do is investigate this like we do all others. But I don't think we should stop our efforts to try to drastically cut nuclear weapons or end corruption in Russia or do all the other things we're supporting. I think this shows the importance of our work that the Congress ratified to continue to reduce the nuclear weapons in Russia and the nuclear threat associated with the decommissioning of nuclear weapons.

And I think that what we have to do is continue—we have to deal with espionage firmly, but we need to try to reduce the consequences of error and mistakes and wrongdoing.

Q. What do you hear about Yeltsin's health?

The President. I think it's a case of pneumonia. That's what they said. I checked on it yesterday, and they believe that he'll be all right.

Mass Graves in Mexico

Q. Mr. President, the Mexican Attorney General is reportedly saying that 22 Americans are

among those found in the mass graves. Have you received any official word?

The President. No. I asked about it just before I came out here, actually, and I haven't. It's a horrible example, apparently, of the excesses of the drug dealing cartels in Mexico, and I think it reinforces the imperative of our not only trying to protect our border but to work with the Mexican authorities to try to combat these.

You know, we had a lot of success a few years ago in taking down a number of the Colombian drug cartels, and one of the adverse consequences of that was a lot of the operations were moved north into Mexico. And there are organized criminal operations there, and they are particularly vicious. You may remember that in that same area a couple of years ago, an honest and brave Mexican prosecutor was shot over a hundred times in front of his wife and child. So it's a very violent, dangerous thing, and we have to be on top of it.

Thank you.

Panama Canal

Q. Mr. President, why aren't you going to Panama? I mean, it's a major event in history.

The President. Well, first of all, I have taken and may have to take—I've already taken, I think, a dozen foreign trips this year. It is a major event. I think my interest in Latin America is well-known, but I may have to take yet another trip before the end of the year, and about that time, which is why I asked President Carter and Secretary Albright to head our delegation.

I think that President Carter deserves enormous credit for his leadership in getting the Panama Canal Treaty through. It was, at the time, as you remember, very controversial, immensely unpopular. A lot of Members in the Senate were—had their seats put in peril over it. And I think it—

Q. So you're not against the turnover?

The President. Oh, no. I supported it at the time, and I still support it. I think it's the right thing to do. I think that the new Government of Panama is committed to maintaining the canal in an appropriate way and keeping it open and working with us to do so, and having good relations.

So no one in Panama or anywhere in Latin America should draw any adverse conclusion. We have a lot of things going on in the world

now. I've been out of the country a lot. I need to get ready for the new Congress and the new budget, and I may have to take another foreign trip at about the same time, which is why I have not committed to make the trip. But I think—

Q. What, which one?

The President. I can't talk about it. [Laughter] But I think—I do think that Jimmy Carter deserves to lead our delegation down there. He did a historic and great thing in advocating the Panama Canal Treaty. But the people of Panama should know that this President and our Government strongly support both the treaty and the event, which will occur in a few days.

Q. You're not worried about the Chinese controlling the canal?

The President. I think the Chinese will, in fact, be bending over backwards to make sure

that they run it in a competent and able and fair manner. This is like them, is like China coming into the WTO. I think they'll want to demonstrate to a distant part of the world that they can be a responsible partner, and I would be very surprised if any adverse consequences flowed from the Chinese running the canal.

President's Possible Visit to Ireland

Q. When are you going to Ireland?

The President. I don't know. You know, I'd like to go once a month.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House prior to departure for San Francisco, CA. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Luncheon in San Francisco, California

November 30, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Bill; thank you, Sally; thank you, Leader Gephardt; and thank you, Nancy Pelosi, for always being so wonderful to take all of your various charges from the D-triple-C to the DNC to your President into San Francisco and find your friends and help us.

It's good to be back here. I was here, as Bill said, a couple years ago. And we had a beautiful dinner here, and I love this place. But it's even more beautiful in the daylight. And I want to thank all the Members for coming. Chairman Torres, thank you for being here. And I want to thank the mayor for coming.

I am so indebted to California, and particularly to San Francisco, for being so good to me and Hillary and the Vice President and Mrs. Gore. And I've also learned so much. Every time I come to northern California I learn something new, so I'm less technologically challenged. [Laughter]

And I've learned a lot from Willie Brown. I've learned how to dress better. [Laughter] I never thought I would live long enough to see him in a race where somebody was running to the left of him; this is a great, great day.

[Laughter] I don't know how there is any oxygen left over there. [Laughter] I'm still learning from you, and I thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Let me say also, this is the first opportunity I've had in public to thank Dick Gephardt and all the others who are here in our caucus, and Senator Boxer, for their stalwart strength in fighting for our budget priorities. I just signed yesterday the first budget of the 21st century. And I think it's worth mentioning that because, and only because, they stayed with me, we got our continuing commitment to 100,000 teachers; we doubled, more than doubled, the funds allocated to after-school and summer school programs for children, something that Senator Boxer has fought for a long time; we've, for the first time ever, got funds to States that will agree to target failing schools and give them money to either shut them down or turn them around.

This was a remarkable thing. We got 50,000 more police for our neighborhoods with the highest crime rates. We passed the remarkable bill called the Kennedy-Jeffords bill, which will enable disabled people to go into the workplace and keep their Medicaid health insurance so

that they can work and become taxpaying citizens. They would be totally uninsurable otherwise. We even got some money to pay for people who are not disabled yet but who are uninsurable—people with HIV, people with Parkinson's who can't be legally declared disabled—because they stuck with me. And we got for the first time a big chunk of money for the so-called lands legacy initiative that the Vice President fought so hard for, to set-aside funds. And a lot of other things.

We also left a lot of things undone. We didn't pass the Patients' Bill of Rights yet. We didn't pass the minimum wage increase yet. We didn't pass the hate crimes legislation yet or the employment and nondiscrimination act yet. And we haven't yet taken the strong action I would like to see to extend Social Security beyond the life of the baby boom generation and to reform and modernize Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit.

We beat a huge and irresponsible tax cut, which enables us to continue to pay down the deficit, and we are now on the track to make America debt-free for the first time since 1835, which means that all these entrepreneurs in northern California will be able to get money at lower interest rates for another generation and to get us a whole generation of prosperity.

But what I want you to understand is it happened only because they were willing to stick with me. Otherwise, there would have been no 100,000 teachers, no 50,000 police, no disability employment bill. It would not have happened. We wouldn't have gotten the lands legacy money. All the environmental riders would have been attached to the legislation that we beat back. All of that would have happened. They stayed.

Now I want to put that in the larger perspective of where we've been, very briefly, for the last 7 years and where we're going, because, you know, people sometimes look at me and say, "What are you doing here? You're not running for anything." And I am, too. I'm running for what Mr. Gephardt said; I want to be a good citizen. And I'm here because I believe in Dick Gephardt's leadership, Nancy Pelosi's leadership, and the potential of our party.

One of you when you went through the line said to me, "Do you have any regrets?" And I said, "Just a few;" and I'm here trying to rectify one of them. I regret that we lost the congressional majority in 1994. And it happened

because, frankly, because I pushed the country and the Congress to deal with some major challenges simultaneously: to deal with this awful budget deficit, without giving up on our commitment to invest more in the health care, in the education, in the environment of our country; to take on the issue of guns, which no administration, no Congress had taken on since Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were assassinated; and to deal with the health care crisis.

One of Dick's colleagues said to me the other day—he slapped me on the back and said, "You know, they told me if I voted for your health care program, health care would become more bureaucratic and fewer people would be insured at work. And I voted for it and, sure enough, that's what happened"—[laughter]—"health care has become more bureaucratic and fewer people are insured at work, because it didn't pass." [Laughter]

So I say to you, look at the record that these people have helped us to establish. In 1992, just remember what California was like and the country was like: economic distress, social division, political drift, Government discredited. Don't let anybody forget that as we come into this session. Just ask them to remember what it was like in '91 and '92: economic distress, social division, political drift, Government discredited.

And you gave Al Gore and I a chance to work with them. And we said we want a country where there is opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans, where everybody can be a part. And we had all these ideas. But you just bought an argument. Well, 7 years later, there is not an argument. There is evidence. And I think that it's worth repeating, because—I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but you need to go out and share this. In February we'll have the longest—not peacetime; the longest—expansion of any kind in our history. We have 19.8 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history.

In addition to that, the society is healing. We have the lowest crime rates in 25 years, the lowest teen pregnancy rates in 30 years. We have the lowest female unemployment rates in 40 years and the lowest poverty rate among single-parent households in 40 years. And we've

set aside more land than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt, including 40 million roadless acres in the national forests. The land is safer; the water is cleaner; the air is cleaner. We've cleaned up three times as many toxic waste dumps as the previous two administrations. We have 90 percent of our kids immunized for the first time in history; 20 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law, which was vetoed by the previous administration. Four hundred thousand people who shouldn't get guns have not been able to buy handguns because of the Brady bill, which was vetoed by the previous administration.

So I say to you, this is not an argument anymore. There is evidence, and I want you to remember those numbers. And when you talk to the skeptics and you talk to the doubters, you need to go out and tell people what the evidence is. And if you look ahead, the real issue is—and Dick talked about this—you know I want them to be in the majority because of the issue of education, because there is still a lot more to be done. I want them to be in the majority because I do believe they will help to conduct their business in a way that will promote the one America that I believe is so important.

I am very proud of the fact that the United States has played a major role in trying to reconcile warring and hating factions from Northern Ireland to the Middle East to the Balkans to Africa. But I want us to do that at home, too, which is why I want this hate crimes legislation to pass. You only have to look at what happened at the Jewish school in Los Angeles or to the Filipino postman who was murdered there or what happened in the rampage in the Middle West, where everybody from the former African-American basketball coach at Northwestern to a Korean Christian walking out of his church—these people were killed—James Byrd dragged to death, Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack. There is still a lot of that in us.

And what I would like to just ask you to think about and what I think about all the time is, okay, we've had all these good things happen to us, and our country now, thanks to a lot of you and technology—I should have mentioned when I became—when we started NetDay here in 1994, 15 percent of our schools were connected to the Internet; 89 percent are

now, thanks to a lot of you and the E-rate. I could just go on and on. You need to remember these things and talk to people about them.

But the big question is, what are we going to do now? What will we do with a moment of prosperity that is, in my lifetime unprecedented. Never in my life have we had this much economic strength, this much social progress, this kind of opportunity free of external threat or internal crisis to shape the future for our children. What are we going to do about it?

And there will be all kinds of siren songs in the election season to kind of distract people from that or to get us to lower our sights or be more selfish or be more shortsighted. And the truth is, I bet you every one of you can cite some point in your personal life, your family life, or your business life when you got in trouble because things were going well and you broke your concentration. You relaxed; you got diverted; you got divided; you got indulgent.

Well, the country is no different. We have to realize this is a truly precious moment. In my lifetime, it has never happened. And the reason I want Dick Gephardt to be the Speaker is I think that we ought to—yes, we made a lot of advances in education, but we don't have a world-class education for all our children, and we shouldn't stop until we do. Yes, we continue to pay down the debt at record rates, and we've got the first back-to-back balanced budgets in 42 years. But we haven't extended Social Security beyond the life of the baby boom generation; we haven't extended Medicare and added that prescription drug benefit when 75 percent of the seniors in this country can't afford the medicine they're supposed to take. So we haven't dealt with the challenge of the aging of America as much as we should.

We haven't done everything we should do to make this the safest big country in the world. We ought to close the gun show loophole in the Brady bill. We ought to pass the child trigger lock legislation. It's not just crimes that are the problem. We have the biggest accidental death rate by guns in the world. And to give you an idea of how bad it is, the American death rate, accidental death rate from guns, is 9 times the rate of the next 25 biggest industrial economies combined. So I think it's worth a little extra to have those child trigger locks.

We've still got serious challenges in health care. We ought to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights. We ought to let people over 55 who

don't have health insurance anymore buy into Medicare. We ought to continue our work to help children, enroll children in our health insurance program and cover other people who don't have it.

We've got a chance to do something serious about poverty for the first time in a generation. One of the things that I'm most encouraged about on our side in the Presidential debate is there is an almost complete consensus that part of our bounty ought to be used to drastically cut child poverty in this country. And that's good. We also have an opportunity that we have not had in my lifetime to bring free enterprise and investment into the most distressed areas of the country. And I have been going around the country trying to highlight these things.

I consider this a big opportunity. And as all of you who live on the Internet know, technology gives us a chance to bring economic opportunity to people and places that were hitherto too isolated to take advantage of it.

Now these are just some of the big challenges that are out there. And I promise you, I fought through this last budget. I've been through this thing now from can't till can't for 6 years. I'm here because I do not believe my country will realize its full potential unless they are in the majority and unless he is the Speaker. And I think if he is, they will.

So I ask you, tell people what was in the budget and why. Tell people what's happened in the last 7 years and why. And most important, tell people what we can do in the future if we have the right people representing you, and help them win. It is profoundly important.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Bill and Sally Hembrecht; Art Torres, chair, State Democratic Party; and Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco.

Statement on the Sixth Anniversary of the Brady Handgun and Violence Prevention Act

November 30, 1999

Today, on the sixth anniversary of the historic Brady law, I am pleased to announce new figures that demonstrate the profound impact this legislation has had on public safety. Data released today by the Department of Justice show that the Brady law, since its passage in 1993, has helped block over 470,000 sales by licensed gun dealers to felons, fugitives, stalkers, and others prohibited from purchasing firearms. In the last year alone, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System created under the Brady law has blocked sales to over 160,000 of these restricted buyers. These numbers, of course, are not just numbers. They represent lives saved, injuries avoided, tragedies averted. They are a measure of what we can do to reduce gun violence and a measure of what still needs to be done.

In addition to our success with the Brady law, this administration has taken important actions to crack down on the illegal market that

supplies juveniles and criminals with firearms. Today Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers will launch the newest tool to fight illegal gun dealing: "Online LEAD," a new technology to help law enforcement across the country use crime-gun tracing data to catch more illegal gun traffickers more quickly. As a result of these efforts and those of communities across the country, violent gun crime is down by over 35 percent since 1992, and the murder rate is at its lowest level in over three decades. But while we are more effective than ever before at keeping guns out the wrong hands, our work is by no means finished. Over 32,000 Americans still lose their lives in gunfire every year, including 12 children every day. That is why I pledge to make passage of commonsense gun legislation my top public safety priority next year. And I challenge Congress to make a New Year's resolution to do the same.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act

November 30, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2116, the "Veterans Millennium Health Care and Benefits Act." This comprehensive bill will improve a broad array of benefits and services for those to whom we owe our freedoms—our Nation's veterans.

This bill is especially significant for its approach in the provision of enhanced extended-care services to veterans. It firmly establishes that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) should accord the highest priority for nursing home care to the most severely disabled veterans and those needing care for service-connected disabilities. It will also ensure that veterans enrolled in the VA health care system receive noninstitutional, extended-care services, including geriatric evaluations and adult day health care.

The bill also expands opportunities for military retirees to utilize VA health care services, at Department of Defense (DoD) expense and in accordance with an agreement to be developed by DoD and VA. The DoD and VA will ensure this agreement allows for the provision of high-quality managed care and increased choice, in the most cost-effective manner for the Federal Government.

This bill includes many other important health care provisions. For example, H.R. 2116:

- Expands veterans' eligibility for reimbursement of emergency care costs when VA

or other Federal health care facilities are not accessible.

- Extends and expands VA's authority to provide health care services to victims of sexual trauma.
- Makes more active duty personnel eligible for VA substance dependency treatment.
- Authorizes VA to update the schedule of copayments charged for certain health care benefits to generate additional program funds.

I am also pleased that the bill will make it easier for surviving spouses of disabled former prisoners of war to qualify for survivor benefits; expand certain education benefit entitlements; extend VA's authority to guarantee home loans for members of the Selected Reserve; and both extend and enhance programs for homeless veterans.

These are but the high points of a comprehensive bill that will enhance many benefits and services our veterans and their families justly deserve. I thank all who were involved in its passage.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 30, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2116, approved November 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-117.

Statement on Signing the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1999

November 30, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2280, the "Veterans Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 1999," which provides a 2.4 percent cost-of-living adjustment in benefits for service-disabled veterans and their surviving spouses and children. It provides for increased rates in payments of service-connected disability compensation to veterans who suffer

from service-related disabilities and in payments of dependency and indemnity compensation for the surviving spouses and children of service members and veterans whose deaths are service-related. The increased benefit rates will take effect on December 1, 1999. This legislation,

derived from an Administration proposal, ensures that the value of these well-deserved benefits will keep pace with increases in consumer prices.

As a country, we must remember those veterans who gave of themselves to assure the continued protection of this great Nation. The freedoms and liberty that we enjoy as citizens depend on the men and women in our Armed Forces. In a tangible way, this legislation ex-

presses the gratitude of the Nation for the sacrifices our veterans have unselfishly endured.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
November 30, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2280, approved November 30, was assigned Public Law No. 106-118.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah, 1999 *November 30, 1999*

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Hanukkah.

This joyous Festival of Lights commemorates the rededication of the Jews' Holy Temple by the Maccabees after their victory over oppression and the rekindling of the Temple's sacred oil lamp. That victory, recounted in ancient Jewish writings, is one of history's earliest recorded battles for religious freedom. More than two thousand years have passed since Judah the Maccabee and his courageous followers refused to reject their faith in God, their customs, and their religious traditions; but today people across

the globe still struggle for the freedom to worship according to their own conscience.

As Jews throughout America and around the world gather with family and friends to light the menorah and remember the miracle of God's presence in our lives and history, let us all give thanks for the blessed light of religious freedom in our nation. And let us be mindful, in our thoughts, prayers, and actions, of those who still must live in the shadow of oppression.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes to all for a memorable Hanukkah observance and for peace and joy in the coming year.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks at a "Stop the Violence" Benefit in Beverly Hills, California *November 30, 1999*

Thank you very much. We can pass laws, but we can't fix this podium here. *[Laughter]* Maybe I'll stand up on it. How's that? *[Laughter]*

I love Whoopi Goldberg. The greatest thing about being President is that nearly anybody will come talk to you. *[Laughter]* Some will talk for you; some will talk against you; some will talk at you, but nearly anybody will come talk to you. And so I've had the honor of meeting all kinds of people from all walks of life.

But when I met Whoopi Goldberg—and I was already sort of a big fan, you know—but I looked at her, and I thought, now, there is a woman who will be my friend. *[Laughter]* You know, there have been times when I'm

sure my friendship has been somewhat embarrassing to her. *[Laughter]* And times when her jokes have caused me some discomfort in public. *[Laughter]* But I'm not a hypocrite about that. I'm with her through thick and thin. *[Laughter]* And she has certainly been with me though thick and thin.

Of all the people that I know, I continue to be amazed by how generous truly busy and successful people are. But Whoopi, you have been so generous to me and to my family and our administration, and in so doing, you've been generous to America. And I thank you for that.

I thank Beau Bridges for being here and for his leadership and for telling his story; for portraying everyone from Jim Brady to P.T. Barnum. [Laughter] Sarah, when you get home, you tell Jim I said that I thought he was just playing the same role twice. [Laughter]

I thank Steve Sposato for being here and being so faithful to this call. I have on the wall of my private office, which is just off the Oval Office, a picture of Steve and Megan Sposato, which he gave me shortly after I signed the assault weapons ban. I see it every day still, and every day it is an inspiration to me to continue to work on the issues we come here tonight to support.

And I thank Sarah Brady for being my friend and my guiding light. I thank Representatives Sherman and Berman and Becerra, who are here; and Senator Dianne Feinstein, who isn't, and Senator Barbara Boxer, who flew out to California with me today, they have both been terrific on all these issues.

I talked to Governor Davis a couple of hours before I got here, and he said to tell you all hello, and he is justifiably proud of the record he established in this recent session of the legislature.

And let me, lastly, by way of introduction, congratulate this year's "Pete" Shields Award-winner, Gregory Peck, for sharing his many gifts with the world. And Veronique, thank you.

You know, we meet in this wonderful old, historic Hollywood home tonight, and it gives me the opportunity to say once again that I have been, since I was a small child, an ardent movie fan. I don't know how many Gregory Peck movies I have seen and enjoyed. But I think that his remarkable performance as Atticus Finch, of all the roles that he played, probably was closer to the person Gregory Peck really is.

There is a wonderful moment in Harper Lee's classic when Atticus sits down to talk with his children about courage. He says, "I want you to know that real courage isn't a man with a gun. It's when the odds are against you, but you begin anyway, and you see it through no matter what." Steve Sposato, you have done that. Sarah, you and Jim have done that. And we thank you.

I am honored to be here tonight. I have come to California many times pursuing the work of this administration. Often I have come to this town that has been so wonderful to Hillary and

me and asked for funds to continue our campaigns or our work. Tonight the main reason I'm here is to say a simple thank you. Thank you for what you're doing to support the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence; for supporting its groundbreaking research, its public education, its coalition building, its leading light to protect families from gun violence.

Thank you for all you've done year after year to support our administration's initiatives to build safer streets and stronger communities. Thank you for championing the Brady bill; as Sarah said, I signed it into law 6 years ago today. Thank you for supporting the assault weapons ban. Thank you for supporting the 100,000 community police officers on our streets and programs to help keep our children out of trouble. It is working. Today—[applause]—yes, you can clap for that.

Today in America the crime rate is at a 25-year low; the murder rate at a 31-year low; violent crime down 35 percent since 1992, with the longest continuous decline in the crime rate in our Nation's history. On this 6th anniversary of the Brady bill, I want you to know that the latest figures are in and the Brady bill has now helped to block more than 470,000 gun sales by licensed gun dealers to felons, fugitives, and stalkers—470,000. And in the last year alone, the national instant criminal background check system has blocked gun sales to more than 160,000 people.

Now these are more than numbers. Remember Steve's story. These are 470,000 acts of community conscience and common mercy. They have saved lives, avoided injuries, averted tragedies. Yesterday I signed the new budget bill. And I want to thank the Member of Congress here who stood with me to make sure this budget will begin putting up 50,000 more community police officers on top of the 100,000 we've already funded, targeted to the most dangerous streets left in our country; provide new crime-fighting technology to police; and more than double after-school programs to keep more kids out of trouble and in safe environments.

I want to also thank you for being a source of strength and courage to all of us in our larger administration family, to Hillary, who urged me every step of the way to push for the Brady bill, to push for the assault weapons ban, to continue to push and take on this issue; who reminded me that because I grew up in the South and first shot a .22 when I was 12 and

understood the mind set of the people, the good people, who uncritically followed the NRA into the voting booth year-in and year-out, that I had a special responsibility to deal with this issue.

And she asked me to tell you hello. I just talked to her about 30 minutes ago, and I thank you for that.

I want to thank you on behalf of Vice President Gore, who cast the tie-breaking vote in the bill to close the gun show loophole that passed the Senate. And I want to thank you on behalf of Tipper Gore, who has done so much to see that Americans with mental illness get treatment and not more handguns.

But I didn't just come to say thanks, because we have a lot more to do. When the Brady bill finally passed Congress and was signed, rather than vetoed, by me—[laughter]—someone asked Sarah, "Well, what are you going to do now?" And without missing a beat she said, "I'm going to keep fighting."

So I come here to tell you, you have to keep fighting. Because even though America is safer from Columbine High School to the Jewish community center in Grenada Hills to the Wedgewood Baptist Church in Fort Worth, and every community in between and beyond, no one believes America is as safe as it should be or can be.

Still, 12 children die every day from gun violence. And America is not acceptably safe when the rate of children under 15 killed accidentally by guns—listen to this—the rate of children under 15 killed accidentally by guns is 9 times higher than the rate of the 25 next biggest industrial nations combined. Now, what do we have to keep fighting for? For what works.

Seven years ago a lot of people did not believe we could get the crime rate down. And when the Brady bill came up again in Congress they said—I remember what they said—they said, "Oh, this Brady bill will not make a difference because criminals and kooks don't buy guns at gun stores." Do you remember that? That's what they said. And we said, "Well, we think it will. And besides that, it's not that big an inconvenience to have everybody go through the background check." Well, 470,000 rejections later we know it did make a difference. The same people, I might add, said that if we put 100,000 community police out there, it wouldn't make a difference; if we passed the assault

weapons ban, it wouldn't make a difference. Well, they were wrong. They were just wrong.

Now, I come here to suggest that the time has come to set a different goal. Let me just sort of parenthesis a minute. I want you all to think about this as citizens in the context of gun violence and every other thing America needs to do.

In my lifetime—a 6-year-old boy asked me this weekend, who was visiting my family on Thanksgiving, he said, "How old are you?" And I said, "I'm 53." And he said, "That's a lot." [Laughter] Well, I guess so. [Laughter]

But in my lifetime—and that's a lot—[laughter]—there has never been a time ever, not even once, when our country had this remarkable combination of economic prosperity, social progress, self-confidence, and the absence of external threat and internal crisis, so that we are freer than we have ever been in my lifetime as a people to shape the future of our dreams for our children.

And the great question before the American people is not whether we'll change it, as how we will change and whether we will do that. And I'll bet you everybody here can remember an instance in your personal life, in your family life, and in your work life when you squandered a terrific opportunity because things were going so well, you thought you could relax; and you got diverted; you got divided; you got distracted. You just blew it. And countries are no different than people, families, and enterprises. That's what countries are.

So the great question before us as a people is, what are we going to make of this magic moment to deal with the challenge of educating all our children, to deal with the challenge of the aging of America, to deal with the challenge of getting poor people an opportunity to be part of our prosperity, to deal with the challenge of environmental preservation? And I could go on and on.

Now, I have a modest proposal here that, if I had said it 7 years ago when I was running for President, people would have said, "Well, he seems like a nice young man, but we ought to send him home because he's touched." [Laughter] But 7 years ago, people didn't believe we could get the crime rate down. Okay. We've got the lowest crime rate in 25 years and the lowest murder rate in 31 years, and there's not a single soul here who believes this country is as safe as it ought to be. So I say,

let's set a goal now that is really worth fighting for. Let's say we're not going to stop until the freest big country on Earth is the safest big country on Earth. [Applause]

Now, to achieve that, we just have to keep doing what we've been doing. We have to keep moving the ball forward and resisting the same old arguments in new guises. We have to pass the commonsense gun safety legislation Congress failed to pass last year in the aftermath of Columbine. We have to, one, build on the success of the Brady bill by closing the gun show loophole.

Now, let me remind you—I don't know how many of you have ever been to a gun show, but I have been. That was sort of a mandatory stop when I was the Governor of my, what my distinguished opponent in 1992 said was a small southern State. [Laughter] I've been to these things, you know, down a country road, alley, pickups and cars on both sides, trunks up, guns in the trunk. The same crowd that said in 1993 when we were trying to pass the Brady bill—they said, "All these criminals, they don't buy guns at gun stores; they buy all their guns at flea markets and gun shows and all that. So this Brady bill won't do any good."

So we did the Brady bill, 470,000 rejections later they now say, "Oh, it won't do any good to close the gun show loophole." I wanted to go back and read them what they said in '93. That's sort of the just-say-no crowd. [Laughter] I'm telling you, we still have too many people getting guns at these gun shows and at urban flea markets, and there ought to be background checks. And it will make a difference. That's the first thing we have to do.

The second thing we have to do is build on the success of the assault weapons ban by closing the gaping loophole there which still allows the legal importation of large-capacity ammunition clips. They ought to be banned from import. We don't need them.

The third thing we ought to do—remember the statistic I gave you on accidental child deaths? We ought to require child safety trigger locks on the sale of all new handguns in this country.

Congress ought to follow the lead of California and pass my proposals to ban handgun sales to one a month, to limit them to one a month and once again to require the Brady waiting period to allow a cooling off period. Just because we've got the instant background

checks doesn't mean we still don't need the waiting period. The waiting period causes people who may not have a criminal background, and who may be in some frenzy, to wait a few days, calm down, and it will save lives. We need to reinstitute it on a national basis.

I also ask for your support for two non-gun-related initiatives, our national grassroots campaign against youth violence, headed by a California activist, Jeff Weiss, and our hate crimes legislation.

I want to make just two general points in closing. One of the previous speakers mentioned that I had stood up to the NRA. It made me rather unpopular with one member of this community out here. [Laughter] But I'll tell you a story.

I vetoed a bill—I think I was the only southern Governor that ever vetoed a bill passed by the NRA in the State legislature, and it was in the late 1980's. They were going around—this conservative group—you know conservative groups believe in limited national or State authority, maximum local authority. They had a bill they were trying to pass in every legislature in the country to prohibit local governments from having gun laws more stringent than State government. There was a reason for that. State governments tend to be dominated by rural legislators, whereas local urban governments tend to be more interested in keeping cop-killer bullets out of guns that can kill police officers wearing bullet-proof vests, for example.

So they thought this was a big threat to the Constitution and our individual liberty, so they wanted to stop all these local governments from doing this. And they passed such a bill in my legislature, and I vetoed it. And my legislature was really good. They knew that they didn't want to be in a position of overriding my veto, but they didn't want to be in the position of having the NRA go after them in the election. And so they waited until late in the session to pass it, and they were gone when I vetoed it, so they didn't have to face the fact whether they would override it or not. It was a great deal.

So then 1990 comes along—this is a true story, I want you all to remember this. I never will forget this. This not a joke, and I'm glad we're laughing because otherwise we would be crying about this.

So 1990 comes along and the NRA comes up with this bill again. And they send a lobbyist

from Washington to Little Rock to lobby for the bill. I'll never forget this guy. He was a real big, fine looking young man, a couple inches taller than me, very well dressed. One day he came up to me in the rotunda of our State capitol, which is sort of a miniversion of the National Rotunda, you know, and everything echoes.

And this young man came up to me, and it was like the E.F. Hutton ad, you know, everybody got really silent. [Laughter] And this guy says, "Now, Governor, Governor," he says, "I want you to just let this bill become law without your signature. You don't have to do anything." I said, "I can't do that. I think your bill stinks." He said, "All right, Governor, it's this way. I think you're going to run for President, and when you do, if you veto this bill, we're going to beat your brains out in the Texas primary." And all of a sudden everybody got real quiet. There must have been 50 of my legislators standing there. And I said, "Young man, you just don't understand, do you? I think your bill stinks." And I said, "Not only that, you know this is a conservative State. You know we're not going to pass any sweeping gun control legislation here. You know that we've got this big influx of gang warfare in a couple of our areas. And it won't hurt anybody if the local government here in Little Rock decides to ban cop-killer bullets. The reason you're trying to pass this bill is back in Washington, in your national headquarters, there's a big chart on the wall, and this bill is at the top of the chart, and all the States are listed down the side, and you want to be able to put a little check by Arkansas." I said, "This doesn't have anything to do with the safety of our children or the freedom of people to hunt." And I said, "If that's the way you feel, you just get your gun, and I'll get mine, and I'll meet you in Texas." [Laughter] So, anyway, we lost Texas in the general election by a few points—[laughter]—but got 67 percent there in the Democratic primary in 1992. So it didn't work very well.

So anyway, so then we go in 1993, and we got the Brady bill. In 1994 we got the assault weapons ban. And it was very difficult for a lot of our people. That's what I want to tell you. We're all here, preaching to the saved, patting each other on the back. Let me tell you something. When these votes are cast in the State legislature and the Congress, there are people who put their seats on the line to

do this because not everybody has the same views that you do and not everybody has had the chance to talk about this.

And one of the reasons there is a Republican majority in the House of Representatives today is that I got them to vote on both the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban in my first 2 years as President. And there were a lot of people, I want you to know, there were a lot of people who laid their seats in Congress down so that there would be fewer people like Jim and Sarah Brady and Steve and Megan Sposato. They lost their seats in Congress to do that.

I never will forget, in 1996 I went back to New Hampshire. We had one Democratic Congressman and one Republican Congressman when I became President, and they beat the Democrat, largely because he voted for these bills. And I went back to Manchester, and I went there, and as I remember, it was on a weekend morning. I went to it, and I said, "I want to get with a bunch of guys that I know go deer hunting and that I know are big sportsmen and that I know are mad about all this." And I had carried—Al Gore and I carried New Hampshire in '92, which is very rare because it is basically a Republican State in the Presidential election.

And so I got all these guys together, and I said, "Let me tell you something. I know you beat your Congressman in 1994 in part because he voted for the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. And I want you to know he did it because I asked him to. So if there is a living soul here who has been inconvenienced one iota in your hunting season because of what we did, then I want you to vote against me, too. But if you haven't been, they lied to you and you need to get even." [Laughter]

We got, in a three-way race in 1996, a majority of the vote in the State of New Hampshire. I say that not to be self-congratulatory but to say the answer here is not to shrivel up, turn aside, or ignore the obligation to communicate with people who are not in this tent tonight. We have to continue to broaden the base.

Look, this is about—it's bought on these two competing views of what liberty is. The view espoused by the NRA and others is that guns don't kill people, people do. That may be true, but people without guns don't kill as many people as people with guns.

So the issue is—go back to what Whoopi said about us all being connected. We've got to go

out to people who may live in very rural areas and say, "Look if you carry this argument to its ultimate conclusion, we'll be in total anarchy." We've got a lot of people being killed by—you know these poor people in the Middle West, the former basketball coach at Northwestern, an African-American, killed by the same guy; then he turns around and kills a young Korean Christian walking out of his church, and kills two or three other people, and he says he belongs to a church that doesn't believe in God but does believe in white supremacy. And I could go on and on and on. You know all these stories.

Now their answer is, well, that we need a concealed weapons law and every law-abiding person needs to carry a weapon. And if you take it to an extreme—I saw—I get my hometown paper still at the White House—I saw—we have a State legislator at home that says the answer to all these school shootings may be to have all the teachers go to the law enforcement academy and get trained to start carrying guns to school. *[Laughter]*

Now you laugh about that, but that is the ultimate extension of the argument that, you know, we're all these sort of isolated individuals, and the last thing we can do is to have some common set of rules that we all follow.

Now, we don't do that in other ways. We all give up a little of our liberty in theory when we walk through those airport metal detectors. Why? Well, we know we can't all pilot our own airplanes. And it's a matter of inconvenience to go take off your brass belt buckle or take your metal money clip out of your pocket and go through there again for the security of knowing that there is no terrorist on the plane. So you never hear anybody gripe about that anymore, do you?

This is the same principle. You cannot be in a society where you are really free, unless your freedom is designed to enhance the freedom of all people in the community. And if you're not safe, you're not free. And we need to leave here tonight with a clear commitment to continue to take this debate to people and places—who are good people, who still don't accept this argument, because we have a lot more to do.

You clapped when I said we ought to make this the safest big country in the world. We can do it and still have a vibrant hunting and sporting culture. But we cannot do it if we labor

under the illusion that we have no responsibilities to one another that require us to show mutual restraint when it comes to this gun issue. And therefore, we have to continue to work on this. This is a huge, huge issue that will go a long way to defining what kind of country we are.

And it goes to this whole hate crimes issue, and I will just close with this. I think it is really ironic that on the edge of a new millennium when we are—we've got now 90 percent of our schools connected to the Internet; when we're unlocking the mysteries of the human genome; in a few years, we'll know what is in the black holes in space; when we'll be able to have little computer chips, before you know it, that we can insert into broken parts of people's bodies, including nerve centers in the spine and elsewhere and restore normal movement; when we are thinking about all of these marvelous things that are going to happen, it is amazing that the biggest problem we face as a society is perhaps the oldest demon of human society, the fear and hatred of people who are different from us: They are a different race; they're a different religion; they're gay; they're whatever. And this whole issue of gun violence and how we handle it as a community and how we approach people who are different from us are related.

I've been working for years on this Irish peace process. It looks like we're going to make it. One of the provisions of the Irish peace agreement is its paramilitary groups should lay down their weapons of war. In the Middle East, one of the provisions of the Wye peace agreement and the modified version that Prime Minister Barak and Mr. Arafat agreed to is that there should be some laying down of the weapons of war. In Bosnia, where I just was, looking at children who got to go home and were uprooted and driven out and seeing them back in their schools and trying to get people to lay down their hatreds and say, "Look, I know you can't lay down your hatreds tomorrow, although you ought to try, but, meanwhile, you've got to lay down your weapons of war."

And so it's all about how you really define community, as just a label, or do we have some mutual responsibilities here? And I say to you, if I could have sort of one wish for America, if somebody said to me, "You don't have another year. You've got to go tomorrow, but you're like a genie, you get to give America one wish."

I'd make this country one America. I would have our people understanding that our diversity is our strength because our common humanity is more important, and that imposes on us common responsibilities.

I wish that we had done more in gun safety than we have. I know we can do more, as I said, and still leave all those people that I grew up with and that I represented and that I love, the right to their hunting and sporting past times. It's a big part of our culture. But we should not tolerate a society where people can still readily get these horrible weapons of destruction for no other purpose than to kill other people. It should be much, much harder for profoundly disturbed children, like those kids at Columbine, to get the kind of weapons they got. We can do better.

Yes, I'm very grateful that I've been privileged to work with Sarah and Steve and Senator Feinstein and Senator Boxer and the Representatives still here to do what we've done. But if you really want to make the most of this moment, you've got to keep going until we make America the world's safest big country. And if you want to do that, you have to reach out beyond those of us in this tent to the heart and soul of America and say, "Listen, we are blessed, but we have a lot to do and we have

responsibilities to one another we have not fulfilled. And as we do that we will become more free, not less free."

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:07 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to comedian Whoopi Goldberg; actor Beau Bridges; former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, and his wife, Sarah, chair, Handgun Control, Inc.; Steven Sposato, whose wife, Megan, was killed by a gunman in a San Francisco law office; Gov. Gray Davis of California; actor Gregory Peck and his wife, Veronique; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. The President also referred to the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act, subtitle A of title XI of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Public Law No. 103-322); the Brady Handgun and Violence Prevention Act (Public Law No. 103-159); and H.R. 3194, consolidated appropriations legislation for fiscal year 2000, approved November 29, assigned Public Law No. 106-113. The benefit was sponsored by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence.

Remarks at a Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project Reception in Beverly Hills

November 30, 1999

Thank you very much, Antonio. I am delighted to be here. I know that all of you have come in support of the Southwest Voter Education Project. But I want to thank especially my good friend Gloria Molina; and Henry Cisneros; Assembly Speaker Villaraigosa—I see him over there; we've been making the rounds tonight—Congressman Becerra; and I think Lydia Camarillo, our DNC CEO, is here. I know this is a nonpartisan event, but I wanted to acknowledge her presence there. Thank you, Lydia.

I have known about the Southwest Voter Education Project a long time, from the beginning. And one of the great honors I had as President was to award the Medal of Freedom

to Willie Velasquez posthumously in 1995. The Southwest Voter Education Project has now registered, I believe, over 2 million Latino voters and well over 2,000 voter education drives.

And what I would—I just want to say a couple of things briefly tonight. Yesterday I signed the budget that we passed in the Congress right before they went home, the first budget of the 21st century. It contained the second year's funding for our Hispanic education project, which is designed to reduce the gap in high school graduation rates between Hispanics and other children and to increase the college going rate. And I just give you that as one little example, although it is a very big thing—I think this is going to have a huge impact over the

years if we keep doing it—of why it is so important for people to be registered and to vote.

I was thinking tonight about the meetings I've had with the Hispanic caucus. And Congressman Torres, we miss you. I'm glad to see you. Thank you for everything.

But what I was thinking about is, two things are certain. One is that the number of Hispanic Members of Congress will grow. The second, maybe more important, is the number of Latino voters in other districts will grow. And I honestly believe that the willingness of people to register and to vote will have a profoundly significant impact on sort of the shape of American politics, on our immigration policies, on our education policies, on our economic policies, on the nature of our trade policies, and I could go on and on and on.

I have seen, just in the last two election cycles the profound difference it makes in terms of who shows up to vote. In 1998 the overall percentage of Americans voting was not that different from 1994, but the composition of those who voted was very different. And very often 4 or 5 percent of the people, whether they stay or go, will reflect the sort of accumulated feelings of maybe 60 or 70 percent of the American electorate. And whether they do or not, I can promise you, will affect the whole sweep of policy. I'm very conscious of this now. And I just want to mention one or two issues.

It has been, for me, an enormous privilege to serve as President these last 7 years. I have had a great deal of help from the most diverse group of Americans ever to serve an administration, including former HUD Secretary Cisneros. And I am very grateful that we have now the results that we have. We've got—in February we'll have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. We have already nearly 20 million new jobs. We have the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 30 years. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest Hispanic and African-American unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in a generation, the lowest poverty rate among single-parent households in 40 years, the lowest unemployment among women in 40 years. What I want to ask you is, what do you mean to do with this? What do you mean to do with this?

I had—I see my sister-in-law, Molly, over there. We just had my big, extended family and Hillary's family were all together for Thanksgiving. And we gathered up at Camp David, and then we had some of our friends come in from the area. And I had a bunch of little kids there. And this 6-year-old boy looked at me a couple days ago, and he said, "How old are you?" [Laughter] And I said, "I'm 53." He said, "That's a lot." [Laughter] And I regretted to say I had to agree with him; it was a lot.

In my lifetime—and that's a lot—our country has never had this level of economic prosperity, social progress, and national confidence, and at the same time been free of external threats and internal crises, so that we are essentially free to face our big challenges and build the future of our dreams for our children.

So the real question is not whether we are going to change, because the world is changing at such a rapid rate that that's not an option. The real question is, how will we change, and what will we do with this chance of a lifetime?

I hope we will use it to meet the big challenges of the future. But I'll bet you every adult in this room can remember at least one, and maybe more, times in your personal life, your family life, or your work life when you made a big mistake because things were going well. When you should have been thinking about the long term, you got diverted, distracted, divided, and the moment was lost.

Now in my lifetime, we have never had a moment like this. We need to use it to give all of our children a world-class education. We need to use it to dramatically reduce poverty among our children and to bring economic opportunity to people and places that have been left out of this remarkable recovery. We need to use it to deal with the challenge of the aging of America and take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boom generation and extend the life of Medicare and give prescription drug coverage to 75 percent of our seniors who can't afford the medicine they need today.

We need to use it to prove we can grow the economy and improve the environment. We need to use it to pass the Patients' Bill of Rights and extend health care coverage to people who don't have it—these big challenges that we can meet.

But if I had one wish, if somebody said to me, "Well, you don't have another year. I'm sorry, you have to go tomorrow, but we'll let

you be the genie, and you can have one wish." I would wish to make America truly one America. Because if you look at what is bedeviling the world today—and this is where you come in—isn't it interesting that as you think about the future—somebody sent me an article today on the future of the Internet and how it wouldn't be long before everybody would be connected to the Internet without needing a personal computer. We'll have these little pads that a lot of you already have, and you'll get it on your telephone; you'll get it in your television; everybody will know everything and all the time. It will be unbelievable.

We are unraveling the mysteries of the human genome. We're about to discover what is in those black holes in outer space. I mean, it's unbelievable all this stuff we're going to know. And yet, we are most bedeviled in the world by the oldest problem of human society. We still are kind of afraid of people who are different from us. They're different races, different religions; they're gay; they're this; they're that, the other.

And in America you can see it when a Jewish community center gets shot up, Filipino postman gets murdered, African-American basketball coach gets killed, and then a young Korean Christian gets killed walking out of his church by a guy that just murdered the African-American basketball coach. James Byrd gets dragged to death in Texas; Matthew Shepard gets stretched over a rack in Wyoming. These things happen. Why? Because if you are afraid of people who are different from you, it's a short step to hating them. Then it's a short step to dehumanizing them. Then it's a short step to justifying violence. And all around the world what has bedeviled the world? Ireland, the Middle East, the Balkans, Bosnia and Kosovo, the African tribal wars. It's just fascinating to me that we're on the verge of a new millennium with all this modern stuff out there, but our biggest problem is the oldest problem of human society.

So the reason it's important that you understand that your vote is your voice, is that you help to guarantee every time you empower people that their voices will be heard and that we will somehow understand that we're not just supposed to tolerate each other; we're supposed to celebrate our differences; not tolerate—that's not good enough—celebrate our differences, not because they are the most important thing about

us, but because they make life more interesting without letting us forget our common humanity.

And that is the only thing that makes democracy the best of all systems of government. If everybody participates, you have a high chance that we come to the right conclusion. And it is profoundly important. I just was thinking, I'm so grateful that we have made these huge steps forward in the Irish peace process. I'm very grateful for the progress we are making in the Middle East.

I was just in Kosovo with all those schoolchildren that got to go home because the United States and our NATO Allies stuck up for them and said they couldn't be wiped out just because of their religion or their ethnic background. But I know that if we want to continue to do good around the world, we have to be good at home. This Irish agreement, it's wonderful. How many people died to get there? And the Middle East, we've got a lot of hard decisions to make, but they're not hard when compared with the alternative.

And so I say to all of you, we have a chance to escape that and to meet these huge challenges when we've got more resources and more confidence and more evidence that we can make progress than any time in my lifetime. But we can only do it if we do it together.

You know, I just came from this gun violence group meeting. And I told them that the big fight we had over the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, all these things, they really were sort of whole different views of the world about what is the nature of freedom, what is the nature of society, what is the nature of our responsibilities to one another. You know, to me, I came from a hunting culture, but it was a no-brainer to me that we ought to be for the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban, because I thought that a modest amount of inconvenience on the part of 95 or 99 percent of the people to find the 1 percent of the people who had no business with assault weapons, had no business with handguns, who were criminals, had other problems in their background. To me, that made me more free, not less free, because I think mutuality is important, the media. And you believed that.

And there is no group of Americans that has a bigger stake in our getting this right than Hispanic-Americans, the fastest growing minority, people who have known all the prejudice and all the promise of America, both, people

who now are setting all kinds of records in new business growth and achievements in every area of our national life, but because we still have such a large group of first-generation immigrants, also have the highest high school dropout rates, the highest education problems.

Listen, we can get all this right—we can get all this right—if everybody has a voice that is heard. That is why what you are doing is so profoundly important.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 p.m. at the Grand Havana Room. In his remarks, he referred to State Assembly Speaker Antonio R. Villaraigosa; Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina; and Lydia Camarillo, executive director, Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project.

Letter to the Secretary of Defense on Space Launch Failures November 29, 1999

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Thank you for conducting and reporting on your thorough and in-depth review of the U.S. space launch failures that occurred in 1998 and 1999. I am pleased to know that you have identified the root causes behind each of the recent launch failures and that you have worked with NASA, the Intelligence Community, and industry to take corrective actions to prevent recurrences. I also appreciate your efforts, and the efforts of industry, in uncovering and addressing the broader systemic concerns that may have contributed to this series of failures.

I have asked Dr. Neal Lane, my Assistant for Science and Technology, and Mr. Sandy Berger, my Assistant for National Security Affairs, to review your report. Now and in the next century, our national security, civil, and commercial space sectors will continue to depend on reliable access to space to achieve our broader national goals. Your report correctly

points out the importance of successfully flying the remaining current fleet of expendable launch vehicles already on contract, with missions valued at more than \$20 billion, while assuring mission success during the transition from these current systems to the modernized Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicles.

Thank you again for the hard work and dedication of the government-industry team in uncovering the technical and management problems associated with these launch failures. Please implement appropriate actions to correct the causes of the failures and ensure our nation's ability to reliably access space in the future.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Telephone Interview With Michael Paulson of the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in San Francisco, California November 30, 1999

The President. How are you?

Mr. Paulson. I'm good. How are you doing?

The President. I'm great. I'm going to the San Francisco Airport, on my way to L.A. and then to Seattle.

Disruption of the Seattle Round

Mr. Paulson. Excellent. So as far as you know, are there still talks taking place? We just heard on CNN, claiming that the talks are actually canceled, which—we don't even know if that's true.

The President. Well, that's certainly news to me. I heard that the talks were still going on.

Mr. Paulson. I'm sure you've heard it's been kind of a chaotic day here. Do you regret choosing Seattle as the location for this? Do you wish you were heading some place sunny, like Honolulu and San Diego?

The President. Well, I don't think the—I think certainly if we had had it any place in the continental United States, we would have had the same thing. And even if we had gone to Honolulu, there might have been thousands of people there.

What I regret is not that there are protesters there. I have supported the right of people whose interests represent labor union, who represent environmental groups, people who represent the poorer countries of the world coming and expressing their opinions. And I've repeatedly said I thought the WTO process was too closed. It ought to be opened up, and labor and environmental interests ought to be represented, and it ought to be fair for poor countries as well as wealthy countries. What I regret is that a small number of people have done nonpeaceful things and have tried to block access and to prevent meetings. That's wrong. It's not only illegal; it's just wrong.

On the other hand, I think the larger number of people that are there, for peaceful purposes, are healthy. I think what they represent is that in the last 5 years you've seen a dramatic change. Trade is now no longer the province of CEO's, organized interest groups that deal with the economy, and political leaders. It's now—we not only live in a global economy. You've got a global information society, and this whole process is being democratized. And we're going to have to build a new consensus that goes down deeper into every society about what kind of trade policy we want. And I think that is, on balance, a healthy thing.

Anyway, that's kind of where I am on it. I regret very much that a few people have given the protesters a bad name, because I think the fact that the protesters are there—were it not for those stopping meetings, stopping movements, not being peaceful—would be a positive.

Protesters and the World Trade Organization

Mr. Paulson. Right. What is your theory about why people are so upset here?

The President. Well, for one thing, I think that a lot of people feel threatened by all these

changes that are going on in the global economy and the process by which the decisions are made—changing the rules of trade—are made by people who generally have not been very accountable. I mean, the whole WTO—I went to Geneva last year to tell them they ought to open their records.

Mr. Paulson. Right.

The President. I mean, they have secret proceedings and things of that kind.

For another thing, a lot of times when decisions have been made, they aren't honored. The United States won 22 out of 24 cases we filed, and in several cases the people say, "Well, so what?"

And then I think, finally, there are people who question whether these trading rules are benefiting lower income countries, poor countries, and who question whether they're a damage to the environment from certain trading arrangements that wouldn't otherwise be there, and who question whether this is a race to the bottom or the top—so that labor unions in wealthier countries want to have certain basic, core labor standards observed in poorer countries because they think it will be better for average people, so that the trading system actually benefits them. So I think that is bringing all those people out.

Goals of the Seattle Round

Mr. Paulson. What in your mind will make this week a success or a failure?

The President. Well, I think if we can continue to negotiate and can reach some accord on the terms under which to start a new trade round and if I can persuade more of my colleagues that if you don't want people like the protesters outside of every trade meeting from now until the end of time, they're going to have to open the process so that the voices of labor, the environment, and the developing countries can be heard and so that the decisions are transparent, the records are open, and the consequences are clear, we're going to continue to have problems.

And I think, on balance, the world is much better off because we've expanded trade over the last 50 years. And I bet you a lot of the protesters came to the protest wearing shoes that were made in other countries, using cell phones, and maybe a lot of them drove cars that were made—

Mr. Paulson. Right.

The President. —or foreign manufactured. We live in a global economy that on balance has been quite good for the United States, but also good for developing countries. But we've got to make a better case down deeper into society. It's not just trying to convince a few elites in every society that the system of integrated trade on fair and open terms is good for them.

Labor Issues, Trade Sanctions, and the WTO

Mr. Paulson. Let me ask you about labor, which, you know, is a big issue here. What is your position on allowing trade sanctions against countries that violate core labor standards?

The President. I think what we ought to do, first of all, is to adopt the United States position on having a working group on labor within the WTO. And then that working group should develop these core labor standards, and then they ought to be a part of every trade agreement. And ultimately, I would favor a system in which sanctions would come for violating any provision of a trade agreement. But we've got to do this in steps.

I do think it is worth noting that the strongest opposition to this position, however, come from the leaders of developing countries, including a lot of developing countries that have leftwing governments, not rightwing governments, who believe that this is a strategy by the American labor movement to keep them down and keep them poor and keep them from selling products that they would otherwise be highly competitive in, in the American market.

Mr. Paulson. Right. Are they right?

The President. Well, I don't think so. That is, it certainly could be used that way. But what the American labor movement has a right, it seems to me, to is to know that their brothers and sisters throughout the world are actually going to be benefiting from expanded trade.

When I ran for President, there were some countries, small countries in the Caribbean where we had dramatically expanded trade in the years before I became President, where average hourly wages had fallen during the time trade had expanded and the incomes of the countries had gone up. That's not right.

So I wouldn't support labor's objectives if I thought they were just purely protectionist and they didn't want Americans to compete with people from other places, because we can compete quite well. And for every job we've lost

in America, we've gained two or three more. That's why we've got 19.8 million jobs in the last 7 years. We never had job growth like this before. And the trade-related jobs pay higher wages. So if I thought the labor agenda was purely protectionist, I wouldn't be for that.

On the other hand, I think it is legitimate to say that if people are out there working and selling their projects in the international arena and Americans are going to buy them and Europeans are going to buy them—all of us who come from wealthy countries where most people have the basic necessities of life—we ought not to buy from countries that violate the child labor norms; we ought not to buy from countries that basically oppress their workers with labor conditions and lack of a living income. And there is a way to strike the right balance here so that we put a more human face on the global economy.

I feel the same way about environmental standards.

Sovereignty, Environmental Issues, and the WTO

Mr. Paulson. That's the subject I want to ask you about next. As you know, critics are pointing at cases like the shrimp-turtle dispute and saying that corporate lawyers, meeting in secret, can invalidate U.S. laws. Are we yielding some of our sovereignty in being part of the WTO?

The President. Well, we yield the right to be unilateral and not bound by a system of rules every time we join any kind of organization. I mean, if you join any kind of organization in which there are going to be disputes, you can't say that "I'll only follow the rules when we win."

Mr. Paulson. Right.

The President. And you can't say that any organization made up of human beings will be error-free. But I know there was a lot of concern about the way the turtle case was handled. There is also—earlier the Venezuelan oil—

Mr. Paulson. Right.

The President. —where we had a lot of concerns. But I think the answer to that is to make sure that these environmental standards are properly integrated into the WTO deliberation and that we agree that countries ought to have more leeway on higher environmental standards than in other areas.

And again, some people in the developing countries may say, well, that's a protectionist

strategy. But from my point of view, it is not at all. I think that with climate change being the number one environmental problem in the world, it is a mistake not to take into account the environmental consequences, to not only a particular nation but to the climate as a whole, to anything that leads to accelerated deforestation or the increase in greenhouse gas emission.

But see, I've got a whole different take on this than most people do. I believe that one of the biggest economic as well as environmental problems the world has today is that most decisionmakers, not only in the United States but in all the developing countries, still believe the only way to get rich is the way the U.S. and Europe got rich in the industrial era, by burning more coal, burning more oil, putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. And then countries say, "When we get as rich as they are, then we'll turn around and clean it up." But as you know, with climate change, it doesn't work that way. If you warm the climate, you put all this stuff into the air, it takes between 50 and 100 years to turn a lot of this around.

But we know now that it is technologically possible to grow the economy and reduce greenhouse gas emission, if you're a rich country, and stabilize them, if you're a poor country, by taking a totally different energy course into the future. The technologies are available right now. And that's what I think we have to sell people on. And then we've got to really work hard to get these technologies widely disseminated into the developing economies, so that India, China, these other places can use them to create jobs and raise income while they protect their environment. That's a sale we've got to make. And it ought to be part of the decision-making process of the WTO to promote that policy.

U.S. Goals in the Seattle Round

Mr. Paulson. Let me ask you one last question. What is the U.S. willing to give up at these talks? I mean, these are negotiations, and other countries would like to talk about our antidumping laws. What can we put on the table?

The President. Well, first of all, I think we ought to support the general rules that reduce tariffs and other trade barriers. And we ought to be for accelerating access to our market, for countries that follow responsible policies. That's at the heart of my Caribbean Basin initiative

and my Africa trade bill, and I have reached out to those countries to try to do that. And we ought to do that.

But I would not be for giving up our dumping laws, and I'll tell you why: because we already have the most open markets in the world. We have—when the Asian economy collapsed in '97, we could have closed our markets, and we didn't. And so it exploded our trade deficit. Our trade deficit is about 4 percent of our income now.

I'm for open borders because we get more products at lower cost, and it's a great pressure against inflation coming back into our economy. And we still have created almost 20 million jobs. But I don't think it's right to allow a temporary economic emergency to lead to a surge of steel dumping, for example, like we went through, and then to throw a lot of Americans out of business in capital-intensive industries who might not be able to get back into business, just because of an economic crisis somewhere else and because nobody else will take the products. I mean, for the Europeans to tell us we should stop dumping, when during the Asian crisis we bought literally 10 times as much foreign steel as they did, is a little ludicrous—when they have absolute quotas on the number of foreign cars they will buy, that we don't have—is ludicrous.

So we can't give up our dumping laws as long as we have the most open markets in the world, and we keep them open to help these countries keep going, and other countries don't do the same. They shouldn't be able to take advantage of temporary economic developments to do something that otherwise the free market economy wouldn't support.

If you look at what our steel industry did, they shed over half of their employment; they spent billions of dollars modernizing technology. They were, under normal circumstances, internationally competitive. They should not have been put out of business by people dumping from Japan, from Russia, from any other country during the period of crisis that we just went through.

Disruption of the Seattle Round

Mr. Paulson. Okay. So as far as you know, the talks are still on, right? You haven't learned anything—

The President. Yes. While we've been talking, as far as I know, they're still on. And I think

they ought to stay on. And I think, again, if we can just get by the few people that are being—that aren't being peaceful and the people that are trying to stop people from meeting, I think the presence of others with legitimate questions about the WTO process, the environment and labor and how poor countries are treated, I think this can be a net positive because we're going to have to build a much deeper consensus for global trade to carry it forward.

Mr. Paulson. Okay. We'll see you tomorrow.
The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:50 p.m. from the Presidential motorcade en route to San Francisco International Airport. This interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 1. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Radio Remarks on World AIDS Day *December 1, 1999*

Since the beginning of the AIDS pandemic, more than 50 million men, women, and children worldwide have been infected with the HIV virus. Each day, 16,000 more become infected, half of whom are young people under the age of 25.

And while we've made great strides in treating AIDS here at home, there is much more that needs to be done, particularly in the developing world, where AIDS poses our greatest challenge.

Today, on World AIDS Day, and every day, we must join together as a global community to stem the tide of new infection, to care for

those who are sick, and to continue our quest for a vaccine and a cure.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10 a.m. on November 29 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 30 but was embargoed for release until noon on December 1. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

Remarks to the Trade Community in Seattle, Washington *December 1, 1999*

Thank you very much. Good afternoon. John, thank you for your introduction, and thank you for your example. I want to say a little more in a minute about the points that you made, but I thank you for being here.

Thank you very much, Patricia Davis. And I'd also like to thank the other people from the port here and the American Presidents Line who gave me a tour earlier of the port and how it works, with the rail and the trucking systems of this area. I thank you, Secretary Glickman and Secretary Slater, who's also here, for your support of trade; and Senator Murray, who had to go give another speech; Congressman McDermott, Congressman Inslee, from here in Washington.

We have a very large delegation from Congress. I'd like to ask all the Members of Congress who are here to please stand, so you'll see what the level of interest is. We have Representatives from the House and the Senate, from the Republican and the Democratic Parties here. And we're very glad to be in Washington State, Governor Locke, and in Seattle, Mayor Schell. We thank you for hosting us.

I thank all the other farmers who are here. And I'd like to say a special word of welcome to the children who are here, who are part of the WTO Trade Winds program.

Last year, Seattle sold \$34 billion in exports to foreign markets, making it the largest exporter among all American cities, everything

from airplanes to apples. The control tower I just climbed, therefore, offers an interesting vantage point, not only of what was once a condemned toxic waste site and is now a wonderful, flourishing economic asset but, in a larger sense, a vantage point of the 21st century world that I think we ought to be building for our children.

It's a perfect place to talk about what we came here to the WTO meeting in Seattle to do, to open markets and expand opportunities, not only for our people but for people all around the world, from the world's newest business, E-commerce, to the world's oldest business, farming. We came to talk about trade and to talk about trade in the context of an increasingly globalized society.

Now, I want to say just a few words about all the rather interesting hoopla that's been going on here. We need to start and ask ourselves some basic questions: Do you believe that on balance, over the last 50 years, the United States has benefited from world trade? I do.

There wouldn't be nearly as many family farmers left in America as there are today, with all the mechanization and the modernization, if we hadn't been able to sell our products around the world, because we can produce more at higher quality and lower cost than any other country in the world in so many products. Today we have about 4 percent of the world's people. We enjoy about 22 percent of the world's income. It is pretty much elemental math that we can't continue to do that unless we sell something to the other 96 percent of the people that inhabit this increasingly interconnected planet of ours.

Now, if you look at where the farmers in our country are today—whether they're row crop farmers like most of them in my home State of Arkansas, growing soybeans and rice and cotton and wheat or people who grow fruit in Washington State or vegetables here and on the east coast—one of the biggest problems we've got is low prices because of the Asian financial crisis. And it's been a terrible burden. In addition to low prices, many of our farmers have been victimized by terrible, terrible weather problems. And finally, they deal with market after market after market where they could sell even more than they do if the markets were more open.

I personally believe, for the farmers that are in our national farm programs, we're going to have to adjust our national laws if we are going

to stop having an annual appropriation of the surplus that's as big as what we've been doing the last couple of years. But over and above that, for the farmers, like the people that run our apple orchards that aren't in the farm programs, we've got to keep fighting to open these markets.

Now, we do that against a background of people who are raising more and more questions about the global trading system and about the process of globalization in general.

When I see all these people in the streets here, I'd like to point out that among—a lot of people who are peacefully protesting here in the best American tradition are protesting in part because the interests they represent have never been allowed inside the deliberations of the world trading system. And I went all the way to Geneva last year to talk to the WTO to tell them we had to change that; we needed to open this system up.

For most of the last 50 years, trading issues, when they were finally decided, were the private province of CEO's, trade ministers, and the politicians who supported them. Now we know we have to continue to open markets, we're reaching out to places like China. We're trying to do more with developing nations. We're trying to build more partnerships with governments and industry and labor and management. But we can't do any of it unless there is a broader consensus on trade that reaches deep into our country and to other countries.

So I say that for those who came here to peacefully make their point, I welcome them here because I want them to be integrated into the longer term debate. To those who came here to break windows and hurt small businesses or stop people from going to meetings or having their say, I condemn them, and I'm sorry that the mayor and the Governor and the police officers and others have had to go through this. But we need to make a clear distinction between that which we condemn and that which we welcome.

I'm convinced we do have to open the WTO and the world trading system to greater public scrutiny and to greater public participation. Because unless real people, like this apple farmer from Washington, can say, "This is how I fit in the global economy. This is why my family and I are better off than we otherwise would be," over the long run we're not going to be able to continue to bring the world together,

which I think is important to America economically, and I think it is very important politically that we continue to work closely with countries and encourage them to follow good rules of law and adopt good economic policies and to be good neighbors and not hostile neighbors.

There are a lot of opinions being expressed here among a lot of the folks that are out in the streets, and representatives of groups that I will meet with later today, that I do not agree with. But I am glad that there is such intense interest in this meeting, because it shows that people really do care about this now, and therefore, trade decisions, like other decisions we make in the Congress and in Washington and in the statehouses around the country, have to become part of the democratic process.

You know, every elected official here will tell you that there are some decisions that you really have to consult heavily with the people you represent before you make, and other decisions you know they've just sort of given you a contract on. They say, "Oh, well"—the people in North Dakota—"I know Congressman Pomeroy or Senator Conrad, and I don't understand that issue very much, but whatever decision they make is okay with me because I trust them."

And it's not that way any more here with trade. We have to bring people into this tent, and we have to do it in an effective way. But I think, at least for people like me—and I haven't even succeeded in bringing harmony, I know, within my own party about this—but I do not see how we can have the country and the future we want unless America continues to be a leading force for expanding trade, expanding markets for goods and services, expanding the reach of international commerce, doing it on fair and decent terms, being sensitive to the burdens that the poorest countries have, and understanding that, while a concern for labor or the environment could be twisted to be an excuse for protectionism, it is not wrong for the United States to say we don't believe in child labor or forced labor or the oppression of our brothers and sisters who work for a living around the world. And we don't believe that growing the economy requires us to undermine the environment.

You know, you just look at this port here. What they're doing with multimodal transportation here is saving huge amounts of energy, dramatically reducing greenhouse gas emissions, as it promotes economic growth. You're going

to see the growth, in my opinion, in the next several years of alternative fuels, much of it coming out of America's farming areas, which will dramatically reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce global warming, and accelerate economic growth. So I strongly believe, if we want to get everybody together and move forward, we are going to have to listen to people who have legitimate economic concerns, legitimate environmental concerns, legitimate labor concerns.

So one of the things that I think we've got to be clear on, everybody has to decide: Do you think we are better off or worse off with an increasingly integrated global economy where productive Americans have a chance to sell their goods and services and skills around the world? I think we're better off. That's the number one core decision we ought to make up our mind as a country we agree about.

Now, I want this new trade round at the WTO to be about jobs, development, and broadly shared prosperity and about improving the quality of life and work for ordinary people all around the world. It isn't right for me to ask for the good things I want for America's working families without wanting to provide those opportunities for others who are willing to work for them.

The impact of this round could be quite profound. Since the first trade round 50 years ago, we've cut major nations' tariffs on manufactured goods by 90 percent. During the same period, global trade has grown fifteen-fold, and we've seen the most rapid, sustained economic growth, not just in the United States but throughout the world, in any period of human history because we're working together.

Are there difficulties? Are there problems? Are there disagreements? Of course, and there always will be. That's why you have to have some system to resolve them. Whatever system you adopt, will there always be a mistake made by somebody, somewhere, sometime? Of course. We're all human.

But we need to keep our eyes on the objective, and increasing economic cooperation is in the interest of the ordinary citizens of the United States and the rest of the world. If we expand access and we do it on fair terms and we're sensitive to the legitimate difficulties these poor countries face, we can also advance the cause of the environment and labor conditions without it becoming a shield for protectionism

and trying to take unfair advantage of countries that are poorer than we are. I believe that.

But again, let's keep our eyes on the big issue: We cannot grow the American economy in the 21st century unless we continue to sell more to a world that is prospering and that is more connected, increasingly, in information technology and travel, not only with us but with everyone else in the world.

The typical American—let's just take apples, for example; the typical American eats 20 pounds of fresh apples each year. And this is a pander to Washington State, I am not the typical American; I eat more. [Laughter] This is a pander, I admit. But the typical European consumes about 46 pounds of apples a year. So America exported \$353 million worth of apples last year. More than a quarter of the total, 46,000 metric tons, were shipped here, from Seattle: Red Delicious from the Lake Chelan region; Granny Smiths from the Columbia basin; Winesaps, Fujis, Galas grown in Washington State, boxed and bound for Mexico, Malaysia, and more than 40 other countries around the world.

I have worked very hard to open these markets. We opened the Japanese market for the first time to Washington State's apples in our administration. Then we fought to get the barriers down in Washington, in Mexico and elsewhere. And we're making some progress.

But it is very important to recognize—go back to John or go back to—those of us who come from farming States. Farmers are the lifeblood of our country. They are better at what they do, thank goodness, than any group of people on Earth. But we cannot preserve family farms unless we sell more of what we grow to more people around the world, because the structure of agriculture we have, to make a living, has to produce a lot more food than all of us can consume.

And that is a good thing. That can be a gift to the rest of the world. It can free other countries to work on what they need to do to develop the capacities of their people, to focus on diversifying their own economies. And we have to find a way to reach agreements to do that.

Five years ago we joined with our trading partners to put agriculture on the WTO agenda. We made some progress then; we pledged to come back and do more. Today, our agenda here is to fight and win for the family farmers of the United States. We want to level the play-

ing field. We don't want any special preferences. We just want agriculture to be treated as fairly as any other sector in the global economy.

I know that's long overdue, and I believe it is the due of every farm family in America, whether an apple farmer in the Cascades, a banana farmer in the Cameroon, any farmer deserves a chance to compete. It is not just American farmers that would be benefited from this. Some of the poorest countries in the world would get the biggest benefits out of this trade round if we continue to tear down barriers to agricultural exports. They shouldn't have to compete against state-owned enterprises, restrictive regulations, the size of other countries' Government grants.

In the European Union, for example, which accounts for 85 percent of the world's agricultural export subsidies, half of the overall budget is spent on agriculture. Now, I appreciate their support for their rural communities. We've always wanted to support our rural communities. But we have to work out a system going forward where everybody can do what they do best. And then people have to be given time and support and investment to make the transitions into the new economy. That's all I'm asking for, and that's all I would ever ask for, for people here in the United States.

We have to lower tariff barriers; they're too high. On average, official rates abroad are 5 times as high as they are here in America. Taking apples as an example, it was just mentioned tariff rates are 45 percent in Korea and 30 percent in China. One of the reasons that our people in our economic team, Charlene Barshefsky and her group and Gene Sperling when they went to China, they negotiated a steep cut in the tariff in China to 10 percent by the year 2004. That's more apple sales from Washington. It will help more family farmers.

We will also work to reduce domestic supports that don't support trade, so much as distort it by paying farmers to overproduce and drive prices down, and we see that in a lot of places in the world. That should not be the case. We know that our farms can produce a vast and varied supply of food at affordable prices in a way that helps to reduce hunger and malnutrition around the world. We also should see that the promise of biotechnology is realized by consumers as well as producers in the environment, ensuring that the safety of our food is guaranteed by science-based and

absolutely open domestic regulations. And we should maintain market access based on sound science.

I want to say to the people of Europe and all around the world, I would never knowingly permit a single pound of any American food product to leave this country if I had a shred of evidence that it was unsafe and neither would any farmer in the United States of America. I say to people around the world, we eat this food, too, and we eat more of it than you do. Now, if there's something wrong with anything we do, we want to know about it first. But we need to handle this in an open, honest way.

It shouldn't be just about politics and emotionalism and short-term advantage. We need an open system. There is a reason we have confidence in the Federal bodies that analyze the safety of our food. They may not be perfect, but nobody believes they are in anybody's hip pocket. They are the world's best experts. We have an orderly, disciplined system here for evaluating the safety of not only our food but our medicine. And we ask all of our trading partners to do the same and to deal with us in a straightforward manner about this.

But everybody must understand we have nothing to hide, and we are eating this food, too. Nobody is trying to do anything under the table, in secret, in an inappropriate way. But neither should our farmers be subject to unrealistic delays and unfair discrimination based on suspicion unsupported by the latest scientific examination. Let's handle this in an open, fair, scientific way. That's the right way to do this.

Now after I leave you, I am going to go meet with the trade ministers that are here from more than 100 countries. It's a great honor for Seattle, for the State of Washington, and for the United States to have these people come here and to try to come to terms with a lot of these very difficult issues. I want to talk about how we can make sure that ordinary working people all across the world feel that they have a stake in an improving global economic system. I want to assure them that we have to do what is necessary to make sure that economic competition lifts people up everywhere.

Now there are people, again I say, who honestly believe that open trade stacks the deck against ordinary people. Thirty percent of the growth we've gotten in this country, 30 percent, between 1993 and the time of the Asian financial crisis, came because of expanding trade. We

had pretty good farm years in there, too, folks. It's hard to remember it's been so bad the last year or so, but we had some pretty good years.

And we have got to figure out a way not only to sell the idea but to make it real, that we can continue to pursue these objectives in a way that lifts people's quality of life up and lifts the ordinary living standards up for people throughout the world. We can do that.

Now let me finally say that I know these questions won't be easy. One of the things I've learned in all trade cases is that it once again reaffirms the wisdom of the Italian Renaissance political philosopher Machiavelli, who said—I'm paraphrasing here, but this is almost exactly right—he said there is nothing so difficult in all of human affairs as to change the established order of things, because the people that are going to win will always be somewhat uncertain of their gain; whereas the people who will lose are absolutely sure of what they are going to lose.

So this will require some amount of imagination and trust and humility and flexibility. But if we're going to have a world, rule-based trading system, then we have got to make it work for ordinary folks. But we in America, we have to take the lead in continuing to make the main point. The world is a better place today after 50 years of more open trade than it would have been if we hadn't had it. Americans are better off today after 50 years of open trade than they would have been if we hadn't had it.

And what has helped us will help the poorest countries in the world, the wealthy countries, and the countries in-between if we find a way to continue to draw together and to deal with the legitimate concerns of the legitimate protesters in the streets of Seattle.

And you know, to me it is a very exciting time. This is a high-class problem, and we ought to treat it as a 21st century challenge, worth our best efforts. If we do, I think we'll get a good result.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:37 p.m. in the Weyerhaeuser Facility at Terminal 5 at the Port of Seattle. In his remarks, he referred to John Butler, apple grower, who introduced the President; Patricia Davis, president, Seattle Port Commission, and president, Washington Council on International Trade; Gov. Gary Locke of Washington; and Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle.

Exchange With Reporters in Seattle December 1, 1999

Disruption of the Seattle Round

Q. Mr. President, what message do the violence and protests send to the WTO officials and delegates here?

The President. Let me say this: I think that the WTO officials are quite well aware that the violence is not representative of how the American people feel, that nearly 100 percent of our people abhor what was done and condemn it. We don't believe in violence. We don't believe in people who keep other people from meeting. We don't like that.

I think that what the WTO people are here is to pay attention to the nonviolent protests and should open the process and find a way to legitimately consider the grievances of the poorest nations, as well as those of us who be-

lieve that we have to give greater concern to the environment and to labor standards and our trade measures. And I think—that's what I think they should listen to. They should give no consideration to the violent people because nobody supports them, nobody believes in it, and what they did was wrong. It was just vandalism.

Q. Can a peaceful message go through?

The President. I hope so. That's more up to you, than me. [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:07 p.m. while the President greeted the crowd at the ropeline following his remarks at the Port of Seattle. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at a World Trade Organization Luncheon in Seattle December 1, 1999

Thank you very much. Ambassador Barshefsky, thank you for your remarks and your work. Ladies and gentlemen, we have a very large delegation from our administration here today, and I hope it's evidence to you of our seriousness of purpose. I thank the Commerce Secretary, Bill Daley; the Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman; our SBA Administrator, Aida Alvarez; my National Economic Councilor, Gene Sperling; Ambassador Esserman; and my Chief of Staff, John Podesta, all of whom are here, and I thank them.

I want to say that I agree that Mike Moore is the ideal person to head the WTO, because he has a sense of humor, and boy, do we need it right now. [*Laughter*] Did you see the gentleman holding up the big white napkin here before we started? He was doing that to get the light for the television cameras. But he was standing here holding the napkin, and Mike whispered to me, he said, "Well, after yesterday, that could be the flag of the WTO." [*Laughter*] We'll have rolling laughter as the translation gets through here.

Let me begin by saying welcome to the United States and to one of our most wonderful cities. We are honored to have you here on a very important mission. Today I want to talk a little bit about the work that we're all here to do: launching a new WTO round for a new century, a new type of round that I hope will be about jobs, development, and broadly shared prosperity and about improving the quality of life, as well as the quality of work around the world, an expanded system of rule-based trade that keeps pace with the changing global economy and the changing global society.

Let me begin by saying that 7 years ago when I had the honor to become President of the United States, I sat down alone and sort of made a list of the things that I hoped could be done to create the kind of world that I wanted our children to live in, in the new century, a world where the interests of the United States I thought were quite clear: in peace and stability; in democracy and prosperity.

To achieve that kind of world, I thought it was very important that the United States support the increasing unity of Europe and the

expansion of the European Union; that we support the expansion of NATO and its partnership with what are now more than two dozen countries, including Russia and Ukraine; that we support the integration of China, Russia, and the Indian subcontinent, in particular, into the large political and economic flows of our time; that we stand against the ethnic and religious conflicts that were still consuming the Middle East and Northern Ireland, then Bosnia and later Kosovo; that we do what we could to help people all over the world to deal with such things, including the tribal wars in Africa.

And I thought it was important that we give people mechanisms by which they could work toward a shared prosperity, which is why we wanted to finish the last WTO round; why we are working hard with our friends in Europe on a Stability Pact for the Balkans; why we know economics must be a big part of the Middle East peace process; why we have an Asian-Pacific economic forum where the leaders meet; why we've had two Summits of the Americas with our friends in Latin America; why we're trying to pass the Africa and Caribbean Basin trade initiatives; and why I believe it is imperative that we here succeed in launching a new trade round that can command broad support among ordinary citizens in all our countries and take us where we want to go.

There are negative forces I have tried to combat, in addition to the forces of hatred based on ethnic or religious difference: the terrorists, the problems of disease and poverty, which I hope that the large debt relief initiative that we are pushing will help to alleviate.

But in the end, all of these changes in my view will only give us the world we want, where the poorest countries have children that can at least live through childhood and where the boys as well as the girls can go to school and then have a chance to make a decent living; where countries with governance problems can work through them; where wealthy countries can continue to prosper but do so in a way that is more responsible to helping those who still have a long way to go economically; and where, together, we can meet our common responsibilities to human needs, to the environment, to the cause of world peace. We will not get that done unless we can prove, for all of our domestic political difficulties and all of our honest differences, we still believe that we can have an interdependent global economy that runs

alongside our interdependent international information society.

And we are called upon here to meet against a background of a lot of people coming here to protest. Some of them, I think, have a short memory, or maybe no memory, of what life was like in most of your countries not so very long ago. So let me say again, I condemn the small number who were violent and who tried to prevent you from meeting.

But I'm glad the others showed up, because they represent millions of people who are now asking questions about whether this enterprise in fact will take us all where we want to go. And we ought to welcome their questions and be prepared to give an answer, because if we cannot create an interconnected global economy that is increasing prosperity and genuine opportunity for people everywhere, then all of our political initiatives are going to be less successful. So I ask you to think about that.

When I hear the voices outside the meeting rooms, I disagree with a lot of what they say, but I'm still glad they're here. Why? Because their voices now count in this debate. For 50 years—one of the reasons I said we needed a leader like Mr. Moore, with a sense of humor, because for 50 years global trade, even though there were always conflicts—you know, the United States and Japan, they're our great friends and allies; we're always arguing about something. But to be fair, it was a conflict that operated within a fairly narrow band. For 50 years, trade decisions were largely the province of trade ministers, heads of government, and business interests. But now, what all those people in the street tell us is that they would also like to be heard. And they're not so sure that this deal is working for them.

Some of them say, well—and by the way, they're kind of like we are; a lot of them are in conflict with each other, right? Because a lot of them say, "Well, this is not a good thing for the developing countries. They haven't benefited as much as they should have, while the wealthy countries have grown wealthier in this information society." Others say, "Well, even if you're growing the economy, you're hurting the environment." And still others say, "Well, companies may be getting rich in some of these poorer countries, but actual working, laboring people are not doing so well." And others have other various and sundry criticisms of what we have done.

I would like to say, first of all, I think we need to do a better job of making the basic case. No one in this room can seriously argue that the world would have been a better place today if our forebears over the last 50 years had not done their work to bring us closer together. Whatever the problems that exist in whatever countries represented here, whatever the legitimacy of any of the criticism against us, this is a stronger, more prosperous world because we have worked to expand the frontiers of cooperation and reduce the barriers to trade among people. And we need to reiterate our conviction that that is true. If we were all out here going on our own, we would not be as well off in the world as we are.

Secondly, at the end of the cold war, I am sure everyone in this room has been struck by the cruel irony that in this most modern of ages, when the Internet tells us everything, as Mr. Moore said, when we are solving all the problems of the human gene, and we will soon know what's in the black holes in the universe, it is truly ironic that the biggest problems of human society are the oldest ones, those rooted in our fear of those who are different from us: different races, different ethnic groups, different tribes, different religions, all over the world, people consumed by differences.

When people are working together for common prosperity in a rule-based system, they have big incentives to lay the differences down and join hands to work together. So if we just make those two points to our critics, I think it's very important: Number one, the world is a better place than it would have been, had we not had the last 50 years of increasing economic cooperation for trade and investment; and number two, the world of the future will be a safer place if we continue to work together in a rule-based system that offers enormous incentives for people to find ways to cooperate and to give up their old hatreds and their impulses to violence and war.

Now having said that, we now have to say: What next? I think we have to acknowledge a responsibility, particularly those of us in the wealthier countries, to make sure that we are working harder to see that the benefits of the global economy are more widely shared among and within countries, that it truly works for ordinary people who are doing the work for the rest of us. I think we also have to make sure that the rules make sense and that we're con-

tinuing to make progress, notwithstanding the domestic political difficulties that every country will face. We all benefit when the rules are clear and fair. I think that means we have to cut tariffs further on manufactured goods and set equally ambitious goals for services. I think we should extend our moratorium on E-commerce. I think we should treat agriculture as we treat other sectors of the economy.

But we all have domestic political constraints. Everybody knows that. I think we have to leave this luncheon saying, in spite of that, we're going to find some way to keep moving forward because the world will be a better place, and the world will be a safer place.

Now, let me offer a few observations of what I hope will be done. First, I think we have to do more to ensure that the least developed countries have greater access to global markets and the technical assistance to make the most of it.

Director-General Moore has dedicated himself and this organization to extending the benefits of trade to the least developed countries, and I thank you for that, sir. Here in Seattle, 32 developing nations are moving toward admission to the WTO. EU President Prodi and I have discussed this whole issue, and I have assured him, and I assure you, that the United States is committed to a comprehensive program to help the poorest nations become full partners in the world trading system. This initiative, which we are working on with the EU, Japan, and Canada, would enhance market access for products from the least developed countries consistent with our GSP preference access program and our Africa and Caribbean Basin initiatives, which, I am glad to report, are making good progress through the United States Congress.

Building on our recent collaboration with Senegal, Lesotho, Zambia, Bangladesh, and Nigeria, we would also intensify our efforts to help developing countries build the domestic institutions they need to make the most of trade opportunities and to implement WTO obligations. This afternoon I will meet with heads of international organizations that provide trade-related technical assistance and ask them to help in this effort.

And I will say this. I do believe, after the Uruguay round, when we set up this system, that we did not pay enough attention to the internal capacity-building in the developing nations that is necessary to really play a part in

the global economy. And I am prepared to do my part to rectify that omission.

We also must help these countries avert the health and pollution costs of the industrial age. We have to help them use clean technologies that improve the economy, the environment, and health care at the same time. And I will just give one example.

Today is World AIDS Day, and today the USTR—our Trade Representative—and the Department of Health and Human Services are announcing that they are committed to working together to make sure that our intellectual property policy is flexible enough to respond to legitimate public health crises.

Intellectual property protections are very important to a modern economy, but when HIV and AIDS epidemics are involved and like serious health care crises, the United States will henceforward implement its health care and trade policies in a manner that ensures that people in the poorest countries won't have to go without medicine they so desperately need. I hope this will help South Africa and many other countries that we are committed to support in this regard.

More generally, this new round should promote sustainable development in places where hunger and poverty still stoke despair. We know countries that have opened their economies to the world have also opened the doors to opportunity and hope for their own people. Where barriers have fallen, by and large, living standards have risen, and democratic institutions have become stronger. We have to spread that more broadly.

So secondly, I want to say what I said at the WTO in Geneva last year. I think it is imperative that the WTO become more open and accessible. While other international organizations have sought and not shied from public participation—when that has happened, public support has grown. If the WTO expects to have public support grow for our endeavors, the public must see and hear and in a very real sense actually join in the deliberations. That's the only way they can know the process is fair and know their concerns were at least considered.

We've made progress since I issued this challenge in Geneva last year, but I believe there's more work to be done from opening the hearing room doors to inviting in a more formal fashion public comment on trade disputes.

Now look, let me just say, I know there's a lot of controversy about this. And as all of you know, I'm about to enter the last year of my Presidency. I will not be around to deal with the aftermath. But I'm telling you, I've been in this business a long time, and in the end, we all serve and function at the sufferance of the people, either with their active support or their silent acquiescence. What they are telling us in the streets here is, this was an issue we used to be silent on. We're not going to be silent on it anymore. We haven't necessarily given up on trade, but we want to be heard.

The sooner the WTO opens up the process and lets people representing those who are outside in, the sooner we will see fewer demonstrations, more constructive debate, and a broader level of support in every country for the direction that every single person in this room knows that we ought to be taking into the 21st century. So we can do it a little bit now and a little bit later. We can drag our feet, or we can run through an open door. But my preference is to open the meetings, open the records, and let people file their opinions.

No one, no sensible person expects to win every argument, and no one ever does. But in a free society, people want to be heard, and human dignity and political reality demand it today.

Third, as I have said repeatedly, I believe the WTO must make sure that open trade does indeed lift living standards, respects core labor standards that are essential not only to worker rights but to human rights. That's why this year the United States has proposed that the WTO create a working group on trade and labor. To deny the importance of these issues in a global economy is to deny the dignity of work, the belief that honest labor fairly compensated gives meaning and structure to our lives. I hope we can affirm these values at this meeting.

I am pleased that tomorrow I will sign the ILO convention to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. And I thank the United States Senate on a bipartisan basis for supporting us in this. I believe the WTO should collaborate more closely with the ILO, which has worked hard to protect human rights, to ban child labor. I hope you will do this.

Let me say in all candor, I am well aware that a lot of the nations that we most hope to support, the developing nations of the world, have reservations when the United States says

we support bringing labor concerns into our trade debate. And I freely acknowledge that, if we had a certain kind of rule, then protectionists in wealthy countries could use things like wage differentials to keep poorer countries down, to say, "Okay, you opened your markets to us. Now we'll sell to you. But you're selling to us, and we want to keep you down, so we'll say you're not paying your people enough."

The answer to that is not to avoid this labor issue, not when there's still child labor all over the world, not when there are still oppressive labor practices all over the world, not when there is still evidence in countries that ordinary people are not benefiting from this. The answer is not to just throw away the issue. The answer is to write the rules in such a way that people in our position, the wealthier countries, can't do that, can't use this as an instrument of protectionism. We can find a way to do this.

But there is a sense of solidarity all over the world, among ordinary people who get up every day, will never be able to come to a luncheon like this, do their work, raise their children, pay their taxes, form the backbone of every nation represented here. They deserve basic, fundamental decency, and the progress of global trade should reflect, also, in their own lives. I do not want the United States, or any other country, now or later, to be able to use this as a shield for protectionism. But to pretend that it is not a legitimate issue in many countries is another form of denial, which I believe will keep the global trading system from building the public support it deserves.

Finally, we must work to protect and to improve the environment as we expand trade. Two weeks ago, I signed an Executive order requiring careful environmental review of our major trading agreements early enough to make a difference, including the input of the public and outside experts and considering genuinely held concerns. We stand ready to cooperate as you develop similar systems, and to integrate the environment more fully into trade policy.

We are committed to finding solutions which are win-win, that benefit both the economy and the environment, open trade and cutting-edge clean technologies, which I believe will be the next industrial revolution. We will continue to support WTO rules that recognize a nation's right to take science-based health, safety, and environmental measures, even when they're higher than international standards.

Now I want to say something about this. Again I know, there are some people who believe my concern and the concern of the United States about the environment is another way that somehow we can keep the developing countries down. That is not true. There are basically two great clusters of environmental issues facing the world today. First, there are the local issues faced primarily by the developing nations: healthy water systems and sewer systems, systems to restrict soil erosion and to otherwise promote the public health.

It is in everyone's interest to help those things to be installed as quickly and efficiently as possible. But the real issue that affects us all, that prompts my insistence that we put this issue on the agenda, is global warming and the related issue of the loss of species in the world as a consequence of global warming.

And the difference in this issue and previous environmental issues is this: Once the greenhouse gases get in the atmosphere, they take a long time, 100 years or more, to dispel. Therefore, one nation's policy, including ours—and we are now the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, in the United States. We won't be long, but we are now. But we have to do something about this. And I want to say to you what I said to the people at our table. There is now clear and compelling scientific, technological evidence that it is no longer necessary for a poor country growing rich to do so by emitting more greenhouse gas emissions. Or in plainer language, a nation can develop a middle class and develop wealth without burning more oil and coal in traditional manners. This is a sea change in the reality that existed just a few years ago.

And let's be candid; most people don't believe it. A lot of people in our country don't believe it. But in everything from transportation to manufacturing to the generation of electricity to the construction of buildings, it is now possible to grow an economy with much less injury to the atmosphere, with available technologies. And within 5 years breathtaking changes in the way automobile engines work and in the way fuel is made, especially from biomass, will make these trends even more clear.

I do not believe the United States has the right to ask India or Pakistan or China or any other country to give up economic growth. But I do believe that all of us can responsibly say, if you can grow at the same rate without doing what we did—that is fouling the environment

and then cleaning it up; Mr. Kono remembers—I remember the first time I went to Tokyo over 20 years ago, people wore masks riding their bicycles around, and now the air there is cleaner than it is in my hometown in Arkansas.

What is the difference now? It is not just a national issue. If you foul the atmosphere and then you later clean it up, the greenhouse gases are still up there, and they'll be there for 100 years, warming the climate.

Now, we do not have a right to ask anybody to give up economic growth. But we do have a right to say, if we're prepared to help you finance a different path to growth, and we can prove to you—and you accept, on the evidence—that your growth will be faster, not smaller, that you'll have more good jobs, more new technology, a broader base for your economy, then I do believe we ought to have those kind of environmental standards. And we ought to do it in a voluntary way with available technologies. But we ought to put environment at the core of our trade concerns.

Now I don't know if I've persuaded any of you about any of this. But I know one thing: This is a better world than it would have been if our forebears hadn't done this for the last 50 years. If we're going to go into the next 50 years, we have to recognize that we're in a very different environment. We're in a total information society, where information has already been globalized, and citizens all over the world have been empowered. And they are knocking on the door here, saying, "Let us in,

and listen to us. This is not an elite process anymore. This is a process we want to be heard in."

So I implore you, let's continue to make progress on all the issues where clearly we can. Let's open the process and listen to people even when we don't agree with them. We might learn something, and they'll feel that they've been part of a legitimate process. And let's continue to find ways to prove that the quality of life of ordinary citizens in every country can be lifted, including basic labor standards and an advance on the environmental front.

If we do this, then 50 years from now the people who will be sitting in all these chairs will be able to have the same feelings about you that Mr. Moore articulated our feelings for the World War II generation.

Thank you very much, and welcome again.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:05 p.m. in the Spanish Room at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Susan G. Esserman; World Trade Organization Director-General Mike Moore; European Commission President Romano Prodi; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Yohei Kono of Japan. The President also referred to GSP, the Generalized System of Preferences. The Executive order on environmental review of trade agreements is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks at the Child Labor Convention Signing Ceremony in Seattle *December 2, 1999*

Thank you, Secretary Herman; Mr. Samovia, thank you for your leadership; John Sweeney, Ambassador Tom Niles; all the Members of Congress here; Governor Locke; I would like to begin—I have to make a brief statement about Ireland, but before I do, just to illustrate the depth of support here, I'd like to ask all the Members of Congress who are here to stand and be recognized, and thank them for their help.

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Before I make my statement about this important convention, I'd like to say a few words about the truly remarkable and historic events taking place today in Northern Ireland. Eighteen months ago today the Good Friday agreement was signed with the promise of a future of peace and hope. Today the promise is being realized. The people of Northern Ireland now have the power to shape their own destiny and choose their own future. Democratic government by and for all the people of Northern Ireland is

now replacing suspicion, fear, and violence. It is now possible to believe that the day of the gun and the bomb are, in fact, over.

There are many leaders who deserve special tribute for their contributions, but I would like to mention especially David Trimble and John Taylor, John Hume and Seamus Mallon, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, John Alderdice, Monica McWilliams, David Ervine and Gary McMichael and so many others.

I would also like to thank Prime Minister Blair, Prime Minister Ahern, their predecessors, John Major, John Bruton, Albert Reynolds. I thank Sir John de Chastelain for his work. I thank the special envoys to Northern Ireland, Ms. Mowlam and Mr. Mandelson, for the work they have done. And especially I thank our great American leader there, George Mitchell, whose patience, commitment, and conviction were essential to making this day happen.

The Good Friday agreement must continue to be implemented in full, in word and in spirit. The United States must continue and will continue to stand with all those who are unequivocally committed to the pursuit of peace and justice and democracy in Northern Ireland. This is our common responsibility to the children there, whose future is the best reason for all that has been done.

Let me say that the United States is the home of the largest Irish diaspora in the world. Many of us claim Irish heritage. For all the years and all the bloodshed, to have the promise of being over today, this is an especially meaningful day for Irish-Americans, and I thank you very much.

ILO Child Labor Convention

I'd like to begin this day by thanking all the Members of the Senate. Thank you, Senator Murray, for being here. And I want to thank the Republicans, as well as the Democrats, who voted on this together. But I would be remiss if I did not say that the first person who ever discussed this issue with me in 1992 when we were both running for the office I am privileged to hold was Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa. And for more than 7 years now, at every occasion, he has talked to me about this issue. It has been truly one of the driving passions of his life, and without him we would not be here doing this today. And I would like to ask him to stand.

Thank you, Senator Harkin. Thank you.

I also want to thank Secretary Herman and Gene Sperling and Karen Tramontano for what they did in our administration to spearhead the effort. Perhaps there is no better way to conclude my visit here, because what we celebrate this morning symbolizes in many ways what we're seeking in the launch of a new round of trade talks, not just to lower barriers but to raise living standards, to help ensure that people everywhere feel they have a positive stake in global trade that gives them and their children a chance for a better life.

We are here in Seattle to continue our efforts to help establish a new consensus on international trade that leads to jobs that are secure, development that is sustainable, prosperity that is broadly shared. We seek to widen the circle of opportunity, deepen our commitments to human rights and human freedom, and put a human face on the global economy.

Some say that it is not possible, that the interests of nations, businesses, and labor, within and across national borders, are too divergent. This child labor convention proves that, at least on this profoundly important issue, it is possible. It is a living example of how we can together come to level up global standards and lift up core labor values.

The step we take today affirms fundamental human rights. Ultimately, that's what core labor standards are all about, not an instrument of protectionism or a vehicle to impose one nation's values on another but about our shared values, about the dignity of work, the decency of life, the fragility and importance of childhood.

In my State of the Union Address almost 2 years ago, I asked Congress to help make the United States a world leader in this cause and to start by working to end abusive child labor. We are making good on that effort. Together, again across party lines, we secured the largest investment in American history to end abusive child labor around the globe.

We're establishing the first-ever United States Government purchasing ban on goods made by forced or indentured child labor, and we've beefed up enforcement to stop the importation of goods made by such labor. Just last week, the Customs Service banned the importation of certain hand-rolled cigarettes, known as bidis, because of evidence that one firm was making them with bonded child labor.

Today we build on our achievements and our common commitment. This convention is truly

a victory for labor, for business, and for Government, for all those who worked long and hard for 2 year to reach a consensus; a victory for the nations of the world who joined together in the ILO this summer to adopt this convention on a unanimous vote. Today we say with one clear voice: Abusive child labor is wrong and must end.

Above all, of course, this is a victory for the children of the world, and especially for the tens of millions of them who are still forced to work in conditions that shock the conscience and haunt the soul; children brutalized by the nightmare of prostitution; children indentured to manufacturers working against debt for wages so low they will never be repaid; children who must handle dangerous chemicals or who are forced to sell illegal drugs; children who crawl deep into unsafe mines; children who are forcibly recruited into armed conflicts and then spend the rest of their entire lives bearing the scars of committing murder when they were 8 or 9 or 10 years old.

For the first time, this convention calls on the international community to take immediate and effective steps to stop the worst forms of child labor. This convention enables the world to say, no more. We recognize, of course, that no treaty or convention is enough and that to end abusive child labor once and for all we must untangle the pathology of grinding poverty and hopelessness that lies at its root. If we want to slam the door shut on abusive child labor, we must open the door wide to education and opportunity. After all, nations can only reach their potential when their children can fulfill theirs.

John Sweeney put it best when he said economic development is based in education, and school is the best place for children. That's why this convention places a priority on basic education, and we are trying to honor that priority.

Around the world, we are investing in creative solutions to get children out of abusive workrooms and into classrooms. We are giving them a way out of the soccer ball industry in Pakistan, the shoe industry in Brazil, the fireworks industry in Guatemala. We are giving them back the most precious gift of all, their childhood.

And as we work to provide both boys and girls access to schools, we are also working to provide their parents with viable economic alternatives and access to jobs. In Pakistan, for example, when 7,000 children moved out of the soc-

cer ball manufacturing plant into the schools, 7,000 parents moved into jobs they didn't have before, at better incomes.

Microcredit loans help people in developing countries, and women in particular, to start businesses, raise their standard of living, build a better life for their children. I am proud that through the Agency for International Development, the United States financed 2 million such loans last year. So we have here not only the Secretary of Labor but the Secretary of Commerce. We see this not only as a labor issue but a business and an economic issue. We believe that everyone will be better off when children are given back their childhoods.

We are working to integrate the agenda, also, as all of you know, of the World Trade Organization, the IMF, and the World Bank with the agenda of the ILO. That is key to making sure that the issues of child labor and core labor standards, more generally, are on the international economic agenda, and they don't become either/or conflicts. That's why ensuring the rights, the basic rights of labor, is central to our mission here in Seattle.

This is a good day for the children of the world, but we can make tomorrow even a better day. We can do it by seeing that other nations also ratify this treaty and join in our cause, and we can do it by building on the solid foundation of this convention and the common ground forged by leaders here in the work of the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank, and other international institutions. We have to harness the spirit of progress and the sense of possibility that this noble document embodies. We can light the way out of the darkness of abusive child labor into the dawn of a new century of promise for all the children of the world.

Thank you very much.

They've elected me to say this. I would like to ask Mr. Sweeney and Ambassador Niles and all of the Members of the Congress, the Governor and Secretary Daley, Secretary Slater, to come up and join us as we do this signing, please.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. at the Bell Harbor International Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Juan Samovia, director general, International Labor Organization; John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO; former U.S. Ambassador to Greece Thomas M.T. Niles, president, U.S. Council for Business; Gov. Gary Locke

of Washington; David Trimble, leader, and John Taylor, member, Ulster Unionist Party; Social Democratic and Labor Party members John Hume and Seamus Mallon; Gerry Adams, leader, and Martin McGuinness, member, Sinn Féin; Alliance Party leader Lord John Alderdice; Monica McWilliams of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition; Progressive Unionist Party spokesman David Ervine; Ulster Democratic Party leader Gary McMichael; Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and former Prime Ministers John Bruton and Albert

Reynolds of Ireland; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces, chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; former United Kingdom Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Marjorie Mowlam and her successor, Peter Mandelson; and former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland. The convention was entitled the International Labor Organization Convention No. 182, Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Telephone Interview With Mark Little of RTE and Steve Grimson of BBC From Seattle

December 2, 1999

President's Possible Visit to Belfast

Mr. Grimson. First of all, Mr. President, thank you very much for joining us. There has been some speculation that, with things again moving in the peace process, you may actually be considering making a return trip to Belfast, and we could say that it's safer than Seattle.

The President. [Laughter] Yes, Seattle, the new home of the Troubles.

Well, let me say this. First of all, I am elated about today's events. They are truly historic. Now the people in Northern Ireland have the authority and the power to work together and to shape their own future, and it's wonderful. And you know how much I love to come there, and I would come at the drop of a hat if there is some contribution I can make to the ongoing peace process and the work still to be done. I've told George Mitchell that. I've told Bertie Ahern that, and I've told Tony Blair that. And obviously, the parties know that. All the others know that I would do that. But I have not made a decision to come right now.

Decommissioning of Arms

Mr. Little. If I could ask you, it seems, unfortunately, with every victory in the peace process, there are sometimes the seeds of the next crisis, and we have the Ulster Unionist Council coming back in February to consider progress on decommissioning. Are you concerned that the historic development we see today could be col-

lapsed in February? And do you agree with the Republicans who say, this is Unionists setting a new deadline which is not in the Good Friday agreement?

The President. Well, I agree with George Mitchell's assessment that decommissioning is an essential element of the Good Friday accord, and it has to be achieved in the overall implementation of the agreement. All parties have a collective responsibility here, and I think what we should do is to give the agreed-upon process the chance to work. I have great confidence in General de Chastelain. I believe the parties have great confidence in him. And I don't think you can underestimate the terrific importance of the IRA naming its representative to General de Chastelain's commission, and I hope they do that today. And the Loyalists should do the same.

And all of us on the outside, rather than speculating on this day about what might happen bad, I think we've got a roadmap for the future. We've got a process, and we've got a commission with a leader that the parties respect, and I think we ought to give it a chance to work.

Ulster Unionist Deadline on Decommissioning of Arms

Mr. Grimson. The problem that we have had with last weekend's events, although today's events are genuinely historic, is that the Ulster

Unionists under David Trimble do—have set effectively a deadline. And if by February there is no decommissioning, they will return and all the signs are that they could bring all of this work down.

The President. Well, let me say first of all, you know, I've always tried to help. I've done everything I could to help, and I've worked with David Trimble and his people and with Gerry Adams and the Sinn Fein and with John Hume and Seamus Mallon. And I think on this day the most important thing I should say is to ask people to focus on what they have all agreed on. And what they have all agreed on is to give the de Chastelain commission a chance to work and to participate in that. As long as that is out there, I think it would be a mistake for me, as a friend of the peace process and the people of Ireland and as the President, to do anything that could in any way complicate that. Let's give it a chance to work and find a way forward.

Impact of Cooperation

Mr. Little. Mr. President, you know that there are a significant proportion of Unionists who do not want to see Sinn Fein in government without some form of decommissioning by the IRA. Do you think the IRA have done enough to persuade that group of Unionists? Is it time they set a deadline for themselves for decommissioning, and is it time they said the war is actually over, the day of the bomb and the bullet is gone?

The President. Well, I believe if in fact the IRA names its representatives to the de Chastelain commission, I think that will be a pretty good signal that we're all moving in the right direction and that all parties recognize the truly historic nature of this day. And I think that a lot of people had to make a lot of compromises to get us to this day and to make the political changes necessary to reflect the plain will of the voters in both communities in Northern Ireland.

And let me say, I think you'll see more movement in the right direction if none of us and none of them do anything that makes it any harder than it is already. So I'm quite hopeful, actually.

And let me say this—I can only tell you this from my experience in other parts of the world as well—I think that there will be an intrinsic benefit to all the parties being in the Govern-

ment and working together and seeing each other and finding out how many things they actually agree on. I mean, there's really not a Republican or a Unionist way to figure out whether the economy is growing or there's adequate infrastructure. And they both have a common stake in having an excellent education for their children.

And I wouldn't minimize what I think will be the surprising amount of commonality they will find with one another as they assume the jobs they have. I mean, if you just look at the names of the portfolios the ministers have, and ask yourself, in how many of these areas could there legitimately be real differences? And won't the commonalities dwarf the differences? So I think the very process of being in this Government together, in the executive as well as the parliamentary branch, is very, very important. And I think it will have a terrifically positive impact that will begin, I think, today, and go forward.

President's Analogy

Mr. Grimason. Mr. President, you recently and rather famously described the two sides here as like drunks in a bar who always have to have one more round. A lot of people—you got some criticism, but a lot of people here said you were actually right to draw that analogy. Are these people, in your view, ready to go on the Government wagon?

The President. Yes, I think they are. I did get a lot of criticism, and I probably deserved some of it, because I didn't mean to be making an ethnic slur. Though what I pointed out is, when people have deeply ingrained habits, you know, even if they're bad habits, they're hard to let go of, because you're sort of leaping out into the unknown, and it's a little frightening. And so maybe I should have used a different analogy, but I think that point, the general point, is quite valid.

And they're in the Government now, and they're in there together, which means they're all saying, "Okay we let go a little." They let go of something to come together. And I think that is, to me, an enormously positive sign.

And so I think that, if the analogy was good at one time, it's less good today than it was, just because they've stood up a government together.

Legacy of Peace Initiatives

Mr. Little. Mr. President, you've been leader of the free world, some would say, in very turbulent times. And you have confronted issues of vital importance to America's national interest. When they write the history books, where does Northern Ireland figure in your legacy?

The President. Well, first of all, I think the credit goes primarily to the people and the leaders of Northern Ireland and to the leaders of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland and, obviously, to George Mitchell for the role he played.

But I do think that the interest that the United States has had in this and the plain commitment we've had to it during my Presidency has made some difference. I hope it has. And all I can tell you is that to me, I think it's very important. And I think it has enormous significance beyond the borders of the six counties and the Republic. I think the significance around the world is huge.

For example, I just met with the leaders of all the parties in Kosovo. I was in Kosovo, you know, and it's a place that the United States and Great Britain, frankly, took the lead in getting our NATO Allies together to stop a horrible example of ethnic and religious hatred and cleansing. And we had all these parties back together, and their wounds are much fresher and of a great magnitude.

And I could talk to them about the Irish peace process. And I could look them in the eye and say, "You know, you can do this, too. And sooner or later, you're going to have to do it. So you ought to do it."

We're entering a very critical phase of the Middle East peace process, where extremely difficult decisions have to be made that are not the same as the kind of decisions that have to be made here. But it gives courage to the proponents of peace in a place like the Middle East to know that the Troubles could be laid down, and people could be reconciled and work together.

So you know, to me it's a big part of the legacy of all the peacemakers of the world in this decade who were involved in it, and I am very proud and honored that I had a chance to be a part of it.

Impact of Irish Peace Process

Mr. Grimason. Mr. President, could I ask you, the importance of the Northern Ireland peace process, could it be said that it will be the first really truly—if it works, the first really truly genuine conflict resolution in the sense that neither side will have won? Frequently, we have things ending with people winning or with a transference of power. Will it have that effect in a world sense?

The President. Yes, except I would use a different word. I think you can say that in many ways it is the first true conflict resolution. But instead of saying neither side won, I would say both sides won. And I think that if they didn't think they were winning, they would not have done this.

And I think when you look at the fact that the biggest problem in the world today are these conflicts over racial, ethnic, and religious differences sweeping the world, the fact that you have set a model here for reconciliation in what has often been a violent and always been a deeply historically embedded struggle, is a profound significance, because this element of people fearing and distrusting and then hating and dehumanizing those who are different from them is at the heart of the problem in the Middle East, the problems in the Balkans, the tribal wars in Africa. You just see it all over the world.

And so I think the people of Northern Ireland and their friends in the Irish Republic—who voted for the necessary changes to implement the Good Friday accord—and in Great Britain, they should know that what they have done is given enormous support and heart to people who are still struggling in very difficult circumstances everywhere in the world. It's just—I can't tell you how important I think it is.

You should have seen the look on the people's faces in Kosovo, the party leaders who are still so fresh from their struggles, when I just was, in effect, hammering them with the decisions that the people and the leaders in Northern Ireland had made and the kind of accommodation that they had made to one another and how, sooner or later, people who shared the same piece of land had to work through not necessarily identical decisions but the same sorts of decisions in the same sort of way. So it is a matter of truly historic proportions, not because nobody won, but because everybody won.

End of Ireland's Claim on Ulster

Mr. Little. Sir, today the Irish Republic did give up a very tangible expression of its identity, as it says, its right to have control over those six counties in Northern Ireland. Some Republicans will say they've given up a birthright today. What do you say to them?

The President. I would say to them, they gave up something quite significant, but they gave it up to the principle of democracy, of majority rule, the principle of consent, in the words that you have used there, and that, in return, they got not only peace but the chance for guaranteed representation, a guaranteed voice in their own affairs immediately, and a guaranteed role in shaping their children's future.

So I think the Irish Republic did a noble thing here. And they ennobled the people who agree with them and who still support the concept of a united Ireland, because they gave them the only chance they could ever have to achieve their dreams, and even more importantly, they gave them the only chance they could have to have a full life along the way, the principle of consent and shared decisionmaking and guaranteed representation, and now a renewed focus on the real challenges that real people face

every day. I think it was a fine bargain and a noble one.

Mr. Little. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Grimson. Mr. President, thank you very much. We hope you are here soon.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Little. Maybe for the turning on of the Christmas lights, we'll be there. *[Laughter]*

The President. You know, if it were up to me, I'd come once every 2 weeks. *[Laughter]*
Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 10:55 a.m. from the supervisor's office at the King's County International Airport at Boeing Field. In his remarks, the President referred to former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the Multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Gen. John de Chastelain, Canadian Defense Forces, chair, Independent International Commission on Decommissioning; Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble; Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams; John Hume and Seamus Mallon, members, Social Democratic and Labor Party. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at a Dinner for Mayor Edward G. Rendell in Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania
December 2, 1999

Thank you so much. Thank you, David, Bill, Mr. Mayor, ladies and gentlemen. It's a great honor for me to be here tonight. You know, I'm preparing for what it will be like a year from now when I am just a member of the Senate spouses club—*[laughter]*—when I have to know my place more. And I thought that there could be no better preparation than to come be the warm-up act for Ed Rendell tonight. *[Laughter]*

Let me say, in all seriousness, I am profoundly honored to be here. I'll never forget the first time I met Mayor Rendell here in Philadelphia in 1992 when I was running for President. And we were walking down the streets of a neighborhood where he had an anticrime program going. And we shot a few

baskets. We made very few, but we shot more. *[Laughter]*

And I thought that this—I have met a kindred spirit, because not only did we agree on so many of the same philosophies on crime, on welfare, on the economy, but we agreed on how public life should be conducted. I have thought about it so many times since, but I got into the political race for President in 1991 at a time when not just Philadelphia but the whole country was facing economic distress and social division, political drift, and then kind of the whole discrediting of the enterprise of government.

And I was really frustrated, as the Governor of what my distinguished predecessor used to refer to as a—of a small southern State, when I would see all these people in Washington just

sort of throwing brickbats at each other and, you know, struggling to get their 15 seconds on the evening news, which they know they could always get if they repeated the same thing over and over again and made sure there was a real wedge dividing the American people in all kinds of ways.

And it struck me that if we ran our business life or our family lives or our personal lives the way we were running our national political lives, the country would just run off the tracks entirely. And I was determined to try to go to the American people with a unifying theory of how we ought to do our common work, to create opportunity for everybody responsible enough to work for it, to build a community of all Americans amidst all the differences among us, and mostly, to get to work on our common challenges. And I went to Philadelphia.

I had no idea how I'd do here or whether I would be embraced here, but I liked it, and I liked Ed Rendell, and I knew that he was committed to turning this city around and to moving it forward. And we're walking down the street having a discussion, not so much about politics but about what it would really take to get the crime rate down, what it would really take to give people on welfare the dignity of work without forcing them to sacrifice their responsibilities as parents, what it would take to bring genuine economic growth back into urban America.

Ed always says, well, you know, he couldn't have done it without you and then he says he couldn't have done it without me, and he talks about the Vice President and I putting the empowerment zone here and the 1,000 police and all that. That's all true. But the success that we have enjoyed here in this country would not have happened had it not been for leaders like Ed Rendell. And there is nobody in America—nobody—who does it better.

Along the way, we've become very good personal friends. He's always been there to try to help raise financial support for me and the Vice President, for our party. At a time when he might have been taking at least a breath, he agreed to our request to become chairman of the national Democratic Party. He has always been there. And I've thought about it. Near as I can figure, all I've done in return is make his wife a Federal judge, so she can't even campaign for him anymore. [Laughter] So I have

disabled him as he has empowered me. It doesn't really seem fair.

I would just like to say one other thing. You know, in this wonderful life that you have made it possible for me to enjoy—and no city in America has been any better to me than Philadelphia, and the State of Pennsylvania has been very good to me and the Vice President and to Hillary and to Tipper. I have had the enormous privilege to get up and to work every day and try to make something good happen in America. But I have never been under any illusion that I could do anything other than create the conditions and provide the tools for the American people who really make this country go every day.

Today, in this country, the most innovative, the most effective public servants are the best mayors, because they understand our common humanity and our limitless possibility and because people like you hire them to get things done. And I just hope that we can continue to do that sort of thing in Washington. People ask me all the time—they say, "Well, you know, it's amazing how well the country is doing, and you must be a great politician." I said, "Well, a lot of it was we just showed up for work every day."

There's a lot to be said for just showing up for work every day and keeping your eye on the prize and remembering who the customers are and believing in the potential of this country. Philadelphia is at the heart of everything that's important about America, our history, our founding documents, our spirit. And it is altogether appropriate that in this remarkable time for our country, no city was better led, made more progress, or proved to be a better partner than the city of Philadelphia.

So I have a lot to be grateful to Ed Rendell for. Most important of all, from your point of view, is he proved that the ideas we shared would work with hard work and good will. And the results are here for all to see, embodied in this beautiful film. He helped to sustain our common political efforts, but most important to me, in the good times and the dark times, he was always there as a real friend. And when all is said and done, that counts most of all.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Don't sit down. This is going to be brief. But you see, you can tell which one of us is not really term limited. He tried to charge up

here to the microphone and was going to deprive me of my one little role here of introducing him. But I still have a little capacity to pull rank. *[Laughter]* So this is my job.

Ladies and gentlemen, the person we all came here to honor tonight, Mayor Ed Rendell.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:42 p.m. at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to David Cohen, former chief of staff to Mayor Rendell, and H. William DeWeese, minority leader, Pennsylvania State House.

Remarks on the National Economy December 3, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Secretary Herman and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily, and especially, thank you, Marvin Dawkins, for your remarks and for the power of your example.

This is a very different time than we were experiencing 7 years ago this month. When I ran for President in 1992, it was a time of economic distress and uncertainty for our country. While some people were moving from the industrial to the information economy with optimism and purpose, many others felt fear and uncertainty because of the problems in our economy, high unemployment, big deficits, high interest rates, low productivity gains, falling real wages for average Americans.

Too many Americans couldn't tell the story that Marvin just told. They lacked the skills they needed to succeed in the new economy; they felt threatened by the changes; and they had no access to the tools that would lift them up.

But when I traveled around the country in 1992 with the Vice President, we saw a lot of signs of hope. We saw a lot of people who were winning. And we became even more convinced that our country, as a whole, could do very well in this new global information economy, if we could create the conditions and provide all Americans the tools necessary to succeed.

It seemed to me that there were three absolutely pivotal elements. First, fiscal discipline: We had to get rid of the deficit and get interest rates back down and get investment back up. Second, expanded trade: We had 4 percent of the world's people and 22 percent of the world's income; even someone technologically challenged like me could figure out we had to sell something to the other 96 percent of the people on the globe. And third, greater investments

in new technologies and in our people in their capacity not only to know what they needed to know but to learn for a lifetime. And people like Marvin Dawkins are Exhibit A of the pivotal importance of that.

Now in 1993, we put in place a new economic strategy. It cut the deficit and increased investment by eliminating hundreds of inessential programs and putting us on a path that now has given us the smallest Federal Government in 37 years. In 1997, with the Balanced Budget Act, we continued the strategy, again increasing investment, cutting inessential programs, first balancing the budget and then providing the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years.

Now that led to lower interest rates, which helped ordinary Americans in all kinds of ways. It cut the price of the average home mortgage by \$2,000, the price of the average car payments by \$200 a year, the average college loan payment by \$200 a year. But critically, it also cut the borrowing costs and the investment costs, therefore, for new businesses, especially for investment in new productivity-enhancing technologies.

At the same time, we negotiated over 270 trade agreements, including dozens of them involving high technology issues, all of which helped Americans to increase exports of high technology products, services. We promoted more competition in telecommunications, providing American consumers with the lowest Internet access rates in the world and fueling the growth of E-commerce. And we've taken actions that have led to the creation of a whole new generation of digital wireless phones, you know, the kind you hear go off in restaurants, movie theaters, and Presidential press conferences. *[Laughter]*

While eliminating hundreds of programs, we have almost doubled our investment in education and training, everything from preschool to dramatically increasing college access, to establishing lifetime access to training and retraining programs for people like Marvin.

Now, as a result of these actions and, most importantly, the innovation and the hard work of the American people, we are now experiencing an amazing virtuous cycle of progress and prosperity that few could have imagined. We are in the midst of the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history. If as seems highly likely it goes on through February, it will become the longest economic expansion in our history.

It has given us low inflation, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, also the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership ever recorded, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate recorded in a generation, the lowest poverty rate among households headed by single adults in over 40 years, and the lowest unemployment rate among women in 40 years.

In other words, a good economy has also turned out to be very good social policy. More and more Americans are mastering the skills and reaping the benefits of this new economy, and America itself continues to lead in new technologies, from E-commerce to biotech, that are shaping the future of the entire world.

Now today, I want to talk about one more piece of stunningly good economic news that is the direct result of the actions that have been taken and the work that has been done by our people to propel our economy into the new century, and now, we have a high-tech animation behind me—[laughter]—to illustrate this good economic news. I hate to compete with the movies, and I'll probably lose—[laughter]—but the idea is that I'm supposed to be the narrator of this show. [Laughter]

What you see behind me is a graphic representation of the growth of new jobs in America, beginning in 1993, as well as the geographic location of these jobs. You can see they have been spread across the country, wherever people live. Virtually no area of our Nation has been left out. At the bottom, you can also see a running tally of how many new jobs have been

created. [Laughter] And I'm ahead of the running tally. [Laughter] But the latest figures are being released today.

Come along. [Laughter] What did you say? Filler, filler. [Laughter] I've never been at a loss for words. [Laughter] Why can't I do this?

With today's new numbers, we have truly crossed a remarkable threshold: 20 million jobs. In fact, the specific number behind me is 20,043,000 jobs, thanks to the hard work of the American people, the economic policies we have pursued.

To give you some idea of what this means, 20 million jobs is a number greater than the population of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Denver, Washington, San Francisco, Dallas, Miami, Buffalo, Cleveland, and Little Rock combined. [Laughter] Twenty million people would fill the Rose Bowl to capacity 200 times over. Twenty million jobs are a lot of jobs.

And by and large, those jobs are good, well-paying jobs, jobs on which you can support a family, buy a home, afford a vacation, save for college, put away a nest egg for retirement. This was made clear in a new report being released today by my Council of Economic Advisers and the Department of Labor.

The report finally should put to rest the old myths about the new economy. The 20 million new jobs we have created mostly are high-wage not low-wage jobs. Over 80 percent of them are in job categories that pay above the median wage. They are mostly full-time, not part-time. In fact, the proportion of Americans in part-time work has actually fallen a bit in the last few years.

Finally, those 20 million new jobs have benefited not just one race or class of Americans but all Americans. Unlike the end of the last economic expansion in the 1980's, when average wages went down, wages during the last 4 years of this expansion have gone up across the board in all income categories, with some of the biggest gains coming to some of our hardest pressed working families. As I said—I want to say this again, because I think it is worth reiterating: This economy is not just 20 million new jobs and a stock market that went above 11000 again today—I never talk about it because it goes down as well as up, but it's done pretty well—but let me say again, the lowest African-American unemployment and poverty rates ever recorded—and we've been separating the figures for nearly 30 years now—the lowest Hispanic

unemployment rate on record and the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in over 25 years, the highest minority homeownership on record, the lowest female unemployment rate since 1953. And I don't need to remind the large group of women in this audience that in 1953, there were a lot smaller percentage of women in the work force, so this is actually a much more important figure than even that number indicates.

Now, technology has been a very important part of this economic performance. It has given us big productivity gains. The information technology sector alone has been responsible for about a third of our economic growth. And jobs in that sector pay nearly 80 percent more than the private sector average. If we want our current prosperity to continue into the 21st century, we must therefore clearly continue to encourage the creation and the spread of new technologies in our own economy.

Therefore, I would like to highlight a couple of things that I think are of real importance in the budget agreement achieved with Congress, that I signed just a few days ago. First, the budget I signed contains substantial increases in direct Federal investment and long-term research and development. This is still very important, as all the private sector experts tell us. It is the kind of investment that allowed the Defense Department to create the predecessor of today's Internet 30 years ago, that led Marc Andresen, working at a federally funded supercomputer center, to develop the first graphical web browser.

We worked hard to get increases not only for biomedical research that had strong support in our Congress but for other science and engineering disciplines as well. And I would like to make this point very strongly, because it's one that I hope to make more progress on next year and hope to see our country embrace as a policy across the board, without regard to party: It is very important that we have a balanced research portfolio. And I don't believe that the National Institutes of Health has had a stronger supporter than me. I believe that. But we have to have a balanced research portfolio, because the research enterprise is increasingly interdependent. Advances in health care, for example, are often dependent on breakthroughs in other disciplines, such as the physics needed for medical imaging technology or the computer science needed to develop more drugs

more rapidly or to continue the mapping of the human genome.

Just think what these investments could mean. Today, scientists and engineers all over the country have ideas for new technologies they need Federal help to explore, technologies that could transform our economy and our lives in the future just as dramatically as the Internet is doing today. There is really a continuing revolution, as we all know, in all kinds of computer technology, in biomedical research, and also in materials development, which I'll say a little more about.

We'll have new materials as strong as steel but 10 times lighter. At the Detroit auto show this year, they were already showing cars 500 to 1,000 pounds lighter that have exactly the same safety tests as the old cars with steel. Obviously, that dramatically increases mileage, that reduces greenhouse gas emissions. We could have new drugs that might cure spinal cord injuries or new computer chips that might simulate nerve movements that allow people to function without the nerves actually being reconnected.

Just before I walked out here—this is ironic—just before we walked out here, we had CNN on in the little anteroom, and they pointed out that Stevie Wonder was about to have experimental surgery to have a computer chip inserted in his retina to see if it can simulate and recreate the functioning that was lost when he was an infant. We obviously all hope it will work. But I can tell you this: Someday, such things will work, and it won't be very long in the future.

We already have fuel cells and blended fuel engines for automobiles which will take mileage up to 70 and 80 miles a gallon. We will soon have, I believe, ultra-clean fuel cells for cars, whose only byproduct will be water clean enough to drink; computers that can translate English into foreign languages and vice-versa as fast as people can speak. All these things are right around the corner, but we have to continue our commitment to research.

Second, later this month, I will sign a tax measure that extends for 5 years the life of the vitally important research and experimentation tax credit. This is important because this tax credit gives private firms the incentives they need to invest in innovative technologies that often don't show up quickly on the bottom line

but that, over the long run, will be highly profitable and that immediately provide tremendous benefits to society as a whole.

Third, last week I signed legislation to help accelerate competition in the telecommunication industry, to give consumers more choices and lower prices. I also signed a bill to strengthen and streamline our patent and intellectual property system, to strengthen the incentives for the next Alexander Graham Bell or Steve Jobs, to create the inventions and innovations that will drive the 21st century economy.

No one today can say for sure what our economy will look like in 25 or 50 years or what as yet unimagined technologies will transform our lives. But we do know that it will be truly amazing, and it will happen with breathtaking speed and scope. And we know that our Nation has always prospered when Government has invested in giving people the opportunity to make the most of their vision and their dreams, from financing the Louisiana Purchase and the Lewis and Clark Expedition to the Interstate Highway System and the space program.

The American people have always been a bold and innovative bunch. We are always drawn to

uncharted lands over the next horizon. Who will pack our bags and head out to the latest gold rush or tinker in our basements for years to invent a product no one else has ever imagined? That's what we do.

Today, thanks to wise investments made by Government and the private sector over many years, the American people have before them the unexplored continent of cyberspace and the prospect of discovering what is in the black holes in outer space. By continuing these commitments, we can celebrate more days like today.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Marvin Dawkins, former AT&T employee who took advantage of retraining opportunities to begin a new career, who introduced the President; Marc Andresen, cofounder Netscape Communications Corp.; and musician Stevie Wonder.

Statement on United States Military Training on Vieques Island, Puerto Rico

December 3, 1999

For several weeks, we have been working on how best to reconcile the imperative of providing satisfactory training for our Armed Forces, with the strong feelings of many residents of Vieques and Puerto Rico about the impact of training operations there. I have discussed this with the Governor of Puerto Rico, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Navy, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commandant of the Marine Corps, and others.

Today the Secretary of Defense has recommended a plan of action which I believe offers the best avenue to addressing both needs. I have accepted that recommendation and am directing the Secretary of Defense to work with the people of Vieques and Puerto Rico so that we can move forward in a cooperative manner.

I understand the longstanding concerns of residents of the island. These concerns cover

a wide range of issues, from health and safety to the economy and the environment. They reflect a distrust that, unfortunately, has been building for decades. Those concerns must be addressed, and I believe our plan will do so in a constructive manner.

At the same time, as Commander in Chief, I cannot send our service men and women into harm's way if they have not been adequately trained. The training that our Atlantic Fleet has undertaken on Vieques since 1941 is important. While the Navy and the Marine Corps will develop a satisfactory alternative for the upcoming exercise, it will take several years to develop a comparable long-term replacement.

The plan I am adopting today provides for the end of training on Vieques within 5 years, unless the people of Vieques choose to continue

the relationship; restricts training activities during the transition period to those required by the Services; sets forth an ambitious economic development plan for Vieques that would be implemented during this transition; and gives the people of Puerto Rico and the Navy an opportunity to discuss this plan in order for it to be understood fully before training resumes this spring for this transitional period.

In particular, the following steps will be undertaken:

First, the Navy and the Marine Corps will make alternative arrangements which they deem satisfactory for training of the Eisenhower Battle Group and the WASP Amphibious Ready Group, scheduled for December. While such arrangements can be undertaken for the Eisenhower and WASP groups, they do not constitute a long-term alternative to Vieques. Rather, this period will provide an opportunity for the people of Vieques to discuss this plan with the Navy and the Marine Corps and understand it fully.

Second, we will resume training next spring for a transition period, no longer than 5 years. This will enable the Navy to develop a suitable, long-term alternative. Training on Vieques will cease after this transition period unless the peo-

ple of Vieques decide it should be continued. The Navy and the Marine Corps will develop a timetable to phase out operations in Vieques as soon as possible during the transition period, including transferring title of land to Puerto Rico beginning with the western quarter of the island.

Third, when training resumes for this transition period, it will be limited to inert ordnance only—no live fire—unless and until the people of Vieques decide differently. Training will be authorized for 90 days a year, what we need to meet our essential training needs.

Finally, when training resumes, we will implement an ambitious program that addresses the concerns that the community has had for so long and that has been spelled out by the Secretary of Defense.

I am convinced that this plan meets my essential responsibility as Commander in Chief to assure that our military forces are satisfactorily trained and ready, while at the same time addressing the legitimate concerns of the people of Vieques. It provides some breathing space so that the people on the island and the Navy and Marine Corps can proceed in an orderly and mutually respectful fashion.

Statement on Signing the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000

December 3, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1555, the "Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000." The Act authorizes appropriations for U.S. intelligence and intelligence-related activities during fiscal year 2000. This legislation contains numerous provisions that will help to ensure that the U.S. Intelligence Community retains the capability to counter threats to our Nation's security.

This Act contains a provision, known as the "Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act," that establishes a global program targeting the activities of significant foreign narcotics traffickers and their organizations. The new Act provides a statutory framework for the President to institute sanctions against foreign drug kingpins when such sanctions are appropriate, with

the objective of denying their businesses and agents access to the U.S. financial system and to the benefits of trade and transactions involving U.S. businesses and individuals. Working with other nations, I intend to use the tools in this provision to combat the national security threat posed to the United States by international drug trafficking.

No nation alone can effectively counter these supra-national criminal organizations. The United States must continue to cooperate with, assist, and encourage other nations to join in coordinated efforts against these organizations. Consequently, as kingpin designations are made under this law, we look forward to working with

appropriate host government authorities to pursue additional measures against those designated.

I am concerned about several parts of the legislation as well as segments of the accompanying joint explanatory statement. Although not law, classified language in the statement accompanying the bill, entitled "State Department Restrictions on Intelligence Collection Activities," could, if required to be implemented, interfere with my responsibilities under the Constitution to conduct foreign policy and as Commander in Chief. My Administration is committed to protecting and increasing its foreign intelligence collection capabilities while simultaneously promoting our foreign policy goals. To that end, in July of this year the Department of State issued new, uniform guidance that clarified the contact procedures and guidelines for executive branch personnel (including military attachés) with respect to official representatives of nations of concern. I believe that these guidelines strike an appropriate balance among the competing interests at stake. Accordingly, consistent with my constitutional responsibilities with respect to the conduct of foreign policy and as Commander in Chief, I will continue to expect that foreign policy guidance provided to U.S. defense attachés will be treated as a foreign policy matter, and direct that the July guidance remain in effect until such time as I decide otherwise.

The Act also creates a commission to review the roles, mission, and operations of the Na-

tional Reconnaissance Office (NRO), and I am pleased to note that the Director of Central Intelligence will have a representative on the commission. While I support the establishment of this commission, I believe that because the NRO is an element within the Department of Defense, the Department should be represented on the commission. I also recommend that the commission coordinate its review and findings of mutual interest with the Commission to Assess U.S. National Security Space Management and Organization established by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000 (Public Law 106-65). Further, H.R. 1555 provides that "[n]o department or agency of the Government may withhold information from the [National Commission for the Review of the National Reconnaissance Office] on the grounds that providing the information to the Commission would constitute the unauthorized disclosure of classified information or information relating to intelligence sources or methods." I do not read this provision to detract from my constitutional authority, including my authority over national security information.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

December 3, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1555, approved December 3, was assigned Public Law No. 106-120.

The President's Radio Address

December 4, 1999

Good morning. Yesterday we crossed a historic threshold with the creation of more than 20 million new jobs since January 1993. This is a great American achievement and further proof of the health of our economy, which now has given us the longest peacetime expansion in our Nation's history. Today I want to talk about a group of new workers who, just a few short years ago, were virtually locked out of our growing economy and their chance at the American dream: the more than one million

Americans who are now moving from welfare to work every year.

Seven years ago I asked the American people to join me in ending welfare as we know it. In 1996, with bipartisan support, we passed a landmark welfare reform bill. Today I am pleased to announce that we've cut the rolls by more than half. Fewer Americans are on welfare today than at any time since 1969, 30 years ago. We're moving more than a million people a year from the welfare rolls to the pay-rolls, 1.3 million in 1998 alone. And most of

the people who get jobs are keeping them. They're getting raises and paying taxes and teaching their children to honor the dignity of work.

We've changed the culture of welfare from one that fostered dependence to one that honors and rewards work. That's why I fought to create high performance bonuses for States that do the most for parents entering the work force. I am pleased to announce the first of those awards today.

Twenty-seven States will share \$200 million in bonuses for four categories: how many people they've placed in jobs; how well those people did at keeping their jobs and improving their wages; the biggest improvement in job placement; and the biggest improvement in on-the-job success. The States ranked highest were Indiana, Minnesota, Washington, and Florida. I congratulate these States for their achievement. If every State had performed as well as Indiana in placing workers in jobs, we would have helped more than twice as many people go to work last year. I challenge every State to invest its welfare reform resources in helping people to succeed at work.

This is not just about numbers. It's about real people. People like Wendy Waxler of Washington, DC. Wendy wanted a job, but needed time to care for her daughter, who has cerebral palsy. She couldn't afford to lose the Medicaid that paid the doctor's bills. Through welfare to work, Wendy found a flexible job and kept Medicaid and food stamps, at first. Now she and her daughter have health insurance, and Wendy has new confidence and new dreams.

People like Wendy Waxler are an asset our economy simply cannot afford to waste. So we must do more to support working families and people who are trying to turn their lives around. That's why I've asked Congress to raise the minimum wage, so that a full-time job is a real ticket out of poverty; it's why we won new resources and will fight for more, for our new

markets initiative, to make it easier for businesses and banks to invest in America's poorest communities; and why I'm asking Congress to increase our commitment to quality child care.

All of us have a moral responsibility to do everything we can to ensure that every eligible family receives health care and nutritional assistance, so all our children can grow up healthy. I fought hard to ensure that the welfare reform law guaranteed these critical supports. Now our administration is taking steps to hold States accountable and make sure families get the benefits they need. Today I am also announcing new performance bonuses like the ones I just awarded for States that do the best at enrolling eligible families in Medicaid and food stamps.

Finally, the old welfare system actually weakened families, by discouraging couples from marrying or living with their children. We want to change that, so starting next year there will also be bonuses for States that do the most to get poor children into two-parent homes, where we know they have the best chance of breaking the cycle of poverty.

Supporting hard-pressed working families and helping people to make the transition from welfare to work isn't just the right thing to do; it's also the smart thing. It encourages millions of people to take responsibility for their families, their future. In so doing, it expands opportunity and strengthens our economy and builds a healthier future for all of us.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:15 p.m. on December 3 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 4. In his remarks, the President referred to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, Public Law No. 104-193. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the World Trade Organization Seattle Round *December 4, 1999*

We made progress at the Seattle WTO trade meetings although significant differences remain.

I remain optimistic that we can use the coming months to narrow our differences and launch

a successful new round of global trade talks. A successful round will include bringing down barriers in agriculture, manufacturing, and services; keeping E-commerce tariff-free; and ensuring that trade will lift living conditions for working people everywhere while protecting the environment. And as I said in Seattle, a successful

WTO must be more open and accessible to all citizens around the world.

I am determined to move forward on the path of free trade and economic growth while ensuring a human face is put on the global economy.

Statement on the Fire at the Worcester Cold Storage and Warehouse Company Building in Worcester, Massachusetts

December 4, 1999

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the tragedy that has struck the Worcester community. The six firefighters who are now missing and presumed dead valiantly put their lives on the line in the effort to save others and protect their city. Their courageous service reminds us all of the tremendous commitment

and sacrifice made by the thousands of firefighters across America who risk their own lives every day to protect our communities. Our thoughts and prayers go out to these courageous firefighters, to their families, to the Worcester Fire Department, and the city of Worcester.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

December 5, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you all, and welcome to the White House; to the wonderful array of artists who are in this room and members of the Cabinet and others who have come to be part of this happy evening.

We share this evening with honorees who have touched our lives and ennobled our Nation. Recently, Hillary and I went to Greece, and I had the opportunity early in the morning to go and visit the Parthenon, a magnificent, almost unbelievable architectural creation, given what had to be done to make it work and the materials and instruments that were available at the time. The Parthenon was the brainchild of the great statesman Pericles. Pericles said this to his soldiers in the Peloponnesian War: "We shall not be without witness. There are mighty monuments to our power which will make us the wonder of this and succeeding ages."

As the curtain falls on this remarkable century, at the dawn of a new millennium, it is fitting that we Americans should ask ourselves, what will be the monuments that we offer up to the gaze of succeeding ages? Today, we are

blessed with unprecedented prosperity and military might, but I believe it will be true of us, as it was Pericles' Athens, that the monuments of power that truly define, sustain us, and last throughout the ages are those that spring from the mind and the spirit.

Just as we remember the great philosophers and playwrights, the historians and architects of ancient Greece, so tonight Hillary and I are proud to welcome you here to pay tribute to these five remarkable artists and creators. They come from many places; their immense talents range over a wide creative landscape. In giving the world new ways to understand the human experience and celebrate the human spirit, they are all leaving their own enduring monuments for succeeding ages.

And now, to present them: four Americans and one Scotsman whom tonight I declare an honorary American citizen. *[Laughter]* It seems appropriate to do on the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. After all, we couldn't have won the cold war without you. *[Laughter]*

In 1940 Borge Rosenbaum of Copenhagen sought safe passage to America, just ahead of the Nazi advance. The United States consul, who had seen his comedy show, granted him a visa on one condition: He had to promise to continue his career in America. With just \$20 in his pocket, he arrived in the United States, changed his name, and began to learn English by watching gangster films. [Laughter]

Soon, Victor Borge landed himself a regular gig on Bing Crosby's radio show. Eventually, this led to the longest running one-man show in Broadway history and 40 years of travel across America, Europe, and Asia, perfecting the fine art of playing brilliant piano in the clumsiest possible way. [Laughter]

Who would ever have thought that one person could be both a virtuoso pianist and an ingenious comic, combining the two into one mischievous, uproarious show? Perhaps the common link between Victor Borge's music and his comedy is his uncanny gift for improvisation. Once, when a pesky fly would not leave him alone, he so skillfully incorporated the fly into his performance that all the audience were absolutely sure he had trained it to cooperate. [Laughter]

At age 90, Victor Borge continues to share his gifts with the world, not only through comedy, piano, and conducting the world's major orchestras but also through the generous scholarship fund he created in gratitude to those who risked their lives to save Scandinavia's Jews. Tonight we are deeply grateful to one long-forgotten United States consul and to the "Great Dane" who has kept America rolling with laughter for so very many years.

Ladies and gentlemen, Victor Borge.

Mr. Borge. Who was that gentleman? [Laughter]

The President. You know, you ought to hang onto that thought; in about 14 months people will be asking that question for real. [Laughter]

Steven Spielberg once said there are only seven genuine movie stars in the entire world today. Of course, his list includes Sean Connery, one of the most charismatic and commanding actors ever to arch an eyebrow on the silver screen.

He rose from humble beginnings in working class Edinburgh. Even today, under the tux he wears better than any man alive, he still sports with pride a "Scotland Forever" tattoo on his arm. He left school at age 13, helped support

his family as a concrete mixer, brick layer, sailor, steel bender, coffin polisher, and weight lifter. All jobs that prepared him for a lifetime of diverse and wonderful roles.

After making 007 the most famous character in the world, Sean Connery went on to broaden his reach with brilliant performances in movies such as "The Man Who Would Be King," "The Name of the Rose," "The Russia House," and "The Untouchables," for which he was hailed as another Olivier. Among his numerous honors, he's earned an Academy Award, a British Academy Fellowship, the French Legion of Honor, Edinburgh's prestigious Freedom of the City Award, and very important to me, a fairly low handicap on the golf course. [Laughter]

To this distinguished list, tonight we add Kennedy Center Honors, and we thank him for four decades of unforgettable, masterful contributions to the world of film.

Ladies and gentlemen, Sean Connery.

On May 4, 1971, in a 16-minute solo of indescribable beauty and emotional force, Judith Jamison vaulted into the realm of legend. The solo was called, "Cry," and Alvin Ailey created it just for her. Rarely, if ever, had the artistry of choreographer and dancer come together in such an elemental, spiritual way. In the chronicle of her career, that night was just one in a long list of soaring triumphs for Judith Jamison.

After a childhood filled with patient and exacting study of dance, her big break came in 1964. "I taught a class of ordinary students," the famed choreographer Agnes de Mille reported, "but there was this one astonishing girl." Miss de Mille brought Judith Jamison to New York to perform with the American Ballet Theatre. A year later Alvin Ailey asked her to dance with his company. For the next 15 years, she premiered new roles, set new standards of excellence, and earned unprecedented global acclaim.

Her achievements as an Ailey dancer would be enough to earn Judith Jamison a place here tonight. But she has always sought new ways to stretch and extend herself and those around her. From the Ailey Company, she went on to star on Broadway, choreograph modern dance and opera, and found her own dance company.

In 1989 she returned to the Ailey Company to take over as artistic director and fulfill her mentor's dying wish. In this role, she has preserved Ailey's legacy while creating transcendent new works, cultivating a new generation of stars,

bringing dance “back to the people,” in her words, and I might add, greatly inspiring many of our daughters.

Tonight we thank her for a lifetime of breaking down barriers and forever lifting up the grace and beauty of American dance.

Ladies and gentlemen, Judith Jamison.

After 6 years in the Navy during World War II, a sailor named Jason Robards, Jr., used the GI bill to enroll in the American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He got some parts and drove a cab to support his family. Then, at the age of 33, he auditioned for the lead in “The Iceman Cometh,” with the esteemed director Jose Quintero. From the moment Robards began to read, the part simply belonged to him. As Quintero later remarked, “I came to see that Jason was the greatest young actor in the world.”

Jason Robards’ authority as an artist only grew with age. After his chilling performance in “Iceman,” he starred in the Broadway premier of O’Neill’s “Long Day’s Journey Into Night,” securing his standing as the finest interpreter of our finest playwright.

He went on to earn the highest honors on the world’s great stages, including, of course, the Kennedy Center, where he presided at the groundbreaking and shined in the very first play the center produced. Of course, he has also enjoyed remarkable success as a screen actor and won back-to-back Academy Awards.

But performing under the stagelights of the theater, drawing us into the shadows and, occasionally, even into the sunshine, has always been his first love. He took possession of the American theater in 1956, and he has worked and reigned there, magnificent and vulnerable, ever since.

Ladies and gentlemen, Jason Robards, Jr.

When Stevie Wonder was a baby in inner-city Detroit, his mother dreamed of carrying her son to the Holy City of Jerusalem in hopes that he would gain his sight. What she could not yet know was that her child had already been profoundly blessed, blessed with prodigious, awe-inspiring inner vision, and musical

talents that must have come from the Almighty Himself.

By the age of 8, Stevie was composing for piano and mastering the harmonica and drums. At age 13, he got the world clapping and stomping with his breakout single, “Fingertips Part 2.” His very first record went gold. At the ripe old age of 18, he came out with his first album of greatest hits. [Laughter]

We all know Stevie’s songs, and we all try to sing them. [Laughter] Even for those of us who sing off key, they’re all in the “Key of Life.” At times, his songs seem to be in the very air we breathe, always part of the sunshine of our lives.

Over these past 30 years, as he has composed and performed these songs, Stevie has also helped to make Dr. King’s birthday into a national holiday, to tear down the walls of apartheid, to alleviate hunger, to stem youth violence, and, in so many other ways, to compose the remaining passages of Dr. King’s unfinished symphony. Along the way, I might add, he has also been a perfectly wonderful friend to Hillary and to me and to Vice President and Mrs. Gore, for which we are very grateful.

So tonight we honor the prodigy who became a prophet, for using his divine gifts to move the world to sing and to act.

Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Stevie Wonder.

Well, there they are, ladies and gentlemen, Victor Borge, Sean Connery, Judith Jamison, Jason Robards, and Stevie Wonder. In them we find comic invention, rugged strength, towering grace, inner fire, and music that flows down like a mighty stream. Tonight the United States salutes them all.

God bless you, and God bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to movie director/producer Steven Spielberg. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks on Presenting the Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights December 6, 1999

The President. Thank you very much, Belquis. Congressmen Gilman, Lewis, Jackson Lee; Reverend and Mrs. Jackson; Deputy Attorney General Holder; Harold Koh; Bob Seiple; Julia Taft; Hattie Babbitt; Bette Bao Lord, thank you for coming back.

School Shooting in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma

Ladies and gentlemen, before I begin, I need—because this is my only opportunity before the press today just to say a brief word about this school shooting this morning in Fort Gibson, Oklahoma. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms are on the scene now working with the local authorities. I expect to get a detailed briefing shortly. Meanwhile, our prayers are with each of the children and their families, and the entire Fort Gibson community is—right now there are no fatalities, only people who are wounded, and we hope and pray it will stay that way.

Eleanor Roosevelt Award for Human Rights

It occurs to me that at some point tonight someone will be doing what some of us—Hillary says it's mostly a male thing—somebody will be channel-surfing tonight. [*Laughter*] And they will just come upon Belquis speaking. And they may stop and listen, or they may not. They may know what the Taliban is, or they may not. But I wonder if even someone who hears her will recognize that in nearly half the world today—in spite of the fact that for the first time in history more than half the people of the world live under governments of their own choosing—in nearly half the world, doing what Belquis just did, simply standing up and speaking freely, could get her arrested, jailed, beaten, even tortured. That's why we're here today.

I wonder if someone who just happened along her remarks tonight would understand that until people like Eleanor Roosevelt came along, the rest of the world didn't even recognize that the right to speak out is more than something enshrined in the American Constitution. It is truly an international human right.

Sometimes we forget how long it took the world to agree on a common definition, a universal declaration of what freedom actually

means. Half a century ago the Universal Declaration on Human Rights said it in very simple words: "All human beings are free and equal in dignity and human rights. All have the right to life, liberty, and security. All are endowed with reason and conscience. All have the right to a standard of living adequate to health and well-being."

The real genius of the Declaration of Human Rights is that it affirmed that basic human rights are not cultural, but universal; that what a country does to people within its own borders is not its business alone, but the business of all of us. We in the United States know how hard it is to achieve the aspirations of that declaration. We've been living with it since our Founders, and living with our flaws in failing to meet up to its standards.

A hundred years ago Eleanor Roosevelt was a 15-year-old girl growing up in a country where women could not vote. Half a century ago, if the standards of the Universal Declaration were held up to segregated schools and lunch counters in the United States, we would have failed the test resoundingly.

This century has taught us that even though human rights are endowed by the hand of our Creator, they are ensured by the hearts and hands of men and women among us who cannot bear to see it otherwise. Inch by inch, such people have moved the world forward. Today we honor five brave Americans whose lives have made a difference. And we ask that all of us remember, in their triumphs, the struggles of people like Belquis, the continuing tensions in Africa, the continuing tensions in the Balkans, and elsewhere in the world where human rights are not yet secure.

It is said that when Burke Marshall first met Robert Kennedy, they sat across a table for 10 minutes and didn't say a single word. Those of us who had Burke Marshall in law school can believe that story. [*Laughter*] Perhaps now he will tell us who spoke first. But from that silent moment sprang a truly extraordinary partnership.

As Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division in the Kennedy administration,

Burke Marshall was a bridge between Government and those activists fighting every day to end Jim Crow. Congressman John Lewis, who received this award last year, once recalled that whenever Martin Luther King or James Farmer needed to talk to somebody in Washington—needed to talk to someone in Washington, they would simply say, “call Burke.”

His work was crucial to passing the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act. After he had helped shape a new America, he later worked equally hard to shape young minds at Yale Law School.

I made a joke about Hillary and I being students. But I can tell you, I never will forget the first time I saw him. And I imagined how this man of slight stature and such a modest demeanor could almost shake with his passion for justice. It was quite something to see for the first time, and we are all in his debt.

When Leon Sullivan was 8 years old, he walked into a grocery store, slapped a nickel on the counter and said, “I want a Coke.” The place being in segregated South Carolina, the shopkeeper threw him out. That moment was the beginning of his life’s work. The pastor of two churches by the time he was at the ripe old age of 17, Reverend Sullivan went on to write the Sullivan principles, which called upon companies all around the world to act in a socially responsible manner. By compelling dozens of businesses to desegregate their plants in South Africa, his work helped to pull down apartheid.

Today, as the author of the new global Sullivan principle, Leon Sullivan is still changing the world. He’s too big for anyone to deny him a Coke—[laughter]—but he has helped to win that right for millions of others who aren’t so large.

Reverend Sullivan, thank you for keeping your eyes on the prize for nearly 80 years now. Thank you.

For those of you who wonder from time to time about whether there really could be a divine plan guiding our lives, consider this: In Spanish, the name, Dolores Huerta, means “sorrowful orchard.” But if Dolores has her way, her name will be the only sorrowful orchard left in America.

She began her career teaching young migrant children but couldn’t stand seeing them come to class hungry. So in 1962 she and Cesar Chavez cofounded the United Farm Workers. While

Cesar Chavez worked the fields, she worked the boardrooms and the statehouses, negotiating contracts and fighting for laws that lifted the lives of thousands and thousands of Americans. In the process, she found time to raise 11 children.

Dolores, we thank you for all you have done and all you still do to promote the dignity and human rights of your family and America’s family. Thank you.

It is no accident that when America opened its arms to Kosovar Albanians early this year, one of the first calls that went out was to a Dominican nun in the Fordham section of the Bronx. Scripture tells us that “if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your life will rise in the darkness and your night will become like noontime.” If that is true, there are few people who live their lives in more sunshine than Sister Jean Marshall.

Disturbed by the sight of refugee families picking up garbage off the street to feed their children, in 1983 Sister Jean founded St. Rita’s Center for Immigrant and Refugee Services. In the days since, it has helped thousands of refugees, from Vietnam to Cambodia to Bosnia, to find jobs, learn English, live better lives.

Sister Jean, we thank you for all you are doing to make our democracy real and dreams come true for thousands who flee human rights abuses and come here expecting the Statue of Liberty to live up to her promise. Thank you.

Lastly, there are few people who have done more to directly build on Eleanor Roosevelt’s work on women’s rights around the world than Charlotte Bunch. Gloria Steinem once observed that for every question that comes up regarding women’s rights, sooner or later someone asks, what does Charlotte think? [Laughter]

As the founder of the Center for Women’s Global Leadership at Rutgers University, she has worked to build a worldwide network of activists. As a result, when the World Conference on Human Rights was held in Vienna in 1993, for the first time there was a network in place to raise international awareness of issues like violence against women and gay and lesbian issues. And for the first time, the U.N. acknowledged that women’s rights are human rights.

Today I think the best way to thank Charlotte Bunch is for the Senate to finally ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Thank you.

We honor these five Americans today with the thanks of a grateful nation. But let me say again, to echo what Hillary said earlier, if we truly want to honor their work, we must stay committed in the places where the glory has not come and continue to speak out for human rights around the world, from Burma to Cuba to Sudan, from Serbia to North Korea and Vietnam. We must do so because it's the right thing to do and the surest path to a world that is safe, democratic, and free.

In Afghanistan, we have strongly condemned the Taliban's despicable treatment of women and girls. We have worked with the United Nations to impose sanctions against the Taliban, while ensuring that the Afghan people continue to receive humanitarian assistance. We are Afghanistan's strongest critic, but also its largest humanitarian donor.

And today we take another step forward. I am pleased to announce that we will spend, next year, at least \$2 million to educate and improve the health of Afghan women and children refugees. We are also making an additional \$1½ million available in emergency aid for those displaced by the recent Taliban offensive. And we're dramatically expanding our resettlement program for women and children who are not safe where they are.

But, as Belquis said, these are but temporary solutions. The Taliban must stop violating the rights of women and respect the human rights of all people. And we must continue to work until the day when Afghanistan has a government that reflects the wisdom of its people.

The whole world is also concerned about the plight of innocent people in Chechnya. Two weeks ago, at the OSCE summit in Turkey, I raised the issue directly with President Yeltsin. The people of Chechnya are in a terrible position, beleaguered by paramilitary groups and terrorists on the one hand and the Russian offensive on the other. I made clear that Russia's fight against terrorism is right, but the methods being used in Chechnya are wrong. And I am convinced they are counterproductive.

We've seen rocket and artillery attacks on largely civilian areas, with heavy losses of life and at least 200,000 people pushed from their homes. I'm deeply disturbed by reports that suggest that innocent Chechens will continue to bear the brunt of this war, and not the militants Russia is fighting.

Russia has set a deadline for all inhabitants, now, to leave Grozny or face the consequences. That means that there is a threat to the lives of the old, the infirm, the injured people, and other innocent civilians who simply cannot leave or are too scared to leave their homes. Russia will pay a heavy price for those actions with each passing day, sinking more deeply into a morass that will intensify extremism and diminish its own standing in the world.

Another country about which we must continue to express concern is China. China is progressing and opening to the world in many ways that are welcome, including its entry into the WTO. Yet its progress is still being held back by the Government's response to those who test the limits of freedom. A troubling example, of course, is the detention by Chinese authorities, of adherents of the Falun Gong movement.

Its targets are not political dissidents, and their practices and beliefs are unfamiliar to us. But the principle still, surely, must be the same: freedom of conscience and freedom of association. And our interest, surely, must be the same: seeing China maintain stability and growth at home by meeting, not stifling, the growing demands of its people for openness and accountability.

For all these challenges, we have to say that we enter the new millennium more hopeful than we have been at any time in the past century. The second half of this century began with delegates from 18 nations, including the United States, coming together to write the Universal Declaration. The century ends with 18 nations having come together with the United States to reaffirm those basic rights in Kosovo—with progress from Indonesia and East Timor to Nigeria.

Now, as I've said, more than half the world's people live under governments of their own choosing. Shortly before the Congress went home, the United States Senate unanimously ratified the International Convention against Child Labor, and I became the third head of state to sign the convention. We are moving, but we have much to do as we enter a new century. And again I would say to my fellow Americans, we all know that our efforts have to begin at home.

On the 10th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Eleanor Roosevelt dedicated a book called "In Your Hands." On that day she said, and I quote, human rights

begin “in small places, close to home . . . Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger world.”

Today we honor that message by honoring five people whose work close to home has made the whole world a better place. May their work continue to inspire us all for generations yet to come.

Lieutenant Colonel, read the citations.

[At this point, Lt. Col. Carlton D. Everhart, USAF, Air Force Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President and First Lady presented the awards.]

The President. Thank you for coming. Thank you for honoring these great people. Thank you for reminding us of all the important work still to be done, Belquis.

We're adjourned. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:17 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Afghan refugee Belquis Ahmadi, who introduced the President; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson and his wife, Jacqueline; Commissioner Harold H. Koh, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe; Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Robert A. Seiple; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

Statement on Signing the Healthcare Research and Quality Act of 1999 December 6, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign S. 580, the “Healthcare Research and Quality Act of 1999,” which authorizes appropriations for the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (and re-names it the “Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality”) and authorizes a new grant program to support children’s hospitals with graduate medical education programs.

This legislation combines two important health care priorities of my Administration: first, ensuring that our Nation’s children, especially those who suffer from complex or unusual diseases, continue to receive the highest quality care that our health care system can provide; and second, developing the scientific evidence that we need to improve the quality and safety of our health care system.

The Act takes an important first step to ensure the delivery of high quality health care for America’s children by investing Federal funds in graduate medical education at free-standing children’s hospitals. This long overdue initiative was included in my Administration’s FY 2000 budget and was strongly advocated by the First Lady. Her leadership in this area is longstanding, and it is with great pride that I sign this groundbreaking legislation.

In an increasingly competitive health care market dominated by managed care, teaching

hospitals struggle to cover the significant costs associated with training and research as private reimbursements decline. Millions of American children each year are treated by physicians affiliated with or trained in one of 60 independent children’s hospitals across the country. While other teaching hospitals receive support for these costs through Medicare, children’s hospitals receive virtually no Federal funds, even though they train nearly 30 percent of the Nation’s pediatricians and nearly 50 percent of all pediatric specialists. This inequity exacerbates an already difficult financial situation for children’s hospitals, which often serve the poorest, sickest, and most vulnerable children. In many cases, they provide the regional safety net for children, regardless of medical or economic need, and they are the major centers of research on children’s health problems.

This Act creates a new grant program to provide much-needed support for the training of these critical health providers. I am pleased that the Consolidated Appropriations Act that I recently approved included my full \$40 million request to get this program started.

The Act also authorizes appropriations through 2005 for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) and represents the culmination of a genuine bipartisan effort to

make better information available to health care decisionmakers to use to improve health care. AHRQ will help close the numerous data gaps throughout the health care delivery system. It will also serve as a bridge between the best science in the world with the best health care in the world.

The AHRQ will build on the foundation of strong scientific approaches to health services research established by the Agency for Health Care Policy and Research. This legislation was passed on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis by the Congress, which is a tribute to the many members of both chambers, from both sides of the aisle. I particularly want to single out Senators Frist and Kennedy and Congressmen Bliley, Dingell, Bilirakis, and Brown, who have championed quality information for quality health care, for their commitment to this important reauthorization.

The AHRQ is now designated the lead Federal agency in health care quality to help meet the needs of decisionmakers and work in partnership with the private sector. AHRQ will de-

velop a national report on quality, stimulate evidence-based medicine, sponsor primary care research, help eliminate medical errors, and apply the power of information systems and technology in a manner that assures adequate patient privacy protections. AHRQ will also be a principal source of research that will guide health plans, purchasers, health care systems, clinicians, and policymakers as they seek to improve access to health care and make it affordable for all Americans.

I am delighted to sign S. 580, which will support research needed to improve health care and help train new pediatricians and pediatric sub-specialists who will be able to put this knowledge to work for America's children.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 6, 1999.

NOTE: S. 580, approved December 6, was assigned Public Law No. 106-129.

Remarks on Improving Health Care Quality and Ensuring Patient Safety and an Exchange With Reporters

December 7, 1999

The President. Good morning, everyone. I'd like to thank Secretary Herman, Janice Lachance, and the other representatives of the Federal Government who are here. I'd like to thank the leaders representing consumers, health care providers, business, labor, and quality experts who are here. This is a very impressive group of Americans who have come together to discuss the question of reducing medical errors.

Last week the Institute of Medicine released a disturbing report about patient safety and medical errors in our Nation's health care system. According to the study, as many as 98,000 Americans lose their lives each year as a result of preventable medical errors. Up to 7,000 die because of errors in prescribing medicine. And the cost of all these errors add as much as \$29 billion to our medical bills.

But this is about far more than dollars or statistics. It's about the toll that such errors take

on people's lives and on their faith in our health care system. We just had a terrific meeting this morning to talk about what we can do to save lives, to prevent errors, to promote patient safety. We have the finest health care system in the world, the best professionals to deliver that care. But too many families have been the victims of medical errors that are avoidable, mistakes that are preventable, tragedies, therefore, that are unacceptable.

Everyone here agrees that our health care system does wonders but first must do no harm. Now let me be clear about one thing: Ensuring patient safety is not about fixing blame; it's about fixing problems in an increasingly complex system, about creating a culture of safety and an environment where medical errors are not tolerated. In short, it's about working together to zero in on patient safety and zero out preventable errors. This morning's meeting builds

on our administration's longstanding record to improve health care quality.

Almost 3 years ago, I established the Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality Care, chaired by Secretary Shalala and Secretary Herman. That Commission produced a landmark report and led to my own executive action to provide patient protections to one out of every three Americans enrolled in Federal health care plans. It also set the stage for the Congress to pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights.

But the Commission has made clear that the challenge goes beyond patient protections for all Americans in all plans. We must also improve the quality of care. That's why I created an interagency task force to coordinate administration efforts in this area; why I asked the Vice President to launch the quality forum—and I thank Dr. Ken Kizer for being here today—a private advisory panel to develop uniform quality standards so that health plans compete on quality and not just cost, and consumers and businesses have better tools to judge what plans are best for them.

In a few moments, I'll announce new steps our administration is taking to promote quality and to reduce medical errors. But first, I want to turn it over to one of our partners in that effort. If there is one thing we have learned, it's that effectively managing the prescribing and dispensing of drugs is one of the best ways we can improve quality and hold down cost. The president of the American Hospital Association, Dick Davidson, is here this morning to announce a major new medical safety campaign they're launching with the Institution for Safe Medication Practices. It's truly a prescription for better health for all Americans. So I'd like to ask Dick to tell you about it.

[At this point, American Hospital Association President Richard J. Davidson made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much, Dick.

I also want to just take a moment out here to thank Dr. Bill Richardson of the Kellogg Foundation for the Institute of Medicine report, and all those others who worked with him on it. It was a terrific document.

Now, let's talk about what we can do at the Federal level. First, I'm signing an executive memorandum this morning directing our health care quality task force to analyze the Institute

of Medicine study and to report back to me, through the Vice President, within 60 days about the ways we can implement their recommendations.

I'm also calling on the task force to evaluate the extent to which medical errors are caused by misuse of medications and medical devices and to develop additional strategies to reduce these errors.

Second, I want the Federal Government to lead by example. So I'm instructing the Government agencies that administer health plans for 85 million Americans to take an inventory of the good ideas out there now to reduce medical errors. They should apply those techniques to the health programs they administer and do so in a way that protects patient privacy.

As a first step, I'm announcing today that each of the more than 300 private health plans participating in the Federal Employee Health Benefits Program now will be required to institute quality improvement and patient safety initiatives. And I want to thank Janice Lachance, the head of our Office of Personnel Management, who had responsibility for figuring out how we were going to do this in record time. *[Laughter]*

Third, ongoing research to enhance patient safety, to reduce patient errors, is absolutely critical. So we're increasing our investment in this area. Yesterday I signed legislation reauthorizing the Agency for Health Care Quality and Research in providing \$25 million for research to improve health care quality and prevent medical errors. Through the work of the agency, we're also engaging our partners at the State level.

In March we'll convene the first national conference with State health officials to promote best practices in preventing medical errors. And I want to thank Dr. John Eisenberg for his leadership of that agency.

Finally, I'm directing my budget and health care teams to develop quality and patient safety initiatives for next year's budget so that we can ensure we're doing all we can to combat this problem. I want next year's budget to provide the largest investment to eliminate medical errors, improve quality, and enhance patient safety we've ever offered.

The Institute of Medicine's report makes clear that a systematic approach to reducing medical errors gives us the best chance of success. Years ago, we took that approach in aviation, and

we've dramatically reduced errors and saved lives. By working together, we can achieve the same goals in the health care industry. The American people deserve this, and we intend to provide it.

I am committed to working with all these people in partnership to do our part to save lives in needless medical errors, to make the best health care system in the world even better in the new century.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, many Americans, I would venture to say, were shocked, probably, to hear about this report, to learn that tens of thousands of people die each year, and tens of thousands more are injured because of medical errors. Does it call into question whether or not we have the best health care system in the world?

The President. No, I don't think it does. I think what it calls into question is whether we've done everything we can to invest the kind of money in avoiding errors that other big complex systems have.

I mentioned aviation, but I might also point out workplace safety. We have a representative from General Motors here who talked about how dramatically they have reduced injury in the workplace. Or if I could use an analogy that I think is, in some ways, even more appropriate, in the 1980's, when the American manufacturing sector was under withering competition from overseas and burdened by our big debt and high interest rates, they underwent the most disciplined imaginable review of every single process in every complex manufacturing operation to go to a zero-error rate.

If you look at the medical profession, if you look at the way hospitals work, if you think—Dick said tens of millions of people—I'm sure there are hundreds of millions of hospital visits every year—just to take hospitals. There are many people who are older who are taking multiple medications, who go to multiple doctors, so that what happens is, you've got a very complex set of processes that, as we have gotten to live longer, have become more complex and even more interactions. And what we need to do is to take—step back and take a critical look at each and every step along the way.

There have been big changes in the roles that various people in the health care system play. Have they all been properly trained to play that role? Do they all check with each other? Are there the right kind of teams in

place in every health care setting that work for safety? These are the kinds of questions that we have invested more money and time and research in, in the workplace and when we fly on airplanes, than we have in the health care arena. And we just have to do that now.

The good news about this is, this is something we can do something about. But if you ask me, does it mean we don't have the best health care system in the world, I would say, no, it doesn't mean that. Keep in mind, the life expectancy now is, what, over 76 years; anybody who lives to be 65 in America has a life expectancy in excess of 82 years. And when we finish the mapping of the human genome, I think sometime early in the next century, we'll look at babies being born that have a life expectancy of nearly 100 years.

So I think that this is just a problem that—I applaud the lack of defensiveness that all the players in the health care system have displayed here. I applaud the report. And we know what the dimensions of this problem are, and now we've got the people in place with the determination to solve it. And I think that we ought to look at this as a very positive event in the progress of American health care.

Elian Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—to President Castro's threats of retaliation against the U.S. unless that Cuban boy is returned?

The President. I will do a press conference tomorrow, and I'll answer all those other questions. I'm looking forward to it.

Health Care Quality

Q. Speaking of lack of defensiveness, should the White House have spotted this problem of medical errors sooner and taken action sooner? And also, isn't this a problem, now, for hospitals and other medical providers, because if they take action to remedy past mistakes, they admit past mistakes, and couldn't they be open to lawsuits?

The President. Well, first of all, I think there has been a lot of work on this over the last 3 years. But I don't think there's any question that the Institute of Medicine report, with its actual calculation of the numbers of lives lost, has focused everybody's attention more on this, including me. And I think the only productive thing to do is to look forward now.

Secondly, when this report came out, I learned that 22 States—if you look at what the report recommends, it recommends mandatory reporting of serious mistakes and errors, and 22 States have that in place and presumably don't have any more significant lawsuit or medical malpractice problems than the rest of the country as a whole.

And regardless—you know, once you know about a problem, you're under a moral obligation to deal with it. So you can't—whatever the consequences are, we have to go forward.

Finally, I do not believe that the kind of systematic improvement in safety training and processes, hospital after hospital after hospital, clinic after clinic after clinic, and in outpatient settings, will increase liability. No one can begrudge the improvement of processes. That still won't establish or fail to establish liability in a particular case. So I don't see that as a problem.

But whatever the problems are, they're not nearly as important as saving thousands and thousands of lives that obviously are there to

be saved now. And that's what all these people behind us are saying. And I think they reflect the overwhelming views of doctors, hospitals, nurses, and everybody else in the health care system.

So this is a good day for America, not only because of this report but because of the response to this report.

Thank you very much, and I'll see you tomorrow.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:45 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Kenneth W. Kizer, M.D., president and chief executive officer, National Quality Forum; W.K. Kellogg Foundation president and chief executive officer William Richardson, chair, Institute of Medicine Committee on Quality of Health Care in America; and Bruce E. Bradley, director of managed care plans, General Motors. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Davidson.

Memorandum on Improving Health Care Quality and Ensuring Patient Safety

December 7, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management

Subject: Improving Health Care Quality and Ensuring Patient Safety: Directive to the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force (QuIC)

Assuring quality through patient protections is a long-standing priority for my Administration. Over the past 2 years, with the leadership of the Vice President, Secretary Shalala, and Secretary Herman, my Advisory Commission on Consumer Protection and Quality in the Health Care Industry (Quality Commission) produced a landmark report on health care quality. Through executive action, I extended the patient protection provisions outlined in this report to the 85 million Americans enrolled in Federal health plans, setting the stage for the Congress

to pass a strong, enforceable Patients' Bill of Rights. As important as putting patient protections in place, however, is improving the quality of the services available to these patients.

The United States has some of the finest medical institutions and best trained health care professionals in the world. However, as the Quality Commission reported last year, millions of Americans are harmed or even killed each year as a result of inappropriate or erroneous medical treatment. These health care quality problems include the underutilization of needed services, the overutilization of unnecessary services, and medical errors in the delivery of care. In addition, there is a continuing pattern of wide variation in health care practice.

As a recent Institute of Medicine study confirms, preventable medical errors present an example of the critical importance of improving the quality of health care in our Nation. Over half of the adverse medical events that occur

each year are preventable, causing the deaths of as many as 98,000 Americans annually and adding as much as \$29 billion to our Nation's health care spending. These errors also deeply affect the lives of many individuals and families and the trust of the American people in the quality of the care they receive.

To build on the initial efforts of the Quality Commission and the leadership of the Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Veterans Affairs, and Defense, the Office of Personnel Management, and other agencies in implementing a range of quality improvement initiatives, I directed the establishment of the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force to help coordinate Administration efforts in this area. I also asked the Vice President to help launch the National Forum for Health Care Quality Measurement and Reporting (Quality Forum). This broad-based, widely representative private advisory body, which includes senior government participants, is developing standard quality measurement tools to help all purchasers, providers, and consumers of health care better evaluate and ensure the delivery of quality services.

In addition to the work and significant potential of the QuIC and Quality Forum, the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense have been leaders in employing information technology to enhance their ability to provide a higher quality of care to patients. Moreover, the Food and Drug Administration is working to implement new reporting systems that allow for a rapid response to medical errors causing patient injury. However, despite all the progress that has been made, it is clear that more must be done.

Recent advances in technology and information systems can help eliminate dangerous medical errors, lower costs by improving communications between doctors, eliminate redundant tests and procedures, and build automatic safeguards against harmful drug interactions and other adverse side effects into the treatment process. Despite this fact, very few public and

private health plans, hospitals, and employers appropriately use these new techniques.

Therefore, I hereby direct the Quality Interagency Coordination Task Force, to report to me a set of recommendations on specific actions to improve health care outcomes and prevent medical errors in both the public and private sectors in a manner that is consistent with the strong privacy protections we have proposed. This report shall:

- Identify prevalent threats to patient safety and medical errors that can be prevented through the use of decision support systems, such as patient monitoring and reminder systems;
- Evaluate the feasibility and advisability of the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine's Quality of Health Care in America Committee on patient safety;
- Identify additional strategies to reduce medical errors and ensure patient safety in Federal health care programs;
- Evaluate the extent to which medical errors are caused by misuse of medications and medical devices and consider steps to strengthen the Food and Drug Administration's surveillance and response system to reduce their incidence; and
- Identify opportunities for the Federal Government to take specific action to improve patient safety and health care quality nationwide through collaboration with the private sector, including the National Forum for Health Care Quality Measurement and Reporting.

I direct the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor to serve as the coordinating agencies to assist in the development and integration of recommendations and to report back to me within 60 days. The recommended actions should lay the foundation for a national system that prevents adverse medical events before they occur.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Tim Johnson

December 7, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, I'm honored to be here. I was trying to think of some one thing I could say that would illustrate the esteem in which I hold Tim Johnson and Barbara, and how valuable they are to the United States Senate. And I think that the best example is that Pat Moynihan and I are here, and we're not running for anything. *[Laughter]* We're here because we like and admire Tim Johnson, and we think he should be reelected, and we appreciate what he's done.

I enjoyed meeting all of you when you went through the line and we had a chance to visit. A lot of you expressed various concerns, which I appreciate. I want to thank Vic Fazio and Jim Slattery for coming. They served in the House with Tim; they were there when I became President. And I want to thank all of you for being here.

I just want to say a couple of serious words in this holiday season. First, our country is greatly blessed. We have been very fortunate. Last week I announced that we went over 20 million jobs since January of 1993, the most rapid job growth we've ever had and the longest peacetime economic expansion in our history.

It is now commonly agreed that the strength and the duration of this expansion was propelled by the 1993 vote that Congress took on a strict party line vote, much to my regret, in favor of the economic package I presented, which reduced the deficit dramatically, put us in a position to pass the Balanced Budget Act of '97, and has now given us the first back-to-back surpluses we've had in 42 years, low interest rates, high investment, and an amazing run of economic growth.

Tim Johnson was in the House. He knew he wanted to run for the Senate. It was an immensely controversial vote. Everybody that took it was told by our Republican friends that it would bring the economy crashing down and be the end of civilization as we knew it. And they were wrong, and he was right. But he couldn't have known at the time, when he put his political life on the line, that it would all come out the way it has. And I wouldn't be here, if for no other reason than that. If it hadn't been for his vote—we passed it by one

vote in the House and the Senate; if it hadn't been for his vote, we wouldn't be here tonight. And if we were here, we wouldn't be nearly so well off as most of you are. So thank you, Senator, for what you did.

I also want to thank Tim for his devotion to using this moment, which is truly remarkable. At least in my lifetime, our country has never had these conditions where we've had as much economic prosperity and as much social progress. In addition to the economic statistics, which you all know, we have a 25-year low in crime, a 30-year low in welfare rolls, a 20-year low in poverty; the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded; the lowest female unemployment rate in America in 40 years; the lowest poverty rate among—single-parent households poverty rate in 40 years. We are moving forward. And this is the first time we've ever had these conditions with the absence of internal crisis and external threat.

And I think it imposes a great challenge on us, because very often individuals, families, businesses, and nations are most likely to mess up at times of great prosperity and high comfort, because it's easy to be distracted, it's easy to be divided, it's easy to take your eye off the ball.

You know, Samuel Johnson said that nothing concentrates the mind so much as the prospect of your own destruction. The flip side of that is also true: It's easy to lose your concentration when things are going very well. And I just want to say to all of you, I think it's very important that we look at the big challenges facing this country: that we save Social Security beyond the life of the baby boom generation; that we extend the life of Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit to the 75 percent of our seniors that don't have adequate prescription drug coverage; that we do something to give economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind in this country, like the Native Americans in Senator Johnson's home State that he has shown such remarkable concern for; that we deal with the long-term challenges of the environment in a way that continues to grow this economy—a lot of you are involved in that; I talked to some of you about

ethanol production tonight; we're about to get the science worked out, we get the technology worked out to reduce the number of gallons of gasoline it takes to make more gallons of ethanol; you're going to see an explosion there that will change the whole economic and environmental future of the United States—that we continue to press for peace and reconciliation and the reduction of the threats of weapons of mass destruction around the world.

Many people here tonight are Pakistani-Americans. I told somebody about 4 months ago that we were making progress on peace in Ireland, progress on peace in the Middle East, progress on peace in the Balkans. But the two places that I have been stymied, since I became President, were in relationships between Greece and Turkey and relationships between India and Pakistan. And just a couple of weeks ago the Greeks and the Turks announced they were going to have talks on Cyprus, and in a few days they're going to meet and discuss whether they will accept Turkey as a candidate for the European Union. So that leaves Kashmir. [Laughter]

And let me say to all of you, and to my good friend Senator Moynihan, who, in one of his many former lives, was our Ambassador to India—I have told many people this—of all the hundreds—we literally have in America now representatives of well over 150 different ethnic groups, I think something like 185. In education

and income, Pakistanis and Indians rank in the top five. They often meet together, work together, do things together in the United States. The Indian subcontinent would have a limitless potential for the 21st century if the differences between the two nations could be reconciled. There would be less need to spend vast amounts of money on military expenditures and more funds available for education, for social development, for all kinds of challenges that are out there facing people. So I look forward to making a real stab at that next year, and I see some hopeful signs there. But many of you can help, and we need your help.

The last thing I want to say is that in this coming election season, which is already well underway, I think it's very important that we not forget that we all still have to do the people's business. We all get paid; we're expected to show up for work every day. And I expect to accomplish a great deal next year, with the help of Senator Johnson and Senator Moynihan. And I am comforted by the thought that when term limits take me away, he'll still be here, thanks to you.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. at the Westin Fairfax Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Johnson's wife, Barbara, and former Representatives Vic Fazio and Jim Slattery.

Remarks at a "Keep Hope Alive" Reception December 7, 1999

The President. Thank you so much. Mark, thank you for this evening. Reverend Meeks, Dennis, all the distinguished business and labor leaders in the audience, and my many friends: Berry, Willie, so many others.

Thank you, Smokey, for being here and for singing for Stevie at the Kennedy Center Honors the other night. You were magnificent. Thank you so much.

Reverend, thanks for bringing your whole family here, except for those who had to have babies and read books tonight. [Laughter] Santita thanks for the music; it was magnificent,

as always. And Jackie, thank you for being my friend and my inspiration.

And I want to thank your mother for all the things that Jesse said. But I want you to know, I've been in public life now—well, I started running for—I ran for my first office almost 26 years ago. I have talked to tens of thousands of people. I've shaken hundreds of thousands, maybe over a million hands now. And Grandma, you're the only person, ever, who came up and complimented me on quoting Machiavelli in a speech, in my whole life, ever. [Laughter] She said, "Every smart politician reads that fellow." [Laughter]

And that brings me to Jesse, because the quote from Machiavelli that she likes so well—now a quote that's well over 500 years old—said, "There is nothing so difficult in all of human affairs than to change the established order of things. For those who will benefit are uncertain of their gain, but those who will lose are absolutely certain of their loss." [Laughter]

Now, I'm honored to be here with Minyon Moore, my political director. Gene Sperling, my National Economic Adviser, just walked in; he works with Reverend Jackson because Jesse Jackson has been my friend for many years, long before either one of us could have known we'd be standing on this stage together and because he has done that most difficult thing in all of human affairs: He has changed the established order of things. And America is a better place.

I think about what he did to help save the Community Reinvestment Act and what he's done to help me enforce it. We now have over 95 percent of all the money ever loaned under that law has been loaned since I've been President, thanks in no small measure to him and to you. I think about all the wonderful things he's done as my Special Envoy to Africa, most recently in Sierra Leone, but in so many other places. I think about all those years with the civil rights movement, with Rainbow/PUSH, all the voter education drives, all the long campaigns, always sticking up for issues bigger than himself and for people in difficult situations.

I was thinking tonight when Jesse was talking about a night many, many years ago when he gave a speech in Little Rock, and I brought him back home to the Governor's Mansion, and we got Hillary to come down to the kitchen, and we sat in the kitchen, and we cleaned out the refrigerator. [Laughter] We just kept on talking and kept on eating, and we kept on talking and kept on eating, until finally Hillary reminded me that I had to go to work in the morning and kicked him out of the house. [Laughter]

I was thinking something else, too. In the gripping story of Jesse's past—you've got to make allowances for us, you know; I think people from the South generally tend to be more obsessed with the past than other people, in ways that are beautiful and burdensome and maybe boring to other people. But we are. But tonight I want to ask you to just take onboard

everything Jesse said. And I want to ask you this question: So, what now?

If you think about it, almost every major, big thing we have ever done in this country, we have done in the throes of difficulty or threat. This great country of ours was born out of the pangs of war, by people who were smart enough to say all of us are created equal, and then to say, but, oh, these slaves count as 60 percent of a person, for purposes of the census. And then to say we're all created equal, but you can't vote unless you're A, white, B, male, and C, you have to own property, which means that if I'd been around back then, I probably couldn't have voted either—[laughter]—because I'd have been one of the hired hands.

So, then, we were born in the pangs of a great war. And Mr. Lincoln comes along, and we finally got rid of slavery after the bloodiest war in all of our history. When we were a much, much smaller country we lost more people in the Civil War than any other one, just over the proposition that we were going to hang together and free people. It happened out of war.

And then in the industrial revolution we had some real social progress in the absence of war, but people were really suffering. I mean, little children, 10 years old, were working in factories 70 hours a week. Women with little children were working on Saturdays and way up into the night. And there was abject human suffering. And then the Depression came, and we had our first real comprehensive wave of social legislation. And we overcame the war, as Jesse said, and got out of the Depression.

And then we had the great civil rights movement of the sixties because of Martin Luther King and all the others, because the Supreme Court was visionary and brave, and—let's be honest—because the Congress and the country were conscience-stricken after President Kennedy was murdered.

Now, in my lifetime and maybe in the lifetime of this country, we have never had so much economic prosperity so broadly shared with the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest poverty rate in 20 years and the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded and the highest rate of business and homeownership among minorities, as well as the majority population, ever recorded; the lowest female unemployment in 40 years, so broadly shared, with the absence of either an internal threat or an external threat to our

security. Crime rate is the lowest in 30 years; teen pregnancy rate is the lowest in 30 years; welfare rolls are the lowest in 30 years.

So what I want to ask you is, what now? And I want to ask you, even if you're not from the South, not to lose your memory. *[Laughter]*

Because—I came here tonight not only because I owe Jesse and because I love him and because Mark told me I had to—*[laughter]*—and because I want Dennis and Bill to help Hillary. *[Laughter]* I also came here because—I'm not running for anything—*[laughter]*—I want to spend the rest of my life as a good citizen.

But I'm telling you, in my lifetime—in my lifetime—this country has never had—not one time—the same level of economic prosperity, social progress, and national self-confidence, in the absence of domestic crisis or international threat, never, not once. And my lifetime, unfortunately, is getting longer. I was talking to a 6-year-old girl over Thanksgiving. She looked up at me, and she said, "How old are you?" And I said, "I'm 53." She said, "Oh, that's a lot." *[Laughter]*

So, what are we going to do about it? So, what? That's what I want you to think about, because we've done real well when we were under the gun in this country, you know? We had Abraham Lincoln, and people fought and bled and died; finally we got rid of slavery. We had Franklin Roosevelt, unemployment was 25 percent, got ourselves in a war; we whipped the Depression and won the war. We had Martin Luther King and people in the streets, and it took a few riots. And like I said, President Kennedy got killed; but we had President Johnson's great record in civil rights, which many of you contributed to.

What are we going to do with this? Because what I want to say to you is—the great English writer Samuel Johnson said that the prospect of a person's own destruction wonderfully concentrates the mind. The flip side is true: When you think things are peachy-keen and can't get bad, it distracts the mind. It makes people shortsighted. It makes people selfish. It makes people distracted.

And what I want to say is, we've still got some huge challenges out there. And we have the opportunity that no generation of Americans has ever had: to take our kids out of poverty; to give them all health care; to bring genuine economic opportunity to the people and places

that have been left behind; to bring genuine educational opportunities to all of our kids; and to build one America, without regard to race or region or income or sexual orientation. We've got this chance, and we'd better not blow it.

If we don't shoulder our responsibility to deal with this, our children and our grandchildren will never forgive us, because the country has never had this chance before, and believe me, nothing lasts forever. That kind of keeps you going in the tough times, but it's well to remember in the good times.

So I say to you, that's the main reason I'm here. Yes, Jesse started this Wall Street Project because he wanted to create more empowerment for individuals who were talented and just left behind. But we also know that there are whole peoples and places—the Indian reservations, Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, big neighborhoods in our cities—who haven't felt this economic prosperity. If we can't get it to them now, we will never get around to it. If we can't bring the benefits of free enterprise to the people and places that don't have it now, with the lowest unemployment in 30 years and the highest growth rate, we will never get around to it. If we can't save Social Security and take it way out beyond the baby boom generation and do something about elderly women who are too poor compared to the other retirees, elderly women living alone, if we don't do that now, when are we going to get around to it? If we don't extend the life of Medicare and provide some prescription drug coverage to the three-quarters of our seniors that can't afford what they need, when will we ever get around to it? If we're not going to give all of our kids—since we now know how to turn around failing schools; we don't have any excuse anymore; it's not a matter of some sort of scientific project—if we're not going to bridge the digital divide and make sure all of our kids have access to the Internet world of tomorrow, if we're not going to do it now, when will we get around to it? If we're not going to shoulder our responsibilities to our friends and neighbors, from the Caribbean to Africa to the world's most indebted countries, so that they, too, can be our partners and be a part of tomorrow, when are we ever going to get around to it?

Now, you can have your own list. But I'm telling you, one of the things I think we've proved is that you can take good social policy and good economic policy and prove they go

hand-in-hand. The progressives—we lost a lot of elections because people said, “Well, those people have a good heart but a soft head. And if you put them in they’ll spend us in the ditch, and tax us until we bleed. And they won’t be able to run the economy.”

They can’t say that anymore. We have the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. And we cut taxes on millions of working people with the earned-income tax credit. We raised the minimum wage, and we ought to raise it again. And we passed the Family and Medical Leave Act, and we ought to make it broader. We ought to do things to prove that good social policy and good economic policy go hand-in-hand, good environmental policy and good social policy and good economic policy go hand-in-hand.

You know, if you go into city after city after city, you will see, as my good friend Congressman John Lewis says, that environmental justice can be a civil rights issue. How many people do you know in urban areas living by toxic waste dumps that we could turn into economic goldmines if we cleaned them up? That’s what we’re trying to do.

But you make your own list when you go home tonight. Just write down the five things that you think are the biggest challenges facing America. And then you ask yourself, if we can’t do it now, when will we ever get around to doing it?

When I think of Rainbow/PUSH, I think of two things: Rainbow means we’re all in it together, and we all have a place at the table; PUSH is what Jesse does to me when he thinks I’m not doing right. [Laughter] And both those things are good. And you know, 14 or 15 months from now, when I become a citizen again, then I can be a PUSHer. We’ll all do that.

But this is a great country. You remember the history of it. Remember the stories Jesse told. Think about his mother-in-law—I got my pin—[laughter]—think about his mother-in-law. You think about this whole deal, and I’m telling you—I defy you to cite a time in your lifetime which has been like this. And I say it not to be self-serving. Look, I’m grateful I got to serve. I’m grateful that I got to serve at a time when the challenges of the country fit my experience, and what I knew, and what I felt in my heart.

But it’s like turning a big old oceanliner around in the middle of the Pacific. You can’t do it overnight. So we’ve turned this country

around. We’re going full steam ahead in the right direction.

But I am telling you, it’s no different from a person, a family, or a business. A nation, when things are going well, has to make a decision. And we have a responsibility to reach out for all those who have been left behind, to create one America, and to build the future of our dreams for our children. If not now, we will never get around to it.

So you go home tonight, and make your list, and keep supporting Rainbow/PUSH, and demand that your leaders take this historic opportunity to be worthy of the sacrifices that Jesse talked about tonight.

Thank you, and God bless you.

Wait, wait now. Before you all leave, we’re going to do one more thing. Jesse and I, we’ve got a little friend here that I want to sing for us. We’re going to have one more song.

Come on, Joshua. Come up here. Come on, Josh.

[At this point, child singer Joshua Watts sang a song, and musician Smokey Robinson urged the audience to support keeping arts programs in schools.]

The President. I know we’ve all got to go. I just want to say amen to this. [Laughter] We had a VH1 concert at the White House the other night because John Sykes, the head of VH1, is collecting instruments—he’s collected, I think, almost one million now, around America—to give to schools so they could have music programs. But all over the country, these music programs, these art programs, have been canceled out.

And we know that there are poor children out there who will learn better and find ways to express themselves better, stay out of trouble, and stay in love with education if they have access to these things. This is a huge deal, and I want to thank you for saying that. It’s a big deal.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. in the Washington Room at the Hotel Washington. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Jesse Jackson, president and founder, Mark Allen, deputy field director and assistant to Reverend Jackson, Dennis Rivera, cochair, and Rev. James Meeks, board member, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; Berry Gordy, Jr., founder, Motown Records; musician Stevie

Wonder; Willie Gray, attorney, Gary, Williams, Parenti, Finney, Lewis, McManus, Watson, and Sperando law firm; former Deputy Mayor Bill

Lynch of New York; and Reverend Jackson's wife Jacqueline, daughter Santita, and mother-in-law Gertrude Brown.

The President's News Conference December 8, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. Before I take your questions, I have a statement to make. We are at a pivotal moment in the Middle East peace process, one that can shape the face of the region for generations to come. As I have said on numerous occasions, history will not forgive a failure to seize this opportunity to achieve a comprehensive peace.

We've made good progress on the Palestinian track, and I'm determined to help Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat move forward in accordance with their very ambitious timetable.

We've also been working intensely, for months, for a resumption of negotiations between Israel and Syria. Today I am pleased to announce that Prime Minister Barak and President Asad have agreed that the Israel-Syrian peace negotiations will be resumed from the point where they left off. The talks will be launched here in Washington next week with Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Shara.

After an initial round for 1 or 2 days, they will return to the region, and intensive negotiations will resume at a site to be determined soon thereafter. These negotiations will be high level, comprehensive, and conducted with the aim of reaching an agreement as soon as possible.

Israelis and Syrians still need to make courageous decisions in order to reach a just and lasting peace. But today's step is a significant breakthrough, for it will allow them to deal with each other face to face, and that is the only way to get there.

I want to thank Prime Minister Barak and President Asad for their willingness to take this important step. And I want to thank Secretary Albright who has worked very hard on this and, as you know, has been in the region and meeting with the leaders as we have come to this conclusion.

Before us is a task as clear as it is challenging. As I told Prime Minister Barak and President Asad in phone conversations with them earlier today, they now bear a heavy responsibility of bringing peace to the Israeli and Syrian people.

On the Palestinian track, Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat are committed to a rapid timetable: a framework agreement by mid-February, a permanent status agreement by mid-September. I'm convinced it is possible to achieve that goal, to put an end to generations of conflict, to realize the aspirations of both the Israeli and the Palestinian people. And I will do everything I can to help them in that historic endeavor.

It is my hope that with the resumption of Israeli-Syrian talks, negotiations between Israel and Lebanon also will soon begin.

There can be no illusion here. On all tracks, the road ahead will be arduous; the task of negotiating agreements will be difficult. Success is not inevitable. Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese will have to confront fateful questions. They face hard choices. They will have to stand firmly against all those who seek to derail the peace, and sadly, there are still too many of them.

But let there also be no misunderstanding. We have a truly historic opportunity now. With a comprehensive peace, Israel will live in a safe, secure, and recognized border for the first time in its history. The Palestinian people will be able to forge their own destiny on their own land. Syrians and Lebanese will fulfill their aspirations and enjoy the full fruits of peace. And throughout the region, people will be able to build more peaceful and, clearly, more prosperous lives.

As I have said, and I say one more time, I will spare neither time nor effort in pursuit of that goal. Today the parties have given us clear indication that they, too, are willing to take that path. Peace has long been within our

sight. Today it is within our grasp, and we must seize it.

Thank you very much. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Elían Gonzalez

Q. Mr. President, on another matter involving a foreign government, as a father, do you sympathize with the demand of Elían Gonzalez for the return of his 6-year-old son to Cuba, now that the boy's mother and stepfather were drowned in a boating accident on the way to Florida?

The President. Well, I think, of course, all fathers would be sympathetic. The question is and I think the most important thing is what would be best for the child? And there is a legal process for determining that.

I personally don't think that any of us should have any concern other than that, that the law be followed. I don't think that politics or threats should have anything to do with it, and if I have my way, it won't. We should let the people who are responsible for this, who have a legal responsibility, try to do the right thing by the child.

These decisions are often difficult, even in domestic situations, but I hope that is what would be done, and it should be done without regard to politics.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, did both sides make a lot of concessions to get to this breakthrough point? And also, are you aware that Amnesty International says that Israel is continuing the demolition of Palestinian homes in east Jerusalem and on the West Bank and also the expansion of the settlements? Are all these part of a package?

The President. Well, Prime Minister Barak made a very important statement about settlements yesterday, which I think was quite welcome. And it's a good first step. As you know, we believe that nothing should be done which makes it more difficult to make peace or which prejudges the final outcome. But I do think that the statement yesterday is a step in the right direction.

As to your question about Syria, I think it's very important at this point that we maximize the chances for success, which means it would not be useful for me to get into the details.

But the negotiations are resuming on the basis of all previous negotiations between the United States and Syria—I mean, between Syria and Israel, and with the United States.

I think it is clear that both parties have sufficient confidence that their needs can be met through negotiations, or they would not have reached this agreement today.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Russia and the Situation in Chechnya

Q. On Chechnya, you used sanctions to punish Yugoslavia and Indonesia for repression; why aren't sanctions being considered against Russia?

The President. Well, there are two categories of aid here in question—or, at least—let's talk about the aid. A sanctions regime has to be imposed by the United Nations, and Russia has a veto there. But I'm not sure that would be in our interest or in the interest of the ultimate resolution of the crisis.

Let me just say, with regard to the aid, because I've been asked about that, I think it's important to point out to the American people that two-thirds of the aid that we spend in Russia is involved in denuclearization and safeguarding nuclear materials. And I think it is plain that we have an interest in continuing that.

The other third goes to fund democracy, the things that we Americans believe would lead to better decisions. It goes to an independent media; it goes to student exchanges; it goes to NGO's, helping people set up small businesses. I don't think our interests would be furthered by terminating that. And as of now, there is no pending IMF transfer because of the general opinion by the IMF that not all the economic conditions have been met. So that's a bridge we'll have to cross when we get there.

Yes.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, when Israel and Syria do sit down, they obviously are going to have to confront the issue of the Golan Heights almost immediately. How are they going to resolve that? What will the U.S. role be? Will you see the administration—Secretary Albright, yourself possibly—being a mediator? And finally, why isn't President Asad sitting down with Prime Minister Barak at this point?

The President. I think they're sitting down because they want to make peace, and they have now concluded that they can do it on terms

and that will meet both their interests. You've asked good questions, but any answer I give would make it unlikely that they would be successfully resolved. Frankly, we all took a blood oath that we wouldn't talk beyond our points today, and I'm going to keep my word.

Q. Sir, maybe you misunderstood. I was asking why President Asad is not personally involved in the talks at this point.

The President. Oh, he is very personally involved. I think that—I believe that he felt it was better—and maybe you should ask the Syrians this—but let me just say, he is very personally involved in this. I think he thinks it better, for whatever reason, he's made the decision that Foreign Minister Shara, who, thankfully, has recovered from his recent stroke and is perfectly able to come here, to do so. And I'm quite comfortable that this is as close to a person-to-person talk that they could have without doing it.

Yes, go ahead.

Elían Gonzalez/Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, can I follow up about Cuba and Chechnya? With regard to Cuba, you said that politics ought to stay out of this decision regarding the boy. Are you saying, sir, that you can envision a circumstance where, in your mind, it would be appropriate to return this young boy to Communist Cuba?

Second question, regarding Chechnya: Given the fact that two-thirds of the aid goes to denuclearization, a third to democracy effects, do you envision no circumstances, sir, under which the United States would cut off that aid? And how does that square with your statement that Russia will pay a heavy price for its war against Chechnya?

The President. Okay, the first question first. I do not know enough about the facts, so you can draw no inferences to what I might or might not do because it's not a decision for me to make. There is a law here. There are people charged with making the decisions. I think they ought to do their best within the parameters of the law; do what seems to be best for the child.

That is all I have to say, and you shouldn't read anything into it. I don't know enough about the case, and I don't think that any of us should interfere with what is going to be a difficult enough decision as it is.

Now on Russia, I have stated what my present view is, and that is all I have done. I think Russia is already paying a heavy price. I think they'll pay a heavy price in two ways. First of all, I don't think the strategy will work. As I said, I have no sympathy for the Chechen rebels; I have no sympathy for the invasion of Dagestan; and I have no sympathy for terrorist acts in Moscow; and none of us should have. But the people of Chechnya should not be punished for what the rebels did. They don't represent the established government of Chechnya. They don't represent a majority of the people there. And the strategy, it seems to me, is more likely to hurt ordinary citizens than the legitimate targets of the wrath of the Russian Government.

So I think that—first of all, I think the policy will not work, and therefore, it will be very costly, just like it was before when it didn't work. Secondly, the continuation of it and that amassing of hundreds of thousands of refugees, which will have to be cared for by the international community—we've already set aside, I think, at least \$10 million to try to make our contributions for it—will further alienate the global community from Russia. And that's a bad thing, because they need support not just from the IMF and the World Bank, they need investors. They need people to have confidence in what they're doing.

They're about to have elections. And so there will be a heavy price there. And I don't think there's any question about that.

I think it's already—yes, go ahead.

Elían Gonzalez

Q. Sir, regarding the Cuban boy, you say you don't know enough about the facts. A lot of people in South Africa think the facts are pretty simple. They say that even though the boy's father's in Cuba, this boy would be better off growing up in the United States than in Cuba under Castro. What would you say to those people?

The President. Well, I think the decision-makers will take into account all the relevant facts. But I don't think I should make the decision. First of all, I can't make the decision under the law. And I don't think I should tell them how to make the decision because I don't know enough about the facts. I believe they will do their best to make the right decision.

Q. What about growing up in Cuba as opposed to growing up in the United States?

The President. Well, of course, I'd rather grow up in the United States. But there may be other considerations there, and one was asked in the previous question about it. So we'll just have to evaluate it.

You know, there are times in the United States when judges have to make decisions. The legal standard governing domestic cases is the best interest of the child. There's a slightly different characterization, I think, of what will determine the international decision here. This is, you know, an unusual case for us. But even here, sometimes it's very hard to say. You know, will children be better off with their parents in America? Almost always, but not always.

So you just can't—I don't think—I can't serve any useful purpose by commenting on it, because I don't know enough about the facts of the family life or even the governing law on this. I just know that I think we ought to let the people make the decision, urge them to do their best to do what's best for the child, and try to take as much political steam out of it as possible so that the little child can be considered.

Yes.

Federal Action Against Gun Manufacturers

Q. Sir, on another legal matter, your threat of a class-action against gun manufacturers, is this an attempt, sir, through either coercion or, ultimately, the judicial branch, to get accomplished what you couldn't get accomplished through legislation? And with the difficulties that you've had recently getting some of your initiatives passed in Congress, as you head into this last year of your Presidency, is this the hint of a new tactic to get those initiatives passed, when you can't get them through Congress?

The President. Let's talk about the gun suit first, and then I'll respond to the general question. The litigation, which is being initiated by public housing authorities, has a good grounding in fact. There are 10,000 gun crimes every year in the largest public housing authorities. Now, they spend a billion dollars on security. And I think it's important that the American people know they're not asking for money from the gun manufacturers; they are seeking a remedy to try to help solve the problem.

They want, first of all, more care from the manufacturers and the dealers with whom they

deal. Senator Schumer released a study, you may remember, that said that one percent of the gun dealers sell 50 percent of the guns involved in gun crimes. Now, if that study is accurate—and he believes it is—that is a stunning fact. And there ought to be something done about that. And if there is a way that the court could craft a resolution of that, that would be a good thing, I think. The second thing we want to do is to stop irresponsible marketing practices. You all remember that one company advertised an assault weapon by saying that it was hard to get fingerprints from. You know, you don't have to be all broke out with brilliance to figure out what the message is there. And the third thing they want is some safety design changes.

Now, let me hasten to say that we have a lot of gun manufacturers in this country who have been, I think, immensely responsible. You'll remember the majority of the gun manufacturers signed on to our proposal for child trigger locks. I still would like legislation to cover them all. But this should not be viewed—if you look at the nature of the release, they're not trying to bankrupt any companies; they're trying to make their living spaces safer. And I think it's a legitimate thing.

Now to your general question, I think if you go back over the whole reach of our tenure here, I have always tried to use the executive authority in areas where I thought it was important. We're doing it on medical privacy. We're doing it on—yesterday we had the press conference on prevention of medical errors. We're doing it with the paid family leave initiative we offered to the States. We did it when we set aside the roadless areas in the forests. So I think this is an appropriate thing to do.

But I would also remind you at the end of this legislative session from the Congress, we got 100,000 teachers, 50,000 police, 60,000 housing vouchers to help people move from welfare to work. We passed the Kennedy-Jeffords bill to allow people with disabilities to move into the workplace and keep their medical care from the Government. We passed the Financial Modernization Act, which will dramatically, I think, improve financial services, grow the economy. And we've protected the Community Reinvestment Act. We doubled funds for after-school programs. We provided, for the very first time ever, funds to help school districts turn around failing schools or shut them down.

So I'm continuing to work with Congress, and I will do so vigorously. But I think this was an appropriate thing to do on the merits.

Yes.

Seattle Round

Q. Mr. President, some of your critics have suggested that the reason that you pressed the issues of the environment and labor at the WTO meeting in Seattle is to benefit the Presidential candidacy of Vice President Gore, knowing that there might be a backlash from the developing nations. How do you respond to that?

The President. That's wrong. And I would like to make two comments, one on the WTO ministerial meeting and, secondly, on that general issue.

The Uruguay round was launched in 1986. The trade ministers started trying to launch it in 1982. It took them 4 years to get it off the ground. The fundamental reason a new round was not launched here had, in my judgment, very little to do with my philosophy of trade, which I'll talk about in a moment. There were—the big blocks here were the Europeans and the Japanese, on the one hand. The United States and the developing nations, we all had positions that couldn't be reconciled. The Europeans were not prepared at this time to change their common agricultural policy, which accounts for 85 percent of the export subsidies in the world. The Japanese had their own agricultural and other issues to deal with.

The United States was not prepared to change its policy on dumping, because—and I think the recent Asian financial crisis justifies that, I might add. Even though we did finally move under our dumping laws, and we had to move, to try to keep our steel industry, which took down 60 percent of its employment and modernized during the eighties and the early nineties, we still bought 10 times as much steel during that crisis as the Europeans did. The recent WTO agreement we made with China protects us from surges and unfair dumping. We have the largest trade deficit in the world. Now, we get a lot of good out of it: We get low inflation; we get goods from all over the world. But there has to be some sense of fairness and balance here.

And the developing nations, for their part, felt that they had not yet gotten enough benefits from the last trade round and the entry into the WTO. They think that we and everybody

else—the Europeans, the Japanese, everybody—they think we ought to have more open markets for agricultural products, which doesn't affect America so much, and for textiles, which does affect us. That's the big issue being negotiated still with the Caribbean Basin and the Africa trade initiative.

So it's very important that you understand that there were real differences that we thought we could bridge, unrelated to labor and the environment, which we couldn't and which I think would have been clearer but for the back-drop of the demonstrations in Seattle over these other issues.

Now, to your second question. When I ran for President in 1992 and the big issue being debated was NAFTA, I said that I wanted to be for NAFTA, I would fight hard for it, but I felt strongly there ought to be provisions on labor and the environment in the agreement, and those provisions were included. I have always had what I guess you would call a Third Way position on trade. I think the position of Americans, including some in my party, that trade is bad for America and bad for the world is just dead wrong.

I think that the world is more prosperous, and I know America is more prosperous because of the continuing integration of the world's economy and the mutual interdependence of people and people being able to produce what they produce best in a competitive environment, including costs. And I think we benefit, not just from our exports but from the imports. That's what I believe. I believe we will have both a more prosperous and a more peaceful world if we have more of the right kind of globalization.

I read—one of the many, many articles that's been written in the last several days in the aftermath of Seattle pointed out that many of the world's most troubled places, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Africa, to some extent the Middle East, suffer because they have too little economic interconnection with the rest of the world.

I believe, even though I'm proud of the role that we've played and especially proud of the role George Mitchell played in the Irish peace settlement, I think it is unlikely that we would have done that if, also, Ireland didn't have the fastest growing economy in Europe and Northern Ireland weren't growing and people didn't imagine that they could have a totally different

life if they just let go of what they've been fighting over.

So the people who don't believe that trade is good, I just think they're wrong. Now having said that, I think that as the world grows more interdependent, it is unrealistic to think that there will be an international economic policy with rules unrelated to an emerging international consensus on the environment and an international consensus on labor. That does not mean that I would cut off our markets to India and Pakistan, for example, if they didn't raise their wages to American levels. I know that's what the sort of stated fear was. I never said that, I don't believe that.

But I think that—let me give you an analogy. Several years ago, the Europeans did this, and I applaud them: They were actually the impetus for protecting intellectual property more than the United States was. And people debated that for years. Why, intellectual property has no place in trade bills. Who cares if people are pirating books and selling them for 60 cents apiece when they cost \$20 somewhere else? And now, we just take it as a given. And it's a good thing for the United States.

You think about all the software we're exporting, all the CD's we're exporting, all the things. Intellectual property is a big deal to us now. It was just as alien a subject a few years ago to trade talks as questions of labor and the environment are today.

So I think I've got a good position here. It has nothing to do with this campaign. It's a position I've had for years. And I believe the world will slowly come to it. We do have to be sensitive to the developing countries. We cannot say that, you know, you're out of here because you can't have the same labor environment we do. But we also have to—all we ask for was to start a dialog within the WTO on trade issues. On the environment, all we ask is that the decisionmaking process not degrade the environment when countries have environmental policies and interests, and just blithely override them because there's an immediate, short-term economic benefit.

I think that's right. And I believe that 10 years from now, somebody will be sitting here, and we'll all take it for granted that we've come a long way in integrating trade and the environment—I mean, trade and labor. That's what I think, and that's what I believe.

Man of the Century

Q. Mr. President, I'm afraid this is in the pop-quiz category of questions, but I'll try to make it easy for you. Every year, this time of year, we pick a Man of the Year. Maybe one day it will be Person of the Year. I'd like to know what your pick of the Man of the Century would be; and note that I'm not asking you for the millennium. [Laughter]

The President. Well, if it were for the millennium, it might be someone different. Well, this century produced a lot of great men and women. But as an American, I would have to choose Franklin Roosevelt, because in this century our greatest peril was in the Depression and World War II and because he led us not only through those things and laid the building blocks for a better society with things like Social Security and unemployment insurance, which was, interestingly enough, first recommended by his cousin Theodore Roosevelt when he was President, but he also looked to the future, endorsing the United Nations and a lot of the other international institutions which were subsequently created under President Truman.

Finally, I think Roosevelt was an example to Americans of the importance of not giving up and of the dignity inherent in every person. And when Franklin Roosevelt was first elected, Oliver Wendell Holmes was still in the Supreme Court; he was 92 years old. And President Roosevelt was taken to see Oliver Wendell Holmes who was still reading Plato in his nineties and all that. Holmes was a pretty acerbic fellow when he said, after meeting Roosevelt, that he thought he might not have had a first-class mind, but he certainly had a first-class temperament.

And he did. He understood that reality is more than the facts before you; it's also how you feel about them, how you react to them, what your attitude is. That was the advice that—"only thing we have to fear was fear itself" was much more than just a slogan to him. He had lived it before he asked the American people to live it.

So for all those reasons, if I had to pick one person, I would pick him.

Yes, sir.

Colombia and Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to ask you two questions on two very important South American

countries that are vital to U.S. foreign policy, Colombia and Venezuela.

First of all, on Colombia, sir. President Pastrana has been extraditing people, and they're still waiting for the help that he is expecting from the United States. Will you fight, will you go to the mat for this, starting in the year 2000, for President Pastrana? That's the first question.

The second question—

The President. You're all asking two questions. That's pretty impressive. [Laughter]

Q. We're just following the others.

You met President-elect Chavez when he first came to Washington, and then you met him as President in New York. He will be—Venezuela will be holding a very unique plebiscite a week from today, which has polarized the country. Some people that back President Chavez thinks it's great; others think it will cause damage to democracy. I'd like your opinion on both subjects, sir.

The President. My opinion on the second question is that I'm not a citizen of Venezuela, and I think that they ought to make their own decisions. But I'm glad that they're getting to vote on it.

My opinion on the first question is—I should point out remember, now, Colombia is already the third biggest recipient of American aid. But I do think we should do more. And President Pastrana has, number one, extradited drug criminals to this country, which is important; number two, is facing a terribly difficult situation where he has both a longstanding civil insurgency in Colombia and all the problems of the drug cartels and the possible interrelation of the two. It's a terrible situation.

Colombia is a very large country. They've been our ally for a long time. They had a long period of steady economic growth. They have suffered terribly in the last couple of years. And I think we should do more.

I had a talk with Speaker Hastert about it, who is also, by the way, very interested in this, when we were together in Chicago recently. And I hope that early next year, we will have a proposal to provide further assistance to Colombia that will be substantial, effective, and have broad bipartisan support. That is my goal.

Ken [Ken Walsh, U.S. News & World Report].

Vice President Al Gore

Q. Vice President Gore has made a point of saying that his candidacy for President now will take precedence over his duties and activities as Vice President. I wonder, how has his role diminished in your administration, and how much has he missed? And does a diminished role by a Vice President in your administration hamper what you're trying to do in any way?

The President. Well, obviously, he's not around as much. We don't have lunch every week, and I miss that terribly. But he was there all day today. He had the meeting with President Kuchma. He knows that the future of Ukraine is very important to our interests and to what we're trying to accomplish in that part of the world. And he came to our meeting this morning, and then, after our meeting was over, he ran a whole series of meetings for several hours after that. So in his critical functions, he's still performing them.

And I would say, first of all, I strongly support what he's doing. I think he has the right to run. I'm glad he's running, and you know I think he'd be a great President. But he—even having said that, whenever there's an important decision in an area that he's been very active in, I always call him; we still talk about it. And his role is probably still larger than that of any previous Vice President, even though he's out campaigning. But it's just less than it used to be, because he's not here all the time.

But I have no criticism of it. I think he's doing what he ought to be doing, and I think it's in the best interests of the country for him to do it.

Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

Accomplishments and Disappointments of 1999

Q. You're ending a tumultuous year that began with impeachment and closed with tear gas in Seattle. Could you tell us what you're proudest of this year, and what events or accomplishments of yours that you're the least proud of?

The President. Well, I'm very happy—what I'm proudest of is that it turned out to be a very productive year. If you look at—I'll just mention them again. I did before, but we wound up—after a year in which almost nothing was accomplished in the Congress, we wound up with a recommitment to the 100,000 teachers, to the 50,000 police. We passed the financial

modernization bill. We passed an historic 60,000 housing vouchers to new people from welfare to work. We passed the bill to give disabled people the right to take health care into the workplace. We doubled after-school funding. We passed this fund that I've been pushing hard for, for a long time, to help the States turn around or shut down failing schools. We had quite a lot of accomplishments.

On the foreign front, we had the China-WTO agreement; progress with the Middle East peace; the Northern Ireland peace agreement; Kosovo, which I am very, very proud of. I still believe our country did the right thing there. And we've got talks starting on Cyprus now. We've got a Caspian pipeline agreement, which I believe 30 years from now you'll all look back on that as one of the most important things that happened this year. We had the Conventional Forces in Europe agreement with Russia, which will result in the removal of their forces from Georgia and Moldova. We had the debt relief for the poorest countries in the world, something I'm immensely proud of and deeply committed to. We made a big dent in our U.N. arrears issue. And we have worked with North Korea to end their missile program. So I'm very proud of what happened this year.

What I'm most disappointed in is what still got left on the table. I'm terribly disappointed that we still haven't passed a Patients' Bill of Rights, that we still haven't raised the minimum wage, that we still haven't passed hate crimes legislation, that we still didn't pass that common-sense gun legislation, which was crying out for action after what happened at Columbine—and we had another school incident this week. I am disappointed that we didn't pass the school construction bill. I'm hoping we will pass the new markets initiative next year. If we don't do something now to bring economic opportunity to the areas of this country which have been left behind, we will never forgive ourselves. And I'm profoundly disappointed that we still haven't done anything to take the life of Social Security out beyond the baby boom generation and extend the life of Medicare and add a prescription drug benefit.

So my only disappointments are what we didn't get done. But I'm gratified by what was accomplished.

Q. Do you blame yourself for that, that you didn't put forward a plan on Social Security,

to make it more substantive? Is there something you're—[inaudible].

The President. No, I gave them—first of all, I asked them—there's no point in putting forward—look, I tried it the other way with health care. I put forward a plan. And everybody said, you put forward—I remember Senator Dole saying, "You put forward your plan, then I'll put forward my plan. We'll get together. We'll agree, and we'll pass a plan." And so, you know, I've had experience with that. That didn't work out too well.

So I had all these meetings on Social Security. You remember, I worked very hard on it, and I asked if we could get together and work out something. I still haven't given up on that, by the way. And I know the conventional wisdom is that these things are less likely to be done in election years, but in some ways they may be more likely.

And I did give them a plan which, if they had embraced it—which would simply require them not only to save the Social Security surplus but to take the interest savings from paying down the debt, with the Social Security surplus, and if you just put that back into Social Security, you could take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boom generation. And I offered to do more with them.

But in order to pass something like that, we've got to have a bipartisan process. And I will do whatever it takes to get that done. But I worked as hard as I could this year to keep working in a very open and collegial spirit with not only the Democrats—without whom I wouldn't have passed any of those things I just mentioned, and all of you know that; they hung in there at the end; we got those things done—but also with the Republicans, with whom I began to have, I think, some real progress there along toward the end of the legislative session. And I hope we will continue it.

Yes, go ahead.

Russia and the Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, on Chechnya, it seems as though the Russians don't feel they will pay a heavy price, and perhaps they don't care. I'm wondering if between now and Saturday's deadline you plan to try to directly contact President Yeltsin to once again convey your feelings on this matter.

The President. Well, I haven't decided what else I can do. I do think—first of all, they may

believe that because of their position in the United Nations and because no one wants them to fail and have more problems than they've got, that they can do this. But most of life's greatest wounds for individuals and for countries are self-inflicted. They're not inflicted by other people.

And I will say again, the greatest problems that the Russians will have over Chechnya are—one is I don't think the strategy will work. I have never said they weren't right to want to do something with the Chechen rebels. But I don't think the strategy will work, and therefore, it will be expensive, costly, and politically damaging, internally, to them.

Secondly, it will affect the attitude of the international community over a period of time in ways that are somewhat predictable and in some ways unpredictable, and that is a very heavy price to pay, because it works better when everybody's pulling for Russia. It's a great country, and they have all these resources and talented, educated people, and they need to—and yet, they've got a declining life expectancy as well as all these economic problems. And I think it's a bad thing for this to be the number one issue both inside the country and in our relationships with them. So I do think it's going to be a very costly thing.

Yes.

Panama Canal/China and Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, with China building a second short-range missile base, allowing them to take Taiwan with little or no warning, are you concerned about America's ability to defend that island, especially with a Chinese company taking over the Panama Canal's ports at the end of this month?

The President. Well, let's talk about the Panama Canal, and then I'll come back to Taiwan. And to be fair, I think I may have misstated this earlier. It's important for the American people to understand that the canal itself will be operated and controlled entirely by the Government of Panama, through the Panama Canal Authority. That is the locks, ingress and egress, access, openness, the canal is completely and totally within the control of the Panamanians.

Now, the Hong Kong company which got the concession to operate the ports will be responsible for loading and unloading ships. They also do this in three or four ports in Great Britain. It's one of the biggest companies in the world

that does this. The managing director is British. Most of the employees will be Panamanian. So I feel comfortable that our commercial and security interests can be protected under this arrangement. That's the first question.

Now, the second question is China is modernizing its military in a lot of ways. But our policy on China is crystal clear: We believe there is one China. We think it has to be resolved through cross-strait dialog, and we oppose and would view with grave concern any kind of violent action. And that hasn't changed.

There has been a lot of buildup of tension on both sides that I think is unnecessary and counterproductive. If you look at the amount of Taiwanese investment in China, for example—that goes back to my Irish example—if you look at the Taiwanese investment in China, it's obvious that eventually they're going to get this worked out because they're too interconnected by ties of family and, increasingly, by ties of the economy, and the politics of neither place should lead either side into doing something rash. And I hope that this will not happen. But our policy is clear, and you know what I've done in the past. And I think that's all I should say about it right now.

Yes.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Q. There is some confusion in people's minds about the First Lady's plans for the coming year. She has referred to the new house in New York as "my house" and indicated she plans to make that her primary residence. I'm wondering if you could tell us how much time you think the two of you will be apart in the coming year and how you feel about this arrangement?

The President. Well, first of all, I am happy for her, for the decision that she made. She was encouraged to run by many people, and she decided she wanted to do it. And if she's going to do it, she's got to spend a long time in New York. So she'll be there a lot. She'll be here when she can. I'll go up there when I can, and we'll be together as much as we can. We always make it a habit to talk at least once, if not more, every day. It's not the best arrangement in the world, but it's something that we can live with for a year. I love the house. We picked it out, and we like it, and I'm looking forward to living there when I leave here.

But I've got a job to do, and she now has a campaign to run, and so we'll have to be apart more than I wish we were. But it's not a big problem. She'll be here quite a lot, and I'll go up there when I can, and we'll manage it, and I think it will come out just fine. I'm very happy for her.

Wendell [Wendell Goler, Fox News Channel].

Responsibility for Impeachment

Q. Mr. President, just a couple of minutes ago you said that most of life's greatest wounds are self-inflicted. If I can paraphrase a recent request by Ken Starr, sir, I wonder if now you can tell us how much of the pain you went through last year was self-inflicted and how much due to excesses by other people, political, and Mr. Starr's excesses himself, sir?

The President. The mistake I made was self-inflicted, and the misconduct of others was not.

Yes.

Golden Parachutes

Q. Mr. President, in the case of—on the subject of corporate golden and platinum parachutes, particularly in the case of mergers and change of controlled packages, tens of millions, and more in most cases, are awarded to corporate officers. Directors just rubberstamp most of these sales to the detriment of other stockholders.

The President. What's the question?

Q. I'd like to know, what can and will the administration do to put a ceiling on this acrimonious alimony?

The President. Well, first of all, unless it's an abuse of the stockholders—and if it is, then we have Federal agencies which have jurisdiction over it—there's nothing we can do. We have made some changes in the tax laws—we did back in '93—that I thought were appropriate. But I don't think beyond that there's anything else we can do.

April [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks], and then John [John M. Broder, New York Times]. Go ahead. No. April. I'll call on all of you, but April first.

Q. Okay.

The President. April first. [Laughter] That's the way I feel up here sometimes. [Laughter]

Q. It should be that way, though. [Laughter]

Racial, Ethnic, and Religious Differences

Mr. President, America is ending the century with resurfacing scars of racism. And where does the issue of race, in terms of your agenda for 2000, stand? And are you still prepared to release your book on race by the end of your term? And what do you think about the comments that there's internal fighting over this book in the White House?

The President. There really isn't much. I have a draft now, and I'm working on it. And I do plan to release it. And it will stay at the center of my concerns not only now but after I leave the White House.

I think that after the cold war and with the sort of end of the ideological battles, you've seen, I think that the biggest problem the world faces today is the conflict people have over their racial and ethnic and their related religious differences. And I plan to be heavily involved in it at home and around the world for the rest of my life.

Q. When do you think the book will come out, though?

The President. I don't know. I've got a day job, you know, and I'm not going to—I've got a library full of books on race, and almost all of them are quite good. But I don't want to put it out unless I think it could make a difference, even if it just says what other people have said, somehow it can make a difference. And I'm trying to make sure how it ought to be done. I don't want to just put it out because I said I would put it out; I want to make sure when I do it, it at least achieves the objectives I'm trying to achieve.

John.

Health Care Coverage

Q. Mr. President, the number of Americans who are not covered by health insurance has increased since you took office by about 7 million. Do you agree with Vice President Gore that Senator Bradley's plan for covering most of those people is irresponsible and unaffordable, even though we're enjoying the healthiest economy in decades?

The President. First of all, I'm not going to get in the middle of the Gore-Bradley campaign—I know you want me to, but I'm not going to do that for you—[laughter]—because I want you to write about Syria and Israel tomorrow.

Let me say, first of all, Hillary and I said when the health care plan went down that the number of people uninsured would go up. And you would all draw the same conclusion. You would have drawn the same conclusion back then if you spent as many years and as much time studying it as we have.

So what happened is exactly what we've predicted would happen. Ironically, all those people who attacked me and said I was trying to socialize medicine, which was a ridiculous charge, trying to have the Government take over health care, which is a ridiculous charge, they got their way in that debate, and the consequence is now, we now have a higher percentage of Americans whose health care is funded by the Government than we did in 1993. But we also have a higher percentage of people without insurance.

Now, I'm not going to get in the middle of that, but I'll tell you what questions you ought to ask. First of all, anybody who makes any proposal, you have to make certain choices. If you want to cover people who don't have coverage and you accept the premise that they all can't afford it, you have to decide: Are you going to make them buy insurance; are you going to make their employers to pay in? If not, are you going to have the Government do it, or are you going to have a big tax subsidy?

All of those choices have problems with them. You know what the employer mandate problem was; we couldn't pass it, because a lot of people said it's too burdensome, even though we exempted small businesses and tried to give them subsidies. If you give all taxpayers subsidies, the problem is you have to give subsidies to people who already have insurance, and it may operate as an incentive for employers to drop people even faster.

So there is no perfect plan. Let's start with that. There is no plan without difficulty. If it were easy, somebody would have done it already.

Second question is how much are you going— if you're going to have the taxpayers involved, either in a tax incentive or expenditure program, how much does it cost, and what do you give up? And I think this is the way this thing ought to debate. People ought to actually try to figure out what the consequences of these plans are and evaluate them and decide.

You talked about the prosperity of the country. That's true. We are prosperous. But do we want to—how much do we want to spend on

that as compared with eliminating child poverty or continuing to improve education? Are we willing to get into the Social Security surplus? If we're not, are we willing to raise taxes for it? In other words, I think whatever the choice is, I think it's important that we be as honest as possible about what it costs, everybody be as honest as possible that there is no perfect plan. And then you be as honest as possible about what else you're giving up if you do it. It's a very complicated issue.

I did my best on it. I am gratified that we finally passed the Child Health Insurance Program. And we might get those numbers down again. We've now—I think we're at about 2 million. I think we've gone from 1 million to 2 million just in the last several months in the number of people covered under CHIP. And if we can get up to 5 million with CHIP and extra Medicare kids—and the States are really gearing up, now; they're really trying now—then maybe we can drive that number back down some.

And what the Vice President is trying to do is to target discrete populations, on the theory that you can cover more people for relatively less money. And that's his position, and he believes he can pass that.

Let me just say one other thing. It makes me proud to be a Democrat. I am proud that, number one, that my party is debating this. And as near as I can see, there is no debate going on in the other party. And if they pass the size tax cut plan, they're talking about, they not only won't have any money to help more people get health care; they'll either have to get into the Social Security surplus, or they won't have any more money for education or the environment or anything else. That's the first thing I want to say.

The second thing I want to say is I'm grateful that my country is doing so well that these kinds of issues can be debated in this way and be seriously debated, but I'm not going to get into handicapping the campaign. I can tell you what questions I think you should ask, how you should analyze it. But there is no perfect solution here. And I'm glad that the two candidates in the Democratic Party are debating it.

Yes, go ahead. I promised these people.

Space Program

Q. Mr. President, in the decade that's just closing, the American people have seen around

\$1.5 billion of their tax dollars lost in space, most recently either up in smoke in the Martian atmosphere or trashed on Mars itself. Does NASA need better quality control or better management? And sir, how do you answer Americans who say that that money could be much better spent on more urgent needs here on this planet?

The President. Well, let me try and answer all those questions. First of all, I think Dan Goldin has done a great job at NASA. He's adopted a lot of economy measures and gone for small and more discreet missions, including more unmanned missions, that I think make a lot of sense.

Secondly, we all use the slogan, "Well, this isn't rocket science." Well, this is rocket science. We're trying to take a spaceship the size of a boulder and throw it 450 miles into a very uncongenial atmosphere and hit a target, and it isn't easy. I regret that both of those things didn't succeed as much as we all—the first Mars mission we got quite a lot out of—because I think it's important. I think it's important not only for the American tradition of exploration, but it's important if we want to know what's—we have to keep doing this if we ever hope to know what's beyond our galaxy. We now know there are billions of them out there, and we know there are all these big black holes in the universe. We know all these things, and I think it's important that we find out.

The third point I'd like to make is that we actually do get a lot of benefits here on Earth from space travel. We get benefits in engineering advances, in material science, in environmental protection, and in medical science. We've made quite a lot of interesting health-related discoveries. I remember going down to the Space Center in Houston and talking to people who were from the vast medical complexes in Houston about all the interesting joint work they were doing.

So I think the American people get things out of it right now. I think we have gotten a lot out of it in the past, and I think we'll get more out of it in the future. So I have always been a big proponent of the space program. They need to analyze what went wrong and figure out how to fix it.

But just think of all the problems we've had along the way with the space program. This is too bad, but this is nothing compared to the tragedy when those astronauts burned to death

when their spaceship was still on the ground. I'll never forget that as long as I live. But they didn't quit, and America didn't quit, and I'm glad. And I don't think we should quit now.

Go ahead.

WTO-China Agreement

Q. Mr. President, one of the things left on your plate for next year is pushing the historic trade agreement with China on Capitol Hill. China's labor standards are clearly not what you and the world community would wish for. And the question is will it be difficult for you to sell that to members of your own party in Congress? And more broadly, what do you think are the prospects for Congress approving the WTO accord with China?

The President. Well, in our caucus some are for it; some are against it; and some have questions. We have a good deal of support for it and a good deal of opposition to it, and then some have questions. But I'm going to make an all-out effort to pass it. And I'll come back to your labor question in a minute.

I think it is plainly in America's interest. We gave up nothing, in terms of market access, to get this. It's very important that you understand that. What we gave in this was our assent to China's joining the WTO. What we got in return is much more market access on everything from farmers to people in the telecommunications industry. This is a huge economic benefit to the people of the United States. Plus, we have a big and growing trade deficit with China. We've got specific protections on dumping and antisurge protections. So it is in the economic interest of the United States.

Secondly, it is in the strategic interest of the United States. One of the great questions of the next several decades, as China's economy grows to match the size of its population, is whether China and the United States will have a constructive relationship or be at odds. I believe that, just as we worked together in the United Nations, even though we sometimes disagree, we will work together in the WTO. I think having China in a rule-based system for the international economy is profoundly important. And I think it would be a terrible mistake not to do it.

Now, do I agree with all their labor standards? No. But we shouldn't impose conditions on membership on China that we don't impose on any other country to get into the WTO.

What we should do, in any judgment, is to go back to the American position. We ought to begin a dialog on these labor initiatives within the WTO—that's all we ask for—and then we ought to get everybody to ratify the International Convention on Child Labor and observe it and deal with the other most egregious forms of labor abuses in the world. That is the right way to proceed here.

Last question.

National Sovereignty and Internationalism

Q. Mr. President, in future years, what do you see taking great precedence, sir, national sovereignty or international institutions? And how does the world prevent such slaughters as you've had recently in the Balkans, in Africa, or East Timor, without violating national sovereignty or interfering in international affairs?

The President. Well, first of all, at least from the International Declaration of Human Rights, 50 years ago, the world community recognized that sovereignty was not the only value in human society. The Russians, even though they've criticized our intervention in Kosovo—although now I might say the Russian soldiers are doing a very good job there, working with all the other allies—recently acknowledged in their signing off of the new charter of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, that the internal affairs of a country can become the legitimate concern of others, whether it's in East Timor—now, wait a minute.

So what I think will happen is national sovereignty is going to be very, very important for a very, very long time. But countries are becoming more interdependent, and they will still have to make decisions about the kinds of internal systems they will have for how their people live together and work together; they will still be able to make decisions about when they will or won't cooperate worldwide in many areas. But if you want the benefits of interdependence, you have to assume the responsibilities of it.

And we've all recognized that from the beginning of the United Nations, nobody, no country in the United Nations, has given up its sovereignty, even though some people still allege that's true. But the more interdependent the world grows, the more likely we are, in my judgment, to have more broadly shared prosperity, fewer wars, and a better life for everyone. That does not require us to give up our

national sovereignty, but it does require us to act in our real national interests.

Last question.

Minorities on the White House Staff

Q. Thank you. I have another question on the issue of race, and it's on your record of appointing minorities to top-level jobs in your administration. You've talked throughout your career about the importance of diversity and inclusion, and setting aside your Cabinet and Federal bench appointees, the top seven West Wing jobs in your administration have all been held by whites. Twenty-six people have had the jobs.

The President. I disagree with that. What are they?

Q. Well, Chief of Staff, National Security, Domestic Policy, Economic Adviser, White House Counsel, Press Secretary, Senior Adviser, Counselor—all those jobs have been held by—not a single person of color has held any of those jobs. And I wonder if you could tell us why?

The President. Well, first of all, you might be interested to know there were a couple of people of color that I tried to get to do those jobs but preferred other jobs in the administration. And they had jobs they liked better. And I have—you didn't point out that a lot of those jobs have been held by women, who also had never held those jobs before I came along. And I think that—all I can tell you is I have never not tried to recruit minorities for any job that was open in the White House. And I have never followed a quota system. I have had more blacks who have served in my Cabinet, more Hispanics who served in my Cabinet, more people from Asia have been appointed to my administration than any previous administration by far. It's not even close. So there was never a decision made. I now have a Hispanic woman who is my Deputy Chief of Staff.

So I never thought about those seven jobs to the exclusion of others. I've tried to make sure that the senior jobs—my political director is an African-American woman. Alexis Herman, before she became Secretary of Labor, was head of public liaison. I was unaware that those were the seven most important jobs in my Cabinet and in the White House in the way that you said them.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 185th news conference began at 2:36 p.m. in the Dean Acheson Auditorium at the State Department. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; President Hafiz al-Asad and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara of Syria; Juan Gonzalez, father of Cuban refugee Elian Gonzalez;

President Andres Pastrana of Colombia; President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine; former Senator Bob Dole; former Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree

December 8, 1999

Thank you. Thank you very much, Peter. Ladies and gentlemen, this is a wonderful ceremony every year, but this year it has been very special. I want to thank Wayne Newton and Renee Fleming, Marty Stuart, Al Roker—he's a good Santa Claus. *[Laughter]* I want to thank the cast from "Chicago" and Ricky Payton and the Urban National Youth Choir and, of course, Colonel Tim Foley and the Marine Corps Band, "The President's Own." The best perk of the Presidency is the Marine Corps Band, and I want to give them all a hand. *[Applause]* They've been wonderful.

For over 85 years now, our country has gathered around our National Christmas Tree to celebrate the beginning of this wonderful season of peace and hope. I am honored once again to be part of a tradition I have come to look forward to every year. For me, Christmas always starts now with the Pageant of Peace and the lighting of this beautiful Colorado spruce. And I am especially honored to be here to light the last tree of the 20th century.

In this sacred season, it is time for all of us to renew our commitment to give of ourselves, to reach out to those who are less fortunate, to reach out to those who are different from us, to build the one America of our dreams. In this Pageant of Peace, we celebrate Christmas, also the season of Hanukkah and Kwanzaa and others, all joined by a simple and universal message, that we are to love our neighbors as ourselves.

This holiday season, we Americans have an awful lot to be thankful for: Our Nation is at peace, and all around the world we are privileged to make peace, from Bosnia to Northern Ireland to the Middle East, the land where a

homeless child grew up to be the Prince of Peace.

Just today, in this season, I was proud to announce that after a long, long stalemate, the Israelis and the Syrians have agreed to meet again in just a few days to make their peace.

At the dawn of a new millennium, as we enjoy these wonderful performers and the timeless songs of all of our childhoods, let us rededicate ourselves to the true spirit of Christmas. As we light the National Christmas Tree, let us spread the light of peace and good will toward our family, our friends, our neighbors, and all those across the world, especially those who need it most.

Merry Christmas, happy new year, and God bless you.

I'd like to ask, now, the young scouts to come up and join me in lighting the Christmas tree. Caitlin Fong and Chris Alvarez—they're going to come up here. And didn't they do a good job? Let's give them another hand. *[Applause]*

Unlike the sissies, like me, they did it without any coats on, either. I thought they were wonderful. All right, you put your hands on the switch now, and I'm going to count from three down to one and tell you to flip it, okay? Ready? Three, two, one, go!

Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6 p.m. on the Elipse during the annual Christmas Pageant of Peace. In his remarks, he referred to Peter Nostrand, chairman, Christmas Pageant of Peace; entertainers Wayne Newton, Renee Fleming, and Marty Stuart; television weatherman Al Roker; and Ricky Payton, Sr., director, BET Urban Nation Voices of Youth H.I.P. H.O.P. Choir; and Col.

Timothy W. Foley, USMC, Director, "The President's Own" United States Marine Band.

Remarks on the Digital Divide and an Exchange With Reporters December 9, 1999

The President. Good morning. I just thought we ought to come out here in the brisk morning sunshine and wake up together. [Laughter] I want to thank the representatives here from all parts of the communications industry, from the foundation world, from various civil rights and other civic groups for being here, and coming in and giving me a chance to make this statement, because I had intended to go to Secretary Daley's conference today on bridging the digital divide, and because I'm going to Worcester, I couldn't do that. So they came in this morning, and we had a visit. I want to thank them for being here and for their commitment and for all those who aren't here but who are at the conference.

This conference is about closing the digital divide. And we have worked hard on that for the last several years in very specific contexts. Under the Vice President's leadership, we have worked to make sure that eventually a digital divide will not deprive business of the technology-savvy workers they need and will not hurt our educational systems today.

We started with the first NetDay in California, back in 1994, when only 3 percent of our classrooms were wired and only 14 percent of our schools were. And we've been working ever since. Now we know that, through the public-private partnerships that have been established all over America, through the Telecommunications Act and the E-rate, which the FCC set to make sure our poorest schools could afford to be connected, we're now up over 50 percent of the schools, from 3 percent, and over 80 percent of the classrooms, from 14 percent, since 1994. And I think that's pretty good.

I'm very pleased by that, and we're on our way to meeting our goal sometime next year of having all of our schools wired and, soon after that, all of our classrooms wired. I want to thank the Vice President and all the people in various industries who have supported us and helped us in this regard.

But as Secretary Daley's most recent "Falling Through the Net" report shows, there is still a lot more to do. We must connect all of our citizens to the Internet not just in schools and libraries but in homes, small businesses, and community centers. And we must help all Americans gain the skills they need to make the most of the connection. So this morning, as they go back to their meeting, I want to announce a series of new plans and partnerships that will expand on both these efforts to use the combined forces of public, private, and nonprofit sectors, finally to slam shut the digital divide.

First, I have decided to lead a prominent delegation, including top CEO's, on a new markets tour this spring to focus specifically on the digital divide out in America. As we've done on our previous tours, we will visit communities that have not fully participated in our Nation's economic growth. And yet, in the communities we'll also see how partnerships between the public and private sectors can unleash the power of the Internet to link children and adults to a lifetime of learning, to provide access to distant medical care, to empower parents, to assist job seekers, to enhance safety, and foster economic development.

Second, I am signing an executive memorandum to ensure that closing the digital divide will be a vital goal not just for Secretary Daley and for us here in the White House but throughout the Federal Government. For example, I'm directing Secretary Daley to work with the private sector to develop a national strategy for connecting all Americans to the Internet and directing Secretaries Daley, Riley, Herman, Cuomo, and Shalala to expand our growing network of community technology centers.

I just ask you all to think about this one thing. What do you believe the economic impact would be if Internet access and usage were as dense in America as telephone access and usage? I think it's clear that we need to keep working until we achieve this goal.

Third, with the help of many other groups, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights is launching an initiative to empower the entire civil rights community through an expanding civilrights.org website, through leadership forums and even modern-day freedom riders who will bring high-tech training to the doorsteps of nonprofit organizations.

As the Congress of National Black Churches has said, the digital divide is a key civil rights issue of the 21st century. That's why our civil rights organizations must be ready, wired, and able to lead the change.

Fourth, the Benton Foundation is bringing together companies from across the computing, telecommunications, software, and Internet industries, as well as the Urban League and several other large private foundations, to create the Digital Divide Network, an enormous clearinghouse of information for information on public and private efforts to bring technology to underserved communities. For the first time, we'll have one-stop shop for tracking our progress in every community and for learning exactly what's worked and what hasn't.

Now, these are the steps we'll take immediately. I want to thank all the leaders who are here today who are making these initiatives possible and all of those who are going to announce specific things that they and their companies and organizations are doing at the conference. I thank them for the other major commitments they will make, because there is no single, big silver bullet here, but we know we have to have a national commitment to closing the digital divide.

I also want to send out an invitation to all of your counterparts around the country who are not able to be with us today but who should join with us in this great national endeavor. Together we have the power to determine exactly what we want the Internet to become. And what we want it to do is to be an instrument of

empowerment, education, enlightenment, and economic advance and community building all across America, regardless of the race, the income, the geography of our citizens. And thanks to these people, we're going to be closer to achieving that goal.

Thank you very much.

Russia and the Situation in Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, there seems to be a divide with President Yeltsin this morning. He has given you something of a long-distance tongue lashing, saying that you've forgotten that Russia is a great power and has a nuclear arsenal. And he accuses you of taking an anti-Russian position.

The President. Well, I'll say again what I said yesterday. I don't think what they're doing will help them to achieve their goal. Their goal, their legitimate goal, is to defeat the Chechen rebels and to stop their terrorism within Russia, to stop their invasion of neighboring provinces like Dagestan. And I don't think displacing hundreds of thousands of civilians will achieve that goal. I don't know what else to say.

I haven't forgotten that. You know, I didn't think he'd forgotten that America was a great power when he disagreed with what I did in Kosovo. I mean, we can't get too serious about all the—let's not talk about what the leaders are saying and all these words of criticism. Let's focus on what the country is doing. Is it right or wrong? Will it work or not? What are the consequences?

I think—I don't agree with what's going on there. And I think I have an obligation to say so.

Thank you. I've got to go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:12 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House prior to departure for Worcester, MA. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

Memorandum on Narrowing the Digital Divide

December 9, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Narrowing the "Digital Divide:"
Creating Opportunities for All Americans in the Information Age

Information tools, such as the personal computer and the Internet, are increasingly important to economic success and full participation in all aspects of American society. People with computers and Internet access can use these tools to find a job, acquire new skills, start a small business, get lower prices for goods and services, and become more informed citizens.

Currently, not all Americans are enjoying the benefits of the Information Age tools. In July 1999, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration issued a report, *Falling Through the Net: Defining the Digital Divide*, which found a growing gap between those with access to these tools and those without. Black and Hispanic households are only two-fifths as likely to have Internet access as white households. Households with incomes of \$75,000 and higher, in urban areas, are more than twenty times as likely to have access to the Internet as households at the lowest income levels, and more than nine times as likely to have a computer at home. As information technology plays an ever-increasing role in Americans' economic and social lives, we cannot afford to leave anyone behind.

Fortunately, competition and advances in technology are driving down the cost of computers and Internet access, which will make these new Information Age tools affordable for more Americans. I believe that we should set a national goal of making computers and Internet access available for every American. Furthermore, we should explore ways of using technology to expand the economic opportunities for those Americans who have not yet enjoyed the benefits of our prosperity.

Accordingly, I am directing executive departments and agencies ("agencies") to take the following specific actions to help Americans benefit from advances in information technology:

1. The Secretary of Commerce shall work with the private sector and others to develop a national strategy for making computers and the Internet accessible to all Americans, with the goal of significantly narrowing the "digital divide."
2. The Secretary of Commerce shall continue to measure the level of connectivity of Americans to telecommunications and information tools, and report periodically on the relationship of income, education, race, gender, geography, and age to Americans' access to these tools.
3. The Secretaries of Education, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, Labor, and Commerce shall:
 - (a) expand our growing network of Community Technology Centers to provide access to technology for low-income Americans; and
 - (b) encourage the development of information technology applications that would help enable low-income Americans to start and manage their own small businesses.
4. The Secretaries of Education, Labor, and Commerce shall work with the private sector to upgrade the information technology skills of America's workforce, particularly workers living in disadvantaged urban and rural communities.
5. The Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Education, and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development shall highlight and disseminate the lessons learned from their grant programs and educational technology initiatives, with an emphasis on underserved citizens, to increase the number of communities across the Nation that could reap the benefits of information technologies for their residents.
6. Items 1-5 of this memorandum and my July 1, 1997, and November 30, 1998, memoranda shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations and consistent with agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.
7. The Vice President shall continue his leadership in coordinating the United States Government's electronic commerce strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of executive departments and agencies report

to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of this memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group (ECWG) in its annual report. To the extent that substantial new policy issues emerge, the analysis

and action on those policies will be coordinated in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of the ECWG, the National Economic Council, and the Domestic Policy Council, as appropriate.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Memorial Service for Firefighters in Worcester, Massachusetts

December 9, 1999

Thank you. First, to the wonderful families of our six fallen heroes, who the Vice President and I had a chance to visit with before the beginning of this service; to their colleagues in the fire department, their friends in this wonderful community; to the thousands of men and women in uniform who have come here to join the mayor, the Governor, the Senators, the Members of Congress, the Bishop and members of the clergy; President Whitehead and members of the firefighters; especially to Chief Budd and Frank Raffa and all the grieving members of this fire department, too.

I hope you can all sense how clearly we know, in spite of our talks, that words have a poor power to alleviate the pain you feel now. But as you look around this vast hall and know that there are thousands and thousands more standing outside and other places, we hope that by our collective presence we will speak louder than words in saying that your tragedy is ours, your men are ours, our whole country honors them and you. We grieve with you, and we will stay with you.

More than two and a half centuries ago, Benjamin Franklin wrote an essay entitled "Brave Men at Fires." He might have written it last week. This is what he said: "Neither cold nor darkness will deter good people from hastening to the dreadful place to quench the flame. They do it not for the sake of reward or fame, but they have a reward in themselves, and they love one another."

Today we honor six brave men who found a reward in firefighting, who loved one another, six men who, in turn, richly rewarded this community. So they hastened to the dreadful place to save others. For them, there was no other way.

In the book of Isaiah, God asks, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And Isaiah says, "Here am I. Send me."

When the question again rang from the smoking skies last week, Paul Brotherton, Timothy Jackson, Jeremiah Lucey, Jay Lyons, Joseph McGuirk, and Thomas Spencer also answered with a single voice: Here am I. Send me.

They were firefighters to the core, heroes already, as we have heard, to their friends and loved ones, not to mention the people they saved through the years. For all six, being a firefighter was more than a job; it was in their blood. So when they went into that building that night, they were following their dream to serve, to save lives, and to stick together.

Like their fellow firefighters everywhere, they embodied the best of our Nation of commitment and community, of teamwork and trust, values at the core of our character; values reflected in the daily service not only of those we lost but in this awesome parade of men and women who have come from all over our country and from some countries beyond our borders to honor their comrades and console their families.

Too often, we take them for granted, our firefighters. In the days ahead, I hope every American will find an occasion to thank those in their communities who stand ready every day to put their lives on the line when the alarm bell rings.

In the Book of Kings, we find the wonderful story of the prophet Elijah, who climbs a mountain to seek the voice of God. A wind shatters rocks in pieces, but the Bible says, the Lord is not in the wind. Then, there's an earthquake and then a fire, but God is not in the earthquake or in the fire. But then, the Scripture says, "after the fire, a still, small voice." It is

that still, small voice that spoke to those six good men, that moved their souls to service and sacrifice. The still, small voice that endures through the ages, that inspires the songs and words we have all shared today, that must now carry this group of grieving families through their grief to going on.

Today we thank God for the lives our fallen firefighters lived. We hope their families can remember the good and happy times and bring some smiles through their tears. We commend their souls to God's eternal loving care, and we pray that His still, small voice will bring strength and healing to these families and to

this wonderful community who loved them so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at Worcester's Centrum Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Raymond V. Mariano of Worcester; Gov. Argeo Paul Cellucci of Massachusetts; Bishop of Worcester Daniel P. Reilly; Dennis L. Budd, chief, Worcester Fire Department; Frank Raffa, president, Worcester Fire Fighters Local 1009; and Alfred K. Whitehead, general president, International Association of Fire Fighters.

Statement on Renewed Flooding in Vietnam

December 9, 1999

I was saddened to learn of renewed flooding in the central provinces of Vietnam, which were already inundated by heavy rains last month. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to all those who have suffered losses and are struggling to rebuild, including the families of many Americans of Vietnamese descent.

The United States is providing emergency assistance to support flood relief efforts, just as we provided almost \$600,000 in November to deliver supplies and build flood-resistant homes. We stand ready to provide further help to meet the urgent needs of those affected by the flooding and to help the Vietnamese people better withstand future flooding.

Statement on Signing Chattahoochee River Protection Legislation

December 9, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 2140, a bill that will enhance the protection of a 48-mile segment of the Chattahoochee River, a vital natural resource for the Atlanta metropolitan area and an important unit of the National Park System. This legislation ensures that the natural, scenic, recreational, and historic values of one of our Nation's great urban rivers will be preserved for the benefit of future generations.

This Act provides the foundation for a cooperative effort by the Federal Government, the State of Georgia, local governments, and private entities to link the separate units of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area through purchases of remaining open space along the Chattahoochee River corridor north of Atlanta. It gives the National Park Service

the authority to expand the land base of the recreation area from approximately 6,800 acres to 10,000 acres through a revision of the boundary, by adding undeveloped land within the 2,000-foot river bank corridors. The National Park Service also will be authorized to exclude some properties currently within the boundary that are no longer suitable for the park because they have been developed.

From the time the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area was established in 1978, the pace of residential and commercial development in the Chattahoochee River corridor has accelerated rapidly. A U.S. Census Bureau report issued earlier this year names Forsyth County, Georgia, where the recreation area boundary begins, the fastest-growing county in

the Nation. The three other counties in which the recreation area lies are also experiencing a surge in growth. This Act will enable the National Park Service to spend funds that were appropriated in the 105th Congress, as well as funds that have been or will be contributed by State and local governments and private interests, to acquire the remaining open space in the Chattahoochee River corridor before those properties are developed for residential and commercial purposes.

The Act is strongly supported on a bipartisan basis by Georgia's congressional representatives, Georgia State and local government officials, the National Park Service, and private organizations,

including the Trust for Public Land, which has played a key role in bringing together the various interests involved and developing a vision for the future of this critical area. It is with great respect and gratitude for those who made this legislation possible that I sign H.R. 2140 today.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2140, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-154.

Statement on Signing Legislation To Establish Federal Criminal Penalties for Commerce in Depiction of Animal Cruelty

December 9, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 1887, a bill that would establish Federal criminal penalties for the "creation, sale, or possession" of "a depiction of animal cruelty" with the intent to distribute such a depiction in interstate or foreign commerce, except when the depiction has "serious religious, political, scientific, educational, journalistic, historical, or artistic value."

I strongly support the objectives of this legislation. Its enactment should assist in reducing or eliminating some of the deplorable and indefensible practices that were identified during the Congress's deliberations on the bill and described in the House Judiciary Committee report on the bill.

Concerns were raised, however, during congressional consideration of H.R. 1887 that its application in certain contexts may violate the First Amendment of the Constitution. It is im-

portant to avoid constitutional challenge to this legislation and to ensure that the Act does not chill protected speech. Accordingly, I will broadly construe the Act's exception and will interpret it to require a determination of the value of the depiction as part of a work or communication, taken as a whole. So construed, the Act would prohibit the types of depictions, described in the statute's legislative history, of wanton cruelty to animals designed to appeal to a prurient interest in sex. I will direct the Department of Justice to enforce the Act accordingly.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1887, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-152.

Statement on Signing the U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999

December 9, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 2401, the "U.S. Holocaust Assets Commission Extension Act of 1999." This legislation, which

extends the mandate of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States for 1 year, is a clear demonstration of

America's determination to pursue justice for Holocaust victims and their families.

The United States has led the renewed struggle for justice and compensation on behalf of the victims of the Holocaust. One year ago, delegations from 44 countries and 13 nongovernmental organizations met at the Washington Conference on Holocaust-Era Assets convened by the Department of State and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. During the Washington Conference, I announced the public and governmental members of the Presidential Advisory Commission, which was created to investigate and advise on the fate of Holocaust victims' assets that came into the possession or control of the United States Government.

Since then, the Presidential Advisory Commission has been hard at work and estimates that it will have to examine more than 45 million pages of documents. To our Nation's credit, the amount of information to be reviewed increases every week as remaining Nazi-era documents are declassified. The U.S. Holocaust Assets

Commission Extension Act of 1999 provides the Presidential Advisory Commission with additional time and authorizes additional resources needed to complete the review of the historical record of American activity during one of the darkest periods of this century.

The Commission's research demonstrates irrefutably that we in the United States are willing to hold ourselves to the same high standard of truth about Holocaust assets to which we have held other nations. The extension of the Presidential Advisory Commission sends a strong message, both at home and abroad, that we are committed to examining difficult aspects of our history and determining how to build a better world for our children in the next millennium.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 2401, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-155.

Statement on Signing the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System Act

December 9, 1999

I am pleased to sign into law S. 1866, the "John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System Act." Renaming the Coastal Barrier Resources System in Senator Chafee's honor is an appropriate tribute to a man who worked so hard—and so successfully—to find common ground in the struggle to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

Senator Chafee authored the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, a law which protects pristine and fragile coastal barriers from development by restricting Federal expenditures that would otherwise encourage such development. This Act has successfully minimized the loss of human life by discouraging development in high-risk areas. It also has reduced the wasteful expenditures of Federal resources and protected the natural resources associated with coastal barriers. Today, approximately 3 million acres of fragile coastal

barrier lands are part of the Coastal Barrier Resources System created by the Act.

Senator Chafee's legacy of achievements in environmental protection is extraordinary and far ranging. He worked tirelessly to ensure the protection of our land, air, and water and he took special pride in the success of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act. For this reason, it is especially fitting that we honor Senator Chafee by renaming the Coastal Barrier Resources System as the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1866, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-167.

Statement on Signing the Digital Theft Deterrence and Copyright Damages Improvement Act of 1999

December 9, 1999

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3456, the "Digital Theft Deterrence and Copyright Damages Improvement Act of 1999." This legislation will increase for the first time since January 1988 the statutory damages that a copyright holder may recover for certain copyright infringements. This increase in penalties would be an effective deterrent to would-be pirates of copyrighted works. This Act also directs the United States Sentencing Commission to issue sentencing guidelines to ensure that sentences for criminal offenses against intellectual property are sufficiently severe to deter such offenses.

I fully support efforts to make sentences in criminal cases involving intellectual property offenses true deterrents against the commission of those offenses and am pleased that H.R. 3456 will require the Sentencing Commission to address this matter on an expedited basis.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 9, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 3456, approved December 9, was assigned Public Law No. 106-160.

Message on the Observance of Ramadan, 1999

December 9, 1999

Warm greetings to Muslims across America and around the world as you celebrate the start of Ramadan, a holy month of prayer, fasting, reflection, and good works.

Islam is one of the world's most prominent religions and a source of profound strength and guidance for millions of Americans. Members of the Muslim American community have made enormous contributions to our national life. I am especially pleased that my alma mater, Georgetown University, has named its first Muslim chaplain, reflecting the increasing recognition in our country of the Islamic faith and our firm commitment to religious tolerance.

Sadly, in too many communities around the world, Muslims and other believers are unable to worship according to their religious traditions. We look forward to the day when people of all faiths can freely express their beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination.

Each year, Ramadan brings a promise of renewal and hope for the world. I pray that, as the new moon rises, we will witness the beginning of a new era of tolerance around the globe. As the followers of Islam celebrate the revelation of God's word to Muhammad, we join you in honoring his call for harmony and peace.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

December 9, 1999

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. It's been a long but a wonderful night. I am delighted to see you all. The most important thing I can say is, thank you. I thank Joe Andrew for his increasingly energetic leadership. [Laughter]

I thank Ed Rendell. For those of you who don't know him, you will get to know him. Philadelphia had lost jobs for 30 years before Ed Rendell became mayor, and now they're gaining jobs rapidly. They had lost population; they had had a crime rate going up—everything. Do you

remember how the Vice President used to say in the '92 campaign, everything that should be up is down, everything that should be down is up? That was Philadelphia times five. Now everything that should be up is up, thanks to Ed Rendell, and he's going to keep our party up, as well.

I want to thank Loretta Bowen and John Cooke and John Merrigan and Carol Pensky for this dinner tonight. It was wonderful. And I want to thank my friend Walter Shorenstein. You have already honored him, and you heard the Vice President talk about the big achievements in his life. I think it is remarkable: He reflects, first, a characteristic I've seen in so many of you. You've been so phenomenally generous. Many of you in this room tonight could be making more money in a short run under the other party's policies. You know it as well as I do. And you came here because you believe that we all ought to go forward together and that we ought to keep our eye on the long run, social justice and the long-term strength of America. And Walter has stood for that all of his life.

He is also an uncommonly decent person. I'll just tell you two things. First of all, not very long ago I was out in Northern California, and I had a day to kill, and I hadn't seen my little girl in a long time. And it's inconvenient for the President to go any place quietly. Walter had a place south of San Francisco; he let me go there and spend the day with my daughter. That meant more to me than anything he could do for me. I'll never forget it as long as I live.

And I'll tell you something else. You heard the Vice President say he helped to save the Giants. I was talking to Walter one night and I said, "You know, Walter, I think the greatest baseball player that ever lived was Willie Mays." Next time I go to dinner at Walter's house, Willie Mays is there. *[Laughter]* And I might add, number 8 on ESPN's list of the 50 greatest athletes of the 20th century. Almost high enough.

So this guy has never lost his sense of personal things, which I think matter most to us all when it's all said and done. And I thank you for honoring him. I hope that all of you feel honored, to some extent, through him. Sometimes I think we take and take and take, and we don't take enough time to give and to say thank you. And I'm honored that we could do this for Walter and, through him, for

all of you who stick with us through thick and thin.

I also want to say a word about the Vice President and Mrs. Gore. I have spent a lot of time studying the history of our country and the institutions that have made it work. When I became a candidate for President, Hillary and I talked about a lot of things. I said, "I'll tell you one thing I'm going to do. If I win this nomination, I'm going to appoint somebody to be my running mate that I would feel good if I dropped dead, if something, God forbid, happened to me, that I am convinced would be a great President. And in the meanwhile, I'm going to make it a real job."

You know that when Harry Truman became President, he did not even know about the atomic bomb? A lot of people don't know that. Franklin Roosevelt had a lot of great qualities, but we had lost a lot of Presidents up to then, and they were still just picking Vice Presidents for the most sort of shallow political reasons. Thank God, Harry Truman turned out to be a great man and a great President.

And then it got a little better. When John Kennedy picked Lyndon Johnson, he was ready for the job. When Dwight Eisenhower picked Richard Nixon, he had broader responsibilities. And then when Jimmy Carter picked Walter Mondale, he qualitatively increased the role of the Vice President. And to his credit, President Reagan followed his lead in giving more responsibility to then-Vice-President Bush. But I want every person in this room to know that Al Gore has had, 2, 3, 4, 5, times as much responsibilities as any person who has ever held this office and he has done a superb job discharging every single one of them.

You know, we've had a lot of fun together over the years, and we kid each other mercilessly. When Arkansas plays Tennessee, he usually wins; sometimes I do. And he always says, "You know, the difference between you and me," he said to me, "is you don't have a vote in Congress, and I do." *[Laughter]* "At least, every now and then I do. And whenever I vote, we win." *[Laughter]*

Well, we're all celebrating this economy, but he cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate to make it a reality. And when we were fighting to pass commonsense gun legislation in the Senate after Columbine, and all we wanted to do was to apply the Brady background checks to

the gun shows and the urban flea markets, require child trigger locks on the guns, he cast the tie-breaking vote in the Senate to pass it.

One day we were sitting around in one of our weekly lunches—which I miss now, as I confessed in my press conference—he said, “You know, we’ve got to do something about getting more computers into the schools, and not just a computer for their educational programs. We’ve got to hook them up to the Internet, and it will revolutionize educational opportunities. But if we don’t do anything about it, only wealthier schools will get it.”

So he came up with this idea that the FCC, now that we’re revolutionizing telecommunications—something else he was the lead on our administration when we rewrote the telecommunications law for the first time in 60 years, or he created 300,000 new high-wage jobs in America—he said, “We’ve got to give a discount to the poor schools, to the hospitals, to the libraries, so they can afford to hook on the Internet. And we need to try to get the business community in. We’ve got this whole private sector group to come help us get the connections done.”

Now, when we started this in 1994—it was his idea—3 percent of the classrooms and 14 percent of the schools were connected; most schools just had one connection in the library or something—1994, 3 percent of the classrooms, 14 percent of the schools. Today, thanks to him, over 50 percent of the classrooms in over 80 percent of the schools in America have an Internet connection. And I could go through what he’s done in helping us to reduce the nuclear threat and dealing with a whole wide range of foreign challenges and the environment. We set aside 40 million roadless acres in our national forests not very long ago. This administration has now protected more land than any administration in the history of the United States, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt, thanks to his leadership on the environment.

So what I want you to know is, he has been a good and faithful servant of the people of this country. And he knows more than any person who has ever held that job. And he’s had more experience than anybody who’s run in my lifetime that is relevant to this work.

The other thing I would like to say is, his wife has given us, Hillary and me, personally, but our administration and this country, many

gifts. I want to thank them for the family conference that they run every year in Tennessee, that many of you have been a part of. What they taught us about family leave and child care, health care for children, many other issues. And I want to thank her for forcing me to recognize the woefully inadequate response that the people of the United States have to the needs of mental health in this country, and taking a lead and making us do better.

I say this because this is a political dinner, but most of us are here—and we’re Democrats instead of Republicans because we’re motivated by these kinds of issues and because we think America should go up or down together. And one way or the other, if we’re going up, we’ve got to go up together. And I honor them, and I thank them for that.

I will be very brief in what I want to say to you. There’s no point in my reciting what you already know about the progress of the last 7 years. Except I will say that there is something special about the fact that it was done by our party, because we believe you can advance the economy and social justice at the same time.

So it’s not just 20 million jobs and the longest peacetime expansion in history; in February it will be the longest one in history. Look underneath that: the lowest female unemployment in 40 years; the lowest single-parent household poverty in 42 years; the lowest African-American unemployment and poverty ever recorded; the lowest Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest Hispanic poverty in a generation; the last 3 years, finally people in the bottom of the income groups, with their income rising as fast or faster than those in the top. This is a democratic recovery, and we’re going forward together.

I want to say this about the next 14 months of my term and the decision the American people will make about the leadership of this country, the Presidency and in the Congress for the next 4 years. Over Thanksgiving I had my whole extended family with me, and then we had a few friends come up to Camp David and a lot of kids around, and I just love that.

And this beautiful little 6 year old girl looked at me, and she said, “Now, how old are you, really”—6 year old girl. [Laughter] And I said, “I’m 53.” And she said, “That’s a lot.” [Laughter] And lamentably, she’s right about that. And I want to say this, and I want every one of you to think about it. In my lifetime, in my

53 years, our country has never had the blessings and the opportunities and, therefore, the responsibilities it has at this moment. We have never had at the same time a strong economy, an improving social climate, strong self-confidence among the American people, with the absence of crisis at home or threat abroad.

We had an economy that was very strong in the early sixties that came a cropper because of the competing demands of civil rights and poverty at home and the war in Vietnam abroad. You can go back all through the 20th century, and you will not find a time when we've had prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, the absence of internal crisis or external threat.

And what I want to say to you is, that imposes on our party not bragging rights for the last 7 years but an enormous responsibility to keep the American people focused on the future. Anybody can take a deep breath and summon themselves to great efforts in tough times. The great British essayist Samuel Johnson said, "Nothing so concentrates the mind as the prospect of one's own destruction."

Every one of us can remember when times were tough and we got right at it. But also, most people can remember a time in your personal life, your family life, your business life, when things were going so well, you just lost your concentration or became indulgent or got distracted. This country faces a great choice here.

The Vice President talked about the tax cut that Congress passed that I vetoed. I was so proud of the American people because times are good and people have been through tough times. And a lot of people still have difficulties in their own lives, and they could have said, "Hey, give us a break here. Don't tell me about paying off the debt for the first time since 1835 or this other rigamarole. Just show me the money."

But they didn't do it. They said just what he said, that we like what we have and we want to go on. We want to leave a stronger America for our children. We want to get out of debt. We want to deal with the aging of America. We want to be able to invest in our children's education. What I want to tell you—I think that's what is at stake here: whether we will assume the responsibility of our success or indulge ourselves and squander it.

Yes, you know, you can say whatever you want to about how I say whatever I say about the Vice President. Everything I said was true, and I believe it. But I'm a lot more interested than the whole country in our children and grandchildren even than I am him. I'm sitting here talking to you about whether we're going to make the most of this prosperity. And I've been here for 53 years. And like the kid said, that's a lot. And we've never had this kind of chance before.

Are we going to deal with the aging of America or not? We're going to double the number of people over 65 in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. We could take Social Security out beyond the life of the baby boomers by doing one simple thing: Just take the interest we're saving on the debt from not spending the Social Security surplus and put it into Social Security. And we ought to do that. We can lengthen the life of Medicare; we can provide prescription drug benefits to the 75 percent of our seniors who can't afford the medicine that they need.

We can radically improve our schools. We can deal with the challenge of global warming and all the other environmental challenges and do it with new technology and smart investments that will grow this economy faster, not weaken it. We can extend economic opportunity to the people and places that have been left behind. In spite of all the happy talk, unemployment tonight is 73 percent on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. I'm going home to the Arkansas Delta tomorrow, right across the river from Memphis, where the Vice President spent countless days. And he can tell you that, except for the Native American reservations, the poorest parts of America are still in the Delta between Memphis and New Orleans or in Appalachia or in any number of our inner cities or upstate New York, which would be 49th in job growth if that were a separate State, or the rural areas of New England and any number of other places. So I think we ought to give people big incentives to invest there, the same incentives we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America and Asia and Africa, to try to grow the American economy now in the places that have been left behind.

No, it's not fashionable to talk about, because when I talk about trade, I make everybody mad. And he's doing a pretty good job of it, too. [Laughter] But let me just say, I think I'm right

about saying that labor standards and the environment ought to be a part of the global economy. And you know I'm pro-trade. I don't think you can make a serious case that the world is not better off. And globalization is not a bad thing if you do it right.

You look at the places he mentioned. Do you really believe that we would have had to go to war in Kosovo and use our military power in Bosnia to stop slaughter there if the Balkans were the richest place in Europe, instead of the poorest? Do you believe we would have had 800,000 people slaughtered in 90 days in Rwanda in a tribal war if their incomes were 10 times higher than they are?

And I have to say—you mentioned Ireland. I'm very proud of the role we played in the Irish peace process. And I'm very proud of Senator George Mitchell. [Applause] But I want to tell you something. You can clap for him. But make no mistake about it, the fact that some American banks were sending their data processing to be done in Northern Ireland by poor people who didn't have any other jobs, the fact that the Irish Republic had the fastest growing economy in Europe, and all those young people saw what was going on in the rest of Europe, and they said, "This is nuts. Let's let it go." That had a lot to do with that.

So we have to find a way to put that human face on the global economy. And we've got to decide who we trust to do it and how to get there.

Finally, there are lots of other things we could talk about. We've got to be willing to take on some difficult questions in the future. You know, all that nice talk Al said to me about all these tough decisions that I had to make. When we first got together after the election he said, "You know, I've spent a lot more time in Washington, and I'm going to tell you, you can't imagine how hard these decisions are going to be. And it's just like developing muscles; it's going to be agonizing for you at the beginning, and you've just got to grit your teeth and make them, and it will get easier and easier and easier."

And like so many things he told me, it turned out to be right. But it was a lot easier because he was there with me, helping me. He was right when we took on guns. He was right when we took on big tobacco. He was right when we took on the health care industry on the Pa-

tients' Bill of Rights and on so many other issues. So we have a lot of things to do.

Now, I just want to make one last point. I'm going to keep working for the next 14 months, and I think the best thing I can do for all of our candidates, from top to bottom, is to try to be the best President I can be. And I'll do my best to do that. And I am profoundly committed to renting back the House and Senate because a lot of those people lost their seats, a lot of those people lost their seats because they voted for the economic plan and they voted for the Brady bill and they voted for the assault weapons ban and they took the tough decisions. And unfortunately, they had to stand for reelection in 1994, before the American people knew we were right. And we owe it to them. And besides that, I've got a minor interest in what happens in New York. [Laughter]

But let me say to all of you, if I had this proverbial encounter tonight, and somebody said, "Well, you can't stay 14 months. You've got to go." And the genie showed up and said I could have not three wishes but one. It wouldn't be anything I've said on this list. I would wish for an America that is truly one America, that can bridge the lines of race and gender and religion and sexual orientation, all these things that divide us.

If you look around the world today—that's why we're going to try to pass the hate crimes bill. That's why we're going to try to pass the employment and nondiscrimination act. Because if you look at the world we're living in at the end of the cold war, when people are not artificially bound into blocks where they feel threatened by their very existence, it was inevitable that we'd have an upsurge of nationalism and some of the things that have happened.

But it is unconscionable that on the verge of a new millennium, when there are 20,000 people making a living on eBay trading, when we're about to decode the whole mystery of the human genome, when some people think we'll find out what's in the black holes in space in a few years, it is unconscionable that the biggest problem society faces is the oldest problem of society, which is that we're afraid of, prone to hate, prone to dehumanize, and prone to brutalize people who are different from us.

There is so much hope around the world. I announced yesterday the resumption of talks next week between the Israelis and the Syrians.

I know they're working hard to make peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians. We even have the Greeks and the Turks talking about Cyprus. We've got all kinds of things going.

And for all of the hate crimes and terrible things that have happened in America, we're not bedeviled like that, but it's still there under the surface. One of our major newspapers today had two breathtaking pictures, side-by-side, on the front page of the young soldier that was beaten to death and the other young soldier that was convicted of killing him. He was beaten to death because he was gay.

And you know, I'm not running for anything; I'm just telling you I felt as a human being. I looked at that and my heart ached for that young man whose life was extinguished. Then my heart ached for the young man whose life was ruined, because somewhere along the way people taught him—you're not born feeling this way—people taught him that it was okay to dehumanize that other young person, who wore the uniform of his country. Both of them have committed to die for this country if I send them some place, God forbid, which might cost them their lives. And yet, that happened.

So I say to you, not to bring you down but to lift you up, the reason I am working as hard as I can to be a good President, the reason I'm here with you, besides to thank you, the reason I feel as strongly as I do about the Vice President and all of our campaigns for the Sen-

ate and the House is that we may never have this chance again. And we have to make the most of it. And we owe it to the American people to get out there and get our message out, stand up, fight, show up for them every day. Never forget that the people we're really fighting for are the people that served our food here tonight and their children. And countless other people who will never have a chance to come to an event like this.

And I'm telling you, if you do what you know to do next year and you tell people what the record is and what we stand for, then we'll have a great 14 months, and we'll have a great celebration in November of 2000.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:30 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Mayor Edward G. Rendell of Philadelphia, general chair, Democratic National Committee; dinner cochaIRS Loretta Bowen, director of political affairs, Communications Workers of America, John F. Cooke, president, the Disney Channel, Carol Pensky, former treasurer, Democratic National Committee, and John Merrigan, cochair, Democratic Business Council; Walter Shorenstein, president, Shorenstein Company LP; and former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland.

Remarks to the Chamber of Commerce in Little Rock, Arkansas

December 10, 1999

Thank you. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, Shelby; and thank you, Joe, for your leadership. They've both been friends of mine a long time, and it's good to see this chamber so well led. And thank you, Joe, for your pledge of support.

Congratulations to Bob and to Beverly on the well-deserved award. I'm delighted to be up here with Dr. Reed and Jesse and Janet, and to be here with all of you. I thank Senator Pryor and Congressman Snyder for joining me, and Mayor Dailey. I think our speaker, Bob Johnson, is here, and I was accompanied this

morning by Secretary Riley, the Secretary of Education, from Washington, and Rodney Slater, the Secretary of Transportation. I thank them for coming with me.

I want to thank you for this award. Herschel Friday was a friend of mine. I was sitting here, racing through my mind, over all the things he asked me to do over the 12 years I was Governor, all the time there was one more emergency at Oak Lawn Park, which he and I had a vested interest in. I don't know if Beth Friday is here, but I want to thank them both for their friendship, and thank you for this

award. And Beth, if you're here, I love you, and I'm glad to see you. Thank you.

I also want to thank the Philander Smith choir. You know, whenever I have to take a trip, I stay up late the night before, and I try to get all the work done that I might have done in the office if I had stayed there. I talked to Hillary last night for the last time about 1 o'clock in the morning. She said to tell you hello, and she's doing well, and Chelsea's doing fine.

But anyway, when I got up this morning, I was a little tired. I walked in here, and I heard the Philander choir singing, and I'm ready to speak now. [Laughter]

U.S Military Aircraft Tragedies

Let me say something I'm sure a lot of you know, but this is my first opportunity to speak to the press today. I want to express my profound sadness for the crash of the C-130 that flew out of the Little Rock Air Force Base, crashed in Kuwait last night with—96 people were on board; 3 were killed; 21 were injured. They were trying to land in terrible, terrible weather. And I thank them for their service, and I extend my deepest condolences to the families of those who were lost.

We also lost a helicopter off the coast of San Diego yesterday with 18 people aboard; 11 were recovered safely. We have not recovered the other seven, and our thoughts and prayers are with them. I say this just to make a simple point, that you might mention the next time you see someone in uniform. We do not have to be at war for that to be dangerous work. Most people have no earthly idea how dangerous it is to fly those fast planes and to fire those powerful weapons and to undergo the rigorous training that they have to undergo.

We are richly repaid for it. We didn't lose a single pilot in combat in the action in Kosovo, but it is inherently dangerous work. So when you see some people from the air base, thank them for putting their lives on the line for the rest of us every day.

Chamber of Commerce

Shelby mentioned a couple of times that I have worked very closely with this chamber for a long time. I don't know how many times I went to your old building trying to hustle some business for the greater Little Rock area or deal with some issue that was before us in common.

I think you picked the right changes; there are big—I mean, the right theme. There are big changes coming. And the pace of change will only accelerate in the years ahead. I love the logo. I asked Shelby who designed the logo, and he told me, and congratulations to you.

I think that what I would like to do today is to talk a little about the library and, first, a little about the last 7 years and the next 14 months that I have left to serve as your President. I want to begin by thanking the people of Arkansas who gave me the chance to serve for a dozen years as Governor, without which I could never have become President, who gave me the chance to learn over those dozen years what makes things really work, which is very often not what dominates the headline, the time, and the energy and the emotions of people in Washington.

I want to thank those who serve in this administration. We have been so blessed. I want to begin by mentioning Mack McLarty, who came down with me today. He was my first Chief of Staff; he oversaw the passage, by a single vote in both Houses, of the '93 economic plan, which was the single most important thing that gave us this economic boom, that got rid of that deficit, that drove the interest rates down, and got investment up in this country. He also oversaw the passage of NAFTA, the Brady bill, the family and medical leave law, and set in motion a teamwork that, according to one Harvard scholar, he said I had the most loyal Cabinet since Thomas Jefferson's second administration. That is in no small measure because of the leadership that Mack McLarty gave to the White House in those early days. And I thank him for it, and equally, for his later work as our Special Envoy to Latin America, where we have reestablished ties that had been too long neglected with so many countries.

I want to thank Secretary Slater, who is here with me today; James Lee Witt, the most popular FEMA Director in the history of the country; Bob Nash; Bruce Lindsey; Nancy Hernreich, who came down with me today; Mel French, our Protocol Ambassador; Janis Kearney; Carl Whillock, who came with me today, the farmers' advocate in the Department of Agriculture; Mike Gaines now runs the Federal Parole Commission; my scheduler, Stephanie Streett; Carol Rasco, my former Domestic Policy Adviser, now runs the national America Reads program, has over a thousand colleges in America with young

people volunteering to go into the grade schools and make sure every child can read independently by the age of 8; Brady Anderson from Helena—a lot of you know him—is now the Director of the Agency for International Development, the most important agency in the Federal Government in dealing with the poor countries of the world; Craig Smith was my political director and had a number of other important jobs in the White House—probably the least political person to work with us from any State; Hershel Gober, the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs; young Kris Engskov from Berryville is here with me today. I first met him when he was 4 years old. Now he's my personal aide. So between Kris and Nancy, at least Arkansas still runs most of my life.

There are literally scores of others I might mention from our State who have come to Washington, who are never noted in the press but who serve with real distinction, and I am grateful for them. And you should be proud of them.

Now let me just take a minute to sort of walk back through memory lane. In October of 1991, when I declared for President on the steps of the old State House, I did it because I became convinced that there was a limit to what Arkansas could do unless America changed direction and because I really felt that our country had an enormous potential to make the most of these big changes we've been talking about.

But it was a time of economic distress, social decline, deep political division, and the whole enterprise of Government had been profoundly discredited. It's almost impossible to remember what it was like just a few short years ago.

I felt, based on what I had learned working with you, that the country ought to work more like we tried to work. Yes, we'd have our political differences; yes, we'd fight at election time; sometimes, we'd fight in-between; but that we ought to have a unifying theory of the public's business. And so I asked the American people to give me a chance, along with Vice President Gore, to implement a vision of opportunity for every responsible American, to challenge every citizen to be responsible, and to build a community that involved all of our people in a world where America was still the leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity.

And we battled through the politics; we battled through a whole flurry of special interests; we battled through our fair share of mistakes;

but we never forgot who we were working for or what the mission was. And I hope that all of you, without whom I would never have become President, can take some pride in the results.

We have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. In February it will become the longest economic expansion ever, including that which embraced World War II. We have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history. We have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest poverty rate among single-parent households in 46 years, the first back-to-back balanced budgets and surpluses in 42 years, and the Federal Government is now the smallest it's been in 37 years. It worked, and I thank you.

Along the way, the society got stronger. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years, and I might add the Brady bill background checks stopped 470,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers who shouldn't have gotten handguns from buying them, and not single Arkansan missed a day in the deer woods because of it.

About 20 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave law. I meant to ask Secretary Riley and forgot to, how many millions, but as many millions of young people are now getting the HOPE scholarship, the \$1,500 tax credit, which effectively makes community college available for 100 percent of the people in America today.

Ninety percent of our kids are immunized against serious childhood diseases. In 1994, when the Vice President and I said we wanted to connect all our classrooms and schools to the Internet, 3 percent of our classrooms and 14 percent of our schools had some Internet connection. Today, over 50 percent of our classrooms and over 80 percent of our schools are connected, and we'll be over 90 percent in the new millennium.

This is changing the nature of opportunity in America. I also know that something that's been very interesting here that the Governor and others have been interested in this State is providing health insurance to children. There are 2 million more children with health insurance under the Child Health Insurance Partnership we formed with the States in the Balanced

Budget Act of 1997, something that's very important to Hillary. In the last budget, we provided funds to help the hospitals who are unduly burdened by the Medicare cuts and provide special funds to train young doctors at children's hospitals throughout America, something that will really help the Arkansas Children's Hospital here, and we're very proud of that.

While the economy got better, the air got cleaner; the water got cleaner. We set aside more land in protected areas than any administration in the entire history of the country except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. And here's something you might like to know that you deserve more credit for, the people do, than our particular administration, although we have accelerated it quite a bit: The United States, in the production of the volume of waste of all kinds, whether it's what you throw away in the garbage at home or in industrial prospects, is at a 20-year low, even though we have 50 million more people than we had 20 years ago. We are the number one recycling nation in the entire world now, and you can be proud of that.

We've also had 150,000 young people serve our communities in AmeriCorps, like those I met just down the block from the Governor's mansion when the terrible tornado whipped through Little Rock not very long ago.

America has been able to be a force for peace and prosperity in the world. We've had over 270 trade agreements. We just saw another successful move in our long efforts to bring peace to Northern Ireland. I announced a couple of days ago that the Israelis and the Syrians would come back to the United States next week, after 4 long years of not talking, to try to finish the work of making a lasting peace in the Middle East. That's a pretty good Christmas legacy to give, and I'm thrilled about that.

We have worked to make our children safer from the kind of problems that will dominate the 21st century: the ethnic and racial cleansing and religious cleansing you saw in Bosnia and Kosovo; the presence of terrorism and the threat of weapons of mass destruction. And I can say to you today, after 7 years, I am grateful that I've had the chance to serve. I am more convinced than I was when I went there that we had the right mission with the right ideas. And I am absolutely convinced that I never would have been able to do what I have done to play my part in this remarkable renaissance if I

hadn't had the dozen years I had working with all of you as Governor. And I thank you for that.

Now I'd also like to say that I get a little nervous when I get awards. Normally, I don't think Presidents should get awards, at least when they're alive. [Laughter] I mean, the job is honor enough. Although, I must say, I like this one. I'm going to put it up in the White House. But I think it's important to remember that a significant chunk of the time that I have been given to serve is still out there.

They said we wouldn't get anything done this year, and then at the end of the budget session we had 100,000 more teachers to bring smaller classes to the early grades; we had 50,000 more police to keep the crime rate coming down; we had 60,000 housing vouchers to help people move from welfare to work and find a place to live, to keep the welfare rolls coming down; we doubled the amount of funds for after-school programs, something that's really important to increase learning and keep our kids off the street when they may not have any adult supervision.

For the first time I got the Congress to give me some money to give States to identify schools that are failing and turn them around or shut them down, something I think is very important.

There are a lot of things I tried to do I didn't pass: the Patients' Bill of Rights, the minimum wage, the hate crimes legislation, aid for school construction. I'll try to get them next year.

I think Arkansas has done well in these last 7 years. You know, the whole time I was Governor, we went through that terrible time in the eighties when we had a bicoastal economy and the country looked like it was doing well, but the middle of the country wasn't. And then we had the recession that everybody suffered through. Not a single month—I had one month the whole time I was Governor, until 1992 when I ran for President, only one month when our unemployment rate was below the national average. Then it got down below the national average in 1992 because, I think, of the accumulated efforts that a lot of us made over many years. In 1992 we ranked first or second—I never saw the final figures—in job growth in the entire country.

But the unemployment rate was 6.7 percent when I took office, and it's 4.3 percent today

here. And in many other ways I think you've done well. I could mention some specific things, but I'd like to talk about the general things.

The average Arkansas family now has \$25,000 less Federal debt than you would have had if we hadn't passed the economic plan in '93 and the Balanced Budget Act in '97. The average family in this State and throughout the country, paying a home mortgage, has interest costs that are about \$2,000 a year lower. The average car payment or college loan payment is about \$200 a year lower. This had made a difference in real people's lives.

And as I look at the next 14 months, and as you as citizens look at the coming election season, I just want to ask you, without regard to your party, to think about this: What are we going to do with our prosperity?

Over Thanksgiving, Hillary and I gathered up everybody in our flung families we could; we brought them all in, and then after Thanksgiving, we had some more friends come in to Camp David and had a bunch of little kids there. I just love having them all around, my two nephews and a bunch of other little kids. And this 6-year-old girl looked at me—on Saturday after Thanksgiving—she looked at me and she said, "Now, Mr. President, how old are you, really?" [Laughter] And I said, "I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot." [Laughter] And regretably, I had to agree with her.

Here's what I want to say about that. In my lifetime, in those 53 years, there has never been another time, not one, when our country had this level of economic prosperity, this level of social progress, this level of national self-confidence, with the absence of a crisis at home or a threat from abroad. Never.

Now, a lot of us who are old enough to remember the 1960's, remember how good the economy was in the early sixties in the country, and how it was torn apart because of our inability to fully integrate the civil rights challenge at home and deal with Vietnam abroad. This has never happened before.

So the question before us is, what are we going to do with it? And as a citizen, I care about that as well as a President. I think there is a heavy responsibility on us, not just the President and the Congress and not just people in Government but the whole country. We have never had this happen, and you know as well as I do that nothing lasts forever. It keeps you

going through the tough times, but it's important to remember in the good times.

Here we are, on the edge of a new millennium with the first opportunity in our lifetime as a country to really shape the future of our dreams for our children. And I hope and pray that I can devote every waking minute of the last 14 months of my Presidency and that the American people will devote their energies and concentration in their own lives and their vote as citizens to making a decision based on shouldering the responsibility to shape that future for our children. And that means big changes. What are they? I'll just mention three or four and end with what I'm going to do when I leave you today.

Number one, we've got to deal with the aging of America. The number of people over 65 is going to double in the next 30 years. I hope to be one of them. It's going to double in the next 30 years. That will be two people working for every one person drawing Social Security. Social Security Trust Fund is projected to run out of money in 2034.

The Medicare Trust Fund, when I took office, was scheduled to run out of money this year. We've pushed it back to 2015 now. We've got to do something about this. Now, let me say there is a big difference of opinion about whether—between the two parties about whether Medicare—I mean Social Security should have individual accounts, and if so, how should they be designed, and should we partially or completely privatize the system. And most Republicans think we should do some of that, and most Democrats think we shouldn't.

But let me just tell you one little simple thing: If we took the interest savings we have from paying down the national debt because we're not spending the Social Security surplus anymore, if we just took the interest savings and put it back in the Trust Fund, we could put that Trust Fund out to 2050, which would take us out beyond the life expectancy of almost 100 percent of the baby boomers, after which the demographics start to get better again.

Now, we've got the money to do that now. We don't have to raise your taxes. We don't have to stop spending money on anything else. We don't have to do anything. It'll never be this easy again. And believe me, it hasn't been this easy for our predecessors, and we ought to do this.

On Medicare, we ought to make some structural reforms that will put some more life into the Medicare Trust Fund, take it out over 20 years. We ought to let people over 55 and under 65 buy into it. It doesn't cost the Treasury any money, and you know, there's tons of people in this country who retire at 55 now, and then something happens to them; they're not covered by a health insurance policy at work anymore; and they can't get any health insurance. It's a huge problem.

And we ought to provide a voluntary prescription drug benefit, because 75 percent of the seniors in this country cannot afford the drug regimen their doctors say they need. So I think we ought to do that.

Now, number two, we ought to recognize that more and more parents are working and do more to help balance work and family. I gave the States the option to use their workers' compensation and their unemployment compensation funds if they wanted to, to experiment with paid family leave. There are lots of other things that can be done, but you know, only 10 percent of the people in the country eligible for Federal assistance for child care are getting it, and I've increased child care funding by 70 percent. And a lot of people go to work every day, really worrying about whether their kids are in quality child care facilities. And it's a big problem.

The family and medical leave law has been a godsend, but I think we ought to broaden it some. And of course, we have to be sensitive not to hurt the economy. But if you want people to succeed at work, they can't be eaten up inside worrying about their kids, whether they're all right.

If you have to make a choice, we lose before we start, because the most important job of any society is raising children. It is still the most important job of any society, including ours, and we forget that at our peril. So we've got to find a way, since all parents either want to work or have to work, just about, at least the majority, we've got to find the way to balance these things better.

The third thing we have to do, I think, is to work even harder to give every child a world-class education. We have the largest and most diverse student body in history—the first time—in the last 2 years we've got a student body bigger than the baby boom generation. And they are going to do great if we give them the tools to do it. I don't want to keep you here all

morning, and you know how I like to pontificate about education, so I won't do that. But you need to make that a factor in your decisions, just as I make it a factor in mine.

The next thing we need to do is to find better ways to balance the preservation of the economy and the preservation of the environment. A big thing has happened in the last 5 to 10 years that most people don't believe has happened. It is now possible to grow the economy and reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. That's a fancy way of saying you don't necessarily have to burn more coal and oil and put it out in the atmosphere to get rich. Most people don't believe it, but it's true.

The Agriculture Department had a seminar the other day on biomass fuels, ethanol being the most prominent one now. Right now, it's a problem. It takes 7 gallons of gasoline to make 8 gallons of ethanol, so the conversion ratio is not too good. They're very, very close to coming up with the technology to make 8 gallons of ethanol with one gallon of gasoline. When that happens, it will change the future of America.

In the next year or so, you're going to be able to buy cars that get 70 to 80 miles a gallon with fuel injection engines, some that are blended. They start off on electricity, then go to gasoline, then go back to electricity, and it's just the beginning. You can get windows in houses now that keep out 5 times as much heat or cold and let in 5 times as much light. You can buy lamps that just in the life of the lamp, will save one ton of greenhouse gas emissions.

With the changes in the White House we have made in the last 6 years, just in the White House, we've taken the equivalent of 700 cars off the highways. This is a big deal, and it is not a question of, in the popular vernacular, hugging trees or growing the economy; it's a question of how to do the self-interested thing, which is to improve the environment and the economy at the same time, and I predict to you it will be a major, major focus for the next 20 years.

The last thing I'd like to mention very briefly is this, because it really applies to Arkansas: We have to find a way to keep the economy going and then to bring the benefits of the economy to the people in places who haven't been a part of this prosperity. And I just want to mention three things. Number one, first things first; we've got to keep paying down this

debt. If we stay on the track we're on now, just on the budget path that came out of this last budget session, this country will be out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835.

Now, what does that mean? What does that mean? Well, let's take ALLTEL—doing reasonably well. We passed the Telecommunications Act. It's led already to hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs at great, high-tech companies. If the country's out of debt and we're not borrowing money, that means there's more money for everybody else to borrow. That means lower interest rates for business loans, faster expansion, more jobs, higher incomes. It means the average family pays less for home mortgages and car payments and college loans. This is a big deal. It's a progressive thing to do.

The second thing we ought to do is work through and keep working at it until we reach a national consensus on this trade issue. If you watched the so-called battle in Seattle, you know that I said I understood why some of the people in the streets wanted to make sure the concerns of working people and the environment were taken account of in trade. But I think they're dead wrong to believe that you can walk away from trade.

Let me tell you, this country is better off today because for 50 years we have worked harder and harder and harder to integrate the global economy. And yes, if we buy stuff that's made somewhere else, it's very sensitive in Arkansas, because we were—50 years ago our per capita income was only 56 percent of the national average. So we had a lot of low-wage workers. And sure, if we buy stuff made somewhere else, where people don't have the incomes we do, it puts more pressure on our low-wage workers. But it also creates a lot more high-wage jobs.

And the answer is to give everybody lifetime training and to have the kind of environment where you can get the kind of investments to give good jobs to everybody. But we are better off both economically and in terms of our security because, for 50 years, we have continued to expand trade.

And if you don't believe it, just look at all the places in the world that are in trouble. You know that problem we've had in Bosnia and Kosovo I had to send the military to solve. Do you seriously believe we would have had to go to war in the Balkans if their per capita income were not the lowest in Europe? If it were the

highest in Europe, would they be fooling around with each other; would they care whether they were Muslims or Orthodox Christians or Roman Catholics if they were all well-educated and they were used to working together and they had more in common than driving them apart?

Or in the Middle East, one of the problems is the abject poverty of the Palestinians. And one of the problems for the Israelis is the limits on their growth because they've got to spend so much on defense. If we were in better shape there economically and everybody were more integrated, don't you think we'd be closer to peace? Do you think people would still be fighting there?

And I'm very proud of the role that I played in the Irish peace process and the role America played and the role George Mitchell played. But let me tell you something. One big reason they made peace in Ireland is that the Republic of Ireland had the fastest growing economy in Europe. A lot of American companies were shipping data processing—raw files to be processed over to Northern Ireland every day and flying them back, and all these kids were growing up saying, "Hey, that's the future we want. We've got to let this other stuff go."

So we have got to—you've got to help me on this. As Americans, we have got to form a new consensus between business and labor and the environmental community and everybody else that allows us to continue to expand trade. And we ought to put China in the World Trade Organization. It's good for our farmers, good for our manufacturers, good for our investors, and it will make a safer world for our children and our grandchildren. It's a big deal. And I hope you will help me do that as well.

Finally, we ought to give people the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America, like the Arkansas Delta, we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa. And I'm very proud of the fact that this Congress supported my position to relieve the debt of world's poorest nations. I want Americans to invest in poor countries. I believe if you lift people out of poverty, you minimize their profound and primitive racial and ethnic and religious hatreds, and you give them something to live for and look forward to when they get up in the morning. But our people deserve the same thing.

Let me ask you this, again: If we don't do this now, if we can't bring more entrepreneurs

and more investment and more jobs to the poorest counties in this State and in our neighboring States and in Appalachia and in upstate New York and rural New England, which is pretty depressed, or on the Indian reservations—the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the unemployment today is 73 percent—and if we can't figure out something to do about this now, when in the world will we ever get around to it?

And when I leave you, I'm going over to West Memphis and to Earle and announce that I'm going to propose in my new budget more than \$110 million to create a Delta regional authority. This will be new investment to fund a bill sponsored by Representative Blanche Lambert Lincoln and—Senator Lincoln and Representative Marion Berry, supported by Congressman Snyder and the entire Arkansas delegation. I think we'll have big bipartisan support for this. We've got to do something about this.

I headed that Delta Commission more than a decade ago. Maybe the time wasn't right; maybe the economy was too tough. We're in good shape now. If we can't bring opportunity to these people in our State and Nation—I'm telling you I've been there. People are dying to go to work. And intelligence is evenly distributed; education is not, but intelligence is. We can get this done now. And I ask for your support for that.

Now because I believe this is a time of big changes, to use your theme, and because I believe these big questions can't possibly be resolved, when I come home to build the library and my policy center, I want to deal with a lot of these big questions: How do you close the digital divide and use these high-tech advances to benefit every American? How do you create good jobs and a clean environment? How do you leave behind the ethnic and religious hatreds, the other kind of hatred that is manifested in hate crimes in America and the tribal slaughters in Africa and all the wars in between? How do you create genuine economic opportunity and empowerment for people who have been poor a very long time?

These are the questions, the kinds of questions that I intend to work on down to the last hour of the last day of my Presidency, and the kind of questions that will be central to me when I come home to build the library and the policy center.

I'd like to begin by just thanking all of you who have supported this. I thank the mayor, the city board of directors and staff, and I'm sorry for the heat you've taken, but it will be a good investment. I thank Paul Harvel and the greater Little Rock chamber. I thank Shelby and Joe and the Downtown Partnership. I thank Dr. Alan Sugg and the university system. I thank Skip Rutherford for being my point person down here; all of you who have worked on this.

From the day I was elected President, I was determined that when it was over, I would try to use this library and policy center not only to continue my own interests and passions but to give something back to this State and this community that have given so much to me. Like I said over and over again, if it hadn't been for you, I never would have had the chance to serve. And if it hadn't been for the experiences you gave me and the lessons I learned, I wouldn't have been prepared to serve at this moment in our history.

So I want to make some dreams come true here in Little Rock. This library can be an energizing force in the life of the city and the broader community. It will attract people from all across the Nation and all across the world. Lots of visitors and lots of people from business and labor and the nonprofit groups in government and journalism.

It can play an important role in the growth and development of greater Little Rock and all of central Arkansas. I am determined that it will be, first, a beautiful place. The site is wonderful, and so will the building be. It will be architecturally important, and it will be state of the art, environmentally and technologically.

I've talked to Dr. Sugg and the university about starting a graduate program in public policy—that's what they want to do—to prepare more of our young people for careers in public service. And I also want to develop partnerships with corporations all across America to bring their young executives here, to get them to agree to let their young people take a little time off to be in public service without being prejudiced in their rise up the corporate hierarchy.

Let me tell you, there is a program called the White House Fellowships—you may know about it—and we just give a few every year, enough for all the Cabinet Secretaries and one for me, one for a couple of other people in the White House. Hundreds of people apply

for them—hundreds—and hundreds get turned down who would be about as good as the handful, the less than 20 we select every year. And so I got this idea.

Now, I realized how dependent we were on the White House Fellows, what fabulous work they did, what great ideas they gave. And think of it, if every company of any size would establish a policy that every year, one or two or three people, depending on the size of the company, could take a year off to serve in State Government, to serve in local government, to serve in the Federal Government, in Washington or at the regional level, to have the experience of government and then come back to the company and continue that career, we could change the nature of government, the quality of the ideas, the quality of the work, and the quality of the partnership.

And we could end a lot of the kind of battles that we've seen here over too many decades. So this is one of the things that I hope we can do, thanks to Dr. Sugg and his leadership on the education issue.

I want to try to find some ways to, as I said over and over, to help to bridge the racial and other divides in our society and throughout the world. I want to bring here people from Northern Ireland and the Middle East and Bosnia and Kosovo. I want people to see members of these different African tribes. I'll never forget being in Rwanda after they killed over three-quarters of a million people in a 100 days with machetes in a tribal war, and Rwanda had been a coherent country for about 500 years.

I talked to a woman, a beautiful woman—Hillary and I were sitting there talking to her—all dressed up in her fine native dress. And I listened to this wonderful woman, who was still a young woman, talk to me about how her neighbors had turned her in as a member of the other ethnic group, along with her husband and her six children, and how they had come after them with these machetes, and how she was convinced she was going to die. And she woke up covered in blood, and saw her husband and her six children dead around her, all because they were from another tribe. And that would be enough to break most of us, but this woman was devoting her life to trying to help other people let it go and get beyond it.

We could, in this State, in this place, become a beacon of hope for those kind of people. We

could train people in societies where these problems exist to get rid of them.

I think it is truly amazing, at a time when we're talking about uncovering the mysteries of the human genome, when a lot of my friends in the profession believe that sometime early in the next century newborn babies will come home from the hospital with a life expectancy of 100 years, when we'll probably find out what's in the black holes in the universe, and we're talking about all this stuff, you know, that the biggest problem of human society is the oldest one: We're still scared of people that are different from us, and we've got to find a way to let it go.

I want to do more on education. I want to do more on all these issues I mentioned. I also want this library to be a great place of history, and I want to make it interactive, especially for our children, with the latest technologies. I want to help our children and our grandchildren understand the times and the forces that took me to the White House and that I tried to shape and move forward, and then I want them to understand how that relates to tomorrow.

I want this to be a museum but not a mausoleum. I want it to be a place with a lot of touch and involvement and learning. I want to give our young people a window on the new millennium. And I want them to believe when they walk out of there, based on the story of my life and the people we tried to help, that every one of them also has a chance to make their own history.

These are the things I want to do with the library here in Little Rock, not only to glimpse the future but to shape it and share it with our neighbors and our families.

So I say to all of you, again, thanks for helping me get here; thanks for giving us a great 7 years, and thanks for your support of the future. But remember, the most important thing of all is your theme is right: Big changes are coming. It's the only time in our lifetimes we've ever had a chance to make the most of them, and we'd better do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in Governors Halls 2 and 3 at the Statehouse Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Shelby Woods, outgoing chairman of the board, Joe Ford, incoming chairman of the board, Paul Harvel,

president, Jesse Mason, education chairman, and Janet Jones, former chairman of the board, Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce; Bob Russell, winner of the chamber's Pinnacle Award, and his wife, Beverly; Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock; Speaker Bob Johnson, Arkansas House of Representatives; Trudy Reed, president, Philander Smith College; former Senator David H. Pryor; Carl Whillock, Special Assistant to the President, Department of Agriculture; Carol Rasco, Director, America Reads Challenge, Department of

Education; Beth Friday, widow of Herschel Friday, former chairman of the board, Greater Little Rock Chamber of Commerce; former Senator George J. Mitchell, who chaired the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; Alan Sugg, president, University of Arkansas; and Skip Rutherford, executive vice president and director of public policy, Cranford Johnson Robinson Woods. Prior to his remarks, the President received the Herschel H. Friday Award.

Remarks to the Community in West Memphis, Arkansas December 10, 1999

Thank you. Was she great or what? Let's give her another hand. *[Applause]* She was unbelievable. That's great.

Well, to Dr. Glen Fenter and your board chairman, my longtime friend Alex Coulter; and to Sandy and all the students from the college and all the faculty members, thank you. Thank you for being exhibit A for the new economy in eastern Arkansas.

Mayor Johnson, Judge Williams, Representative Jones, Representative Steele, I think I speak for all of us when I say we are delighted to be here. I want to thank Lieutenant Governor Rockefeller and the other people from State government who came over to be with us. I thank Secretary Riley for coming down with us; and my longtime friend Carl Whillock, who I'll say a little more about in a minute; and Rodney Slater, who I'll say a little more about in a minute.

I also would like to thank this White House staff who have heard me say now 5,000 times, we have to do more for the Delta. My Deputy Chief of Staff, Maria Echaveste; Lynn Cutler; Lisa Kountoupes, it is their job to monitor everything the Federal Government does that might, in their wildest imagination, have a positive effect on Arkansas and the other States in the Delta. And I thank them.

But I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln and to Marion Berry who, long before he was a Congressman, was the farmers' advocate in our administration in Washington, and long before he did that, he used to host all of us at the Gillette

coon suppers. *[Laughter]* That's my ultimate trump card with every Congressman or Senator from every other State in America who tells me they know more about rural America than I do. I say, "Well, how many coon suppers have you been to?" *[Laughter]* I haven't lost an argument in 7 years up there. *[Laughter]*

You have absolutely no idea the amount of time and effort and the passion that these two people have put in to trying to help eastern Arkansas and the Delta. You cannot imagine. They have been magnificent. I deal with Members of Congress from all across America. I deal with people who are really good at what they do. There is nobody—nobody—who has done a better job standing up for the people they represent than Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Marion Berry.

I may have a little trouble getting through this speech today. First, I'm a little tired. I talked to Hillary last—about 1 o'clock last night, and we talked three times between 11 and 1. And she was kind of jealous that I was coming down here. And I want you to know she's doing great, and I'm proud of her for what she's doing, and my daughter is doing great.

I woke up early this morning and started thinking about what I wanted to say. It's a little harder now. I look out in this crowd, and I know half of you by your first names. There's old Bobby Glover sitting there, gave me the first contribution I got when I ran for attorney general in 1976. You could have stopped this whole thing if you hadn't done that. *[Laughter]*

Mary Louise Poindexter had me to the first revival of the Elaine Christmas parade. I've been colder in Elaine than any public official in the history of America. [Laughter] We know east Arkansas—that's not the royal "we;" that's all of our crowd here—and we owe eastern Arkansas. Rodney's roots are here. He did such a good job for you as a highway commissioner and at ASU, and he's been a superb Secretary of Transportation. Carl Whillock was the president of ASU, head of the co-ops. When Marion went home, he came to Washington; he thought somebody ought to stick up for the ordinary farmers in the Department of Agriculture. I see Kevin Smith out there. I've had so many people here. You can't imagine how many people from Arkansas we've got working in Washington. It's sort of a subterranean plot. That's how we stayed in all these years; we had people that showed up and remembered who they were working for.

I was thinking about the first time I came to Crittenden County to John Gammon's wild game dinner when they were still meeting in that—that's before the dinner moved uptown—when they were still meeting in a place that had a tin roof. And the first night, a woman got up, a young woman got up to sing "If I Can Help Somebody," and the darndest rain came up you ever saw. And it was raining on that tin roof and it sounded like a musical background, and she was just beautiful, singing.

Ness Sechrest reminded me that the first time I saw him, I had to traipse all the way out to Horseshoe Lake and fish with him and do other sundry things that he thought were necessary to decide whether he should support me or not. [Laughter] He's been making the same mistake for 24 years now.

And I came here today to make another installment on the work we've been doing together for two decades. I'm very proud that I signed the bill when I was in my very first term as Governor to create the vo-tech school here. And then in 1991 I signed the bill that enabled you to convert it to a community college. And since I have been President, the enrollment at this college—the stories like Sandy's—the enrollment has increased by tenfold of accredited students—tenfold. And that's something you can be really proud of, and it will make a difference.

I was thinking when I was coming over here today, all the time I spent in the eighties when the whole State, the whole country, this part

of the country was in trouble economically, trying to get plants to come in here and save the ones that are here. When I got reelected Governor in '82, I remember going up to I think it was Poinsett County, and they closed the Singer plant for the last time. I stood there and shook hands with 600 people when they walked off the job for the last time. That was right before I got inaugurated Governor the second time. I had this emblazoned memory of all these people leaving their jobs for the last time.

I remember going all the way to Japan to try to get the Sanyo people not to close the plant in Forest City, and then working with all the folks in Brinkley and other places to help start this Wal-Mart buy American campaign, to get them to buy the TV's from Sanyo and shirts from Brinkley and first one thing, then another.

I have a vivid memory of what you have been through and the struggles you had and the struggles you continue to have. And we're here to try to fulfill our duty, not only to you but to people like you throughout the country. I'm very grateful that I've had the chance to serve these last 7 years. I'm grateful that we're ending the 20th century on a high note.

In February we will have the longest economic expansion in the history of the country—already the longest peacetime expansion. In February it will be longer than the one we had in World War II, when we had to fully mobilize.

Since 1993, we've got over 20 million new jobs. We've got the lowest unemployment rate and welfare rolls in 30 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest African-American unemployment and poverty rates ever recorded since we kept separate figures for about three decades now. We have the lowest unemployment rate for women in 40 years and the lowest poverty rate for single-parent households in 46 years in America. And I'm proud of that. But you couldn't prove it by some places in this country, because there are still people in places that have been totally left out of this remarkable upswing, and that's what we're here to say. All of you know that. Maybe they're too rural. Maybe they're too undereducated. Maybe they're too this, that, or the other thing. Maybe their power is too expensive or the transportation is too distant.

I've been across America now, doing what I used to come over here and do, county by county. I've been in the hills and hollows of

Appalachia. I've been in upstate New York which, interestingly enough, would be 49th in job growth in this country of all the 50 States if it were a separate State. I've been in rural Maine, where it's a long way from everything. The State's 90 percent timberland. I've been on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the home of the Lakota Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse, where the unemployment rate is 73 percent. So you can go to bed tonight thanking God for small favors. I have seen these inner-city neighborhoods where every other store is still boarded up.

And what I want to say to you is, if we, with this economy, in the absence of foreign threat or domestic crisis, can't bring free enterprise and opportunity to the people and places who have been left behind now, when will we ever get around to doing it?

We are determined to try to convince everybody in America that places like the Delta are the new markets for the 21st century. We sit around in Washington all the time, and Mr. Greenspan sits over at the Federal Reserve all the time, and we have the same debate now. We say, we've already got the—in February we're going to have the longest economic expansion in history, and we didn't even have a war. How did it happen? Can we keep it going? How can we keep it going? How can we keep it going without inflation, because if we have inflation, then, to protect everybody else, they'll have to raise interest rates a lot, and that will kill the recovery.

And I'll tell you one way to keep it going is to get money invested and jobs created and consumers created in the places that have been left behind. That's an inflation-free way to continue to grow the economy. So it is in the interest of every single American in places like Nebraska where the unemployment rate is 2.4 percent statewide, it's in their interest for us to do what is necessary to bring opportunity to the people in places who have been left behind. And if we don't do it now, we'll never get around to doing it.

So I want to look at this. Now, let's look at Crittenden County. In Crittenden County, unemployment has dropped from over 7 percent in '93 to 5 percent today, but it's much higher in the rest of eastern Arkansas than the Nation as a whole. Wages are up in the Delta, but wages are still way below the national average. Infant mortality rates are better than they were,

but they're still much, much higher than the national average.

Now, I want to thank all of you for stepping up to the challenge of trying to change all that. Before I came over here, I was over at the community college meeting with Dr. Fenter and a group of CEO's from some of America's largest transportation companies. They're working together to design a curriculum and to build a facility to train young people for good jobs in the transportation industry.

Now, these jobs pay good money, and there is a shortage today, I learned at our meeting, of 80,000 jobs for entry-level truck drivers and other transportation jobs that would pay an average of \$35,000 to \$40,000 a year—entry-level jobs.

So what we want to do is train everybody in the Delta who wants one of these jobs here so that they can continue to live in the Delta. You have to travel 3 or 4 or 5 days a week, but you don't have to move away from here to get a job. I mean, you all know you can move away from here and get a job, but you don't want to leave.

So this is the kind of thing that we should be doing. This is one of the most important transportation hubs in the country, and education and training is the key to providing these opportunities.

In August I was here in Helena, and we had kind of a listening session, and in September Secretary Slater had another meeting like that here in West Memphis. In October we invited a delegation from here to meet with senior officials in the White House, and today we want to respond to that.

First of all, to try to address the unacceptably high rates of poverty that still plague the region, I intend to propose in next year's budget more than \$110 million to create and fund a new Delta regional authority, as recommended by Senator Lincoln and Representative Berry. This will fund their legislation. It will provide funds for economic development and assistance from Federal agencies to help improve the quality of life. It already has a number of bipartisan cosponsors from throughout the Delta, and I want to work with the Congress, and particularly with all the Members from this region, to ensure that we get quick enactment of this legislation. This should not be a partisan issue. This is about economics.

Second, we're going to help rural communities again access the myriad of Federal programs that already exist. Today I am signing a memorandum directing 14 Federal agencies to provide comprehensive technical assistance to the region in a pilot program we're calling the circuit rider project. You know, preachers and judges used to ride circuits and go from town to town. That's what the Agricultural Extension Service did for decades, seeing people one-on-one.

It is almost impossible for a little town to be able to afford—to find out what kinds of grants they could be eligible for in every conceivable Federal agency, much less how to apply for them and get them. So we want to organize that effort and bring them to you.

I'd like to thank Wilbur Peer and the others at the Agriculture Department who have been involved in our rural economic development issues. I want to thank all the departments for agreeing to do this. We're going to get out there, be aggressive, and try to bring the benefits of the Federal Government that's already being paid for to the people who are paying but not getting, and the circuit rider project will work, I think.

Third, we're announcing the creation of a \$16 million fund to provide resources to develop and improve rural health infrastructure in the seven counties served by the Arkansas Health Education Center—including Crittenden County—funds used to make loans to hospitals, clinics, and health providers to help close the health care gaps that are also a problem here and a problem in attracting new investment.

Fourth, we're announcing an award of \$1.2 million from the Economic Development Administration to the Blytheville-Gosnell Regional Airport Authority to create a 35,000 square foot mail sort facility out of one of the former hangars at Eaker Air Force Base. This will help create more than 350 new jobs. It will create more than 350 new jobs and protect some that are already there.

Finally, we're expanding trade opportunities in the region by opening a Commerce Department rural export office at Mid-South Community College to help east Arkansas businesses take advantage of export opportunities through E-commerce. This is no idle thing. I was out in Los Angeles the other day, and I went to a training facility where a young man was in a program buying and selling things in South

America, in Russia, and you wouldn't believe where else. In this poor inner-city neighborhood, he was making a living. He established a business identifying people in other countries that needed to buy things and identifying people in third countries who had them, and putting them together.

We can sell a lot of the things produced in east Arkansas all over the world if we have the right kind of networks. And one of the things that—we just had last week a conference at the White House, bringing in big executives in the communications business all over America to try to figure out how to close the so-called digital divide, because if you look at the places where not only computer usage but Internet access is roughly as dense as telephone access, they're growing faster.

And one of the things that I am determined to do is to finish the job of getting all of our schools and libraries and hospitals connected to the Internet so that all of our kids will have access to that educational information. But we need to make that available for adults, too, in commercial centers so that no part of the country is denied these opportunities.

I'll bet you there are people here—and I'll just give you one example—I'll bet there are people in this audience who have bought something off the Web from eBay. Have you ever used eBay? I see some of you nodding. I'll tell you an interesting thing. I was out with the eBay people in California a couple of weeks ago, and they told me there are now 20,000 Americans, including many former welfare recipients, who are making a living on eBay. They don't work for eBay; they make a living buying and selling on eBay because it's basically America's trading mart now on the Internet.

It is very, very important that we bring the benefits of E-commerce to the poorest parts of America and to teach people how to use it. It's simple. It's getting increasingly user friendly. It's about gotten to where even I can figure it out. *[Laughter]* And I think it is profoundly important.

Finally, I want to ask you one thing that I want you to do for us, for me and for Senator Lincoln and for Congressman Berry. I'm trying to pass a couple of simple bills in Washington. I got two of them actually passed to provide some funds for my so-called new market initiative. But what I'm trying to do is to get money, tax credits, and tax incentives basically so that

I can say to anybody in America, we think you should have the same financial incentives to invest in the poor areas of America that you now have to invest in the poor areas of Latin America or Africa or Asia or any other part of the world.

Now, I hope and pray I'll be able to pass that this year. We have more bipartisan support for this endeavor than we've ever had before.

I went to Chicago the other night with the Speaker of the House, and we met with the two local Members of Congress who were there. We had a great joint meeting. And there is a chance we can just totally put this beyond politics. But if you think about it, sure there are some extra risks in going to an extremely rural area where the average education level may not be as high as it is in some other places, but it's not as great as the risk of going thousands of miles from home.

I'm not against asking Americans to help the people of Africa and Latin America and Asia. I'm all for that. We just passed through the Congress a bill forgiving the debt of some of the poorest countries in the world that can't pay it back anyway, and all we're doing is keeping them mired in poverty. We can't educate their kids or make them vaccinate them or do anything else, because they spend all their money paying interest on the debt, and they never make any headway. I'm all for that.

But I think we have areas in the country, as prosperous as we are now, and we still have areas as poor as some of our areas are. It is wrong not to give the same incentives to invest there, whether it is the Delta or Appalachia or the Indian reservations. So I want you to help me do that.

I want you to help make sure every Member of this congressional delegation votes for that legislation. I want you to help make sure anybody you can reach in Tennessee or Mississippi votes for that legislation, and I want you to tell people that the dignity of the job and of a thriving community has nothing to do with party politics, and every American ought to be entitled to it. And if we can't do it now, we will never get around to it, because we are more prosperous now than we have ever been.

We'll keep working at it every day to the last hour of the last day of our term. When I come home and set up my library and public policy center, I'll keep working at it some more.

I'll always be doing this. I'll always be indebted to the Delta.

When I was a young college student and I used to drive back home from Washington, I used to take off a day every Christmas vacation and just drive to the Delta and ride around. I never knew I would be Governor, much less President, and I was just fascinated with it. But I always promised myself, if I could do anything about it, I would.

I never will forget the first time I ran for Governor, and I discovered how many communities over here had no water and sewer. And we tried to do something about it. I don't even know if I can tell this story. The most emotional moment I ever had in all the years I was in government in Arkansas occurred when I was running for reelection as Governor in 1982. And there was a big meeting in a barbecue joint in Forest City of all the black leaders in the Delta. And they were trying to decide whether they were going to be for me or not. I had just gotten beat 2 years before, when I had the distinction of becoming the youngest former Governor in American history, with very limited career prospects. *[Laughter]* And no one in Arkansas had ever been Governor and then defeated and then reelected again. It had never happened before.

So they were having this meeting, and an articulate young lawyer, whom I still know well, got up and said—I was there, and one of my opponents had been there, and he had left—so this young lawyer got up and said, "You know, Governor Clinton was a good Governor, but we can't be for him; he's a loser. And we've got to win; we can't afford to lose." And he had a point. *[Laughter]* I mean, I had lost, and no one had ever been elected, defeated, and reelected again.

I wouldn't be here today if this meeting turned out that way, in the Delta. I'm telling you, my whole life since then was riding on the outcome of what these 85 people in this barbecue joint were going to do.

Wilbur is smiling. He knows all this. I don't know if I can tell this story. And you could feel the tone of the meeting go cold. And all of a sudden, this guy stands up in the back, named John Lee Wilson, who was the mayor of a little town called Haines, Arkansas—150 people. He's not alive anymore. I'd give the world and all if he were here today. John Lee was in jeans and a white T-shirt. He wasn't

a lawyer. He weighed about 300 pounds, on his light days. [Laughter] He had arms bigger around than my neck. And he said, the young lawyer might have had a point, but all he knew about this whole deal was that before I became Governor the first time, sewage was running open in the streets of Haines and the children were sick. And after I had served, they weren't sick anymore.

And he said, "If we don't stick with people who stick with us, what kind of people will we be?" He said, "Governor Clinton may be going down, but I'd rather go down with him than run off from him." And they all—and the room changed again. And the Delta stayed with me, and the rest is history.

I owe you, and I owe the memory of John Lee Wilson, whom I revered and loved and remember to this day. And I'll do my best to be faithful.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3 p.m. in the Civic Auditorium at Mid-South Community College. In his remarks, he referred to student Sandra Eason O'Sullivan, who introduced the President, Glen Fenter, president, and Alex Coulter, board of trustees chair, Mid-South Community College; Mayor William H. Johnson of West Memphis; Crittenden County Judge Brian Williams; State Representatives Steve Jones, Marvin Steele, and Bobby L. Glover; State Senator Kevin Smith; Lt. Gov. Winthrop P. Rockefeller of Arkansas; Carl Whillock, former president, Arkansas State University; Wilbur Peer, Associate Administrator, Rural Business-Cooperative Service, Department of Agriculture; and John Gammon and N.S. (Ness) Sechrest, long-time friends of the President.

Memorandum on the Arkansas Delta Circuit Rider Pilot Project December 10, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture, the Attorney General, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration

Subject: Arkansas Delta Circuit Rider Pilot Project

The Delta region of the United States is rich in historical, archeological, geological, natural, and cultural assets. The Delta region also has tremendous human capital in the people who live there and hold strong hopes for the future. The Delta's human, natural, and cultural resources have the potential to contribute significantly to the region's future.

Despite great progress in a wide range of economic and social areas, the Delta region, particularly the Delta communities of Arkansas, still often lag behind the rest of the country. Sub-

standard housing, inadequate transportation systems, limited access to capital, low educational levels, and lack of adequate health care have hindered progress and caused hardship. While nationwide unemployment levels have fallen during my Administration, the Arkansas Delta communities still suffer from disproportionately high unemployment. Furthermore, in the Delta counties of Arkansas, only 55 percent of the adult population has a high school diploma.

While Governor of Arkansas, I chaired the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. In 1990, the Commission submitted an action plan to address the economic development needs of the region. This action plan has served as a guidepost during my Administration for creating further opportunities for investment in the region.

During my Administration, we have continued to provide resources to the entire Delta region and to the Delta communities of Arkansas to promote job creation, improve transportation and housing, and address environmental needs. In 1998, the Department of Transportation organized a meeting with local Delta leaders at

which ten Federal agencies pledged to work together to coordinate a Government-wide review and assessment of the Delta; their review resulted in the recent publication of *The Mississippi Delta: Beyond 2000 (Interim Report)*. My Administration has designated two rural Enterprise Zones (EZ) and seven Enterprise Communities (EC) in the Delta, including two ECs in Arkansas that receive assistance from the Department of Agriculture (USDA)—one in Mississippi County and one in East Central Arkansas. As part of the EZ/EC program, these communities have engaged in extensive community planning and have gained a number of tax incentives to promote investment opportunities. The USDA provides significant resources to the Delta in grants and loans through its rural housing and business programs. The Department of Commerce has provided over \$100 million to the Delta from 1993 to mid-1999. Approximately 1100 low-income Arkansas homes were weatherized last year through Department of Energy funding. The Department of the Interior is assisting in the development of the Arkansas Delta Heritage Trail, a new quasi-State park composed of a 78-mile rail corridor that traverses some of the richest natural and cultural resources of the State. The Department of Transportation has provided approximately \$140 million to complete highway reconstruction, surfacing, widening, and other projects in Delta counties. However, Federal funding alone is not sufficient to revitalize the Delta region. As part of my July 1999 “New Markets” trip to Clarksdale, Mississippi, I announced nearly \$15 million in new private investments in the Enterprise Corporation for the Delta, a nonprofit organization that uses Federal grants to leverage private investment in business.

Other Federal efforts seek to empower the Delta communities by providing information and assistance directly in the communities where they are needed. The USDA and the Environmental Protection Agency provide significant on-the-ground technical assistance to rural communities nationwide through circuit rider programs for both drinking water and wastewater. The Small Business Administration (SBA) also regularly engages in active outreach activities in the Arkansas Delta Region, where SBA staff meet with small business entrepreneurs in the field. These programs have been very successful in assisting communities and individuals, but have

been limited in the number of agencies that participate and the topics that are covered.

To build on the success of these circuit rider programs and to address the great need expressed by Delta communities for technical assistance, I am expanding my Administration’s efforts in Arkansas’ Delta communities by creating a pilot Arkansas Delta Circuit Rider program to provide, for the first time, a concentrated, coordinated effort by 14 Federal agencies to address needs in areas such as housing, economic development, transportation, environment, tourism, cultural resources, infrastructure technology, education, and health care. The Arkansas Delta Circuit Rider program will bring the expertise and resources of the Federal Government directly to communities that need assistance by providing a more integrated Federal response across several agencies and reaching out to the communities to search for solutions. Accordingly, I direct each of you to work with the USDA as lead agency in the development of a pilot program to be based on a circuit rider concept with the goals of helping Delta communities (1) systematically identify needs and priorities in economic and community development; (2) draft strategic plans to leverage both private and public resources for such development; and (3) implement their plans. This initiative should forge a coalition of Federal, State, local, private business, nonprofit, and other interested parties in meeting the unique needs of each community. The investment of resources by each agency will vary depending on the specific needs of each community but should include providing information; conducting traveling seminars; deploying staff; and staffing regional offices.

I further direct you to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) no later than March 1, 2000, with the specifics of the pilot program, including an implementation framework and schedule; mechanisms to assemble the Circuit Rider team after receiving a community’s request for assistance; and details of the types of assistance to be provided. This MOU should establish the Arkansas Delta communities Circuit Rider pilot program for a minimum period of 5 years in order to assist communities in addressing both long-term and short-term needs.

As we look to the new millennium, we should make every effort to ensure that no areas of this country are left behind. This pilot project, taken together and in full coordination with the

other resources devoted to community and economic development, will help to build capacity in the communities of the Arkansas Delta and

will empower the area's residents to achieve their full potential.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at the Earle High School Dedication Ceremony in Earle, Arkansas

December 10, 1999

Thank you very much. Wow! Well, this is a wonderful end to one of the best days I've had in a long, long time. We started out this morning in Little Rock, and I spoke at the annual Chamber of Commerce banquet. I talked to them about the library and the public policy center I wanted to build not just for Little Rock but for our entire State. And then I went to West Memphis, to the community college, which I helped to establish, where the enrollment, by the way, has increased by tenfold since I've been President. I'm very proud of them, and I know all of you are.

And I told them that I was going to support the legislation sponsored by Senator Lincoln and Congressman Berry, with \$110 million for a Delta commission to invest in the economic future of the Mississippi Delta next year.

Then I got a little barbecue. *[Laughter]* And sidled up here to Earle. Thank you, Secretary Riley, for making this journey with me and the journey of the last 22 years now. Thank you, Secretary Slater, for coming out of the Arkansas Delta and going all the way to become Secretary of Transportation.

I'm not sure you heard the superintendent when he said this, but Secretary Slater's chief of staff and a longtime supporter of mine is a wonderful attorney named Jerry Malone, who graduated from Earle High School. Jerry, stand up. Where are you? There you go.

I want to thank my friend of 30 years, the Lieutenant Governor, Rockefeller, for making this trip with us today. I thank my longtime friends County Judge Brian Williams and Mayor Sherman Smith. We also have the head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Bill Ferris, who is from the other side of the Mississippi River in Mississippi, here with us today. I thank him for coming.

And I want to introduce the vice president and foundation executive of MCI, Caleb Schutz,

who has decided to help this school. I'll explain more about why later, but thank you very much. I'd like to thank all the people from the Arkansas Department of Education who are here, Simon and others. Thank you, Principal Nicks and members of the school board. And thank you, Jimmi Lampley; you were terrific.

I have to tell you, when I met President Kennedy in 1963, I didn't give him a library. *[Laughter]* I didn't even give him one of my Trojan band jackets. *[Laughter]* Now I've got this football jacket, making me an honorary Bulldog.

You won't believe this, but when we were down in West Memphis, we had this meeting about how we could train people in the Delta that don't have jobs to get some of these real good jobs in transportation. There are 80,000 jobs driving trucks and working in terminals, for example, vacant today.

So Secretary Slater was working on that, and he invited the man who runs the USA truckline from Fort Smith, but they train all their truck drivers here in West Memphis. So the guy's been my friend forever—I mean, he's been my friend for 27 years and, coincidentally, runs this truckline, and he trains all his truckers here in West Memphis.

So right before I come up here to get this jacket and become an honorary Bulldog, he whips—I said, "Have you got any pictures of your wife and daughter?" And he said, "Yes." He takes out this beautiful picture of his wife and his 12-year-old daughter, and they've got a bulldog there. I said, "What's that bulldog's name?" And he smiled, and he said, "Clinton." *[Laughter]*

So I'm going to have a picture taken in this jacket and send it to him, and he'll have two bulldogs in the house. *[Laughter]* And we both respond in the same way. It will be great.

Finally, let me say a word about your superintendent. He has been a friend of mine a long time. I have known him probably since before most of the students here were alive. I have eaten his good food in his former life. *[Laughter]* I have met with his students. I have listened to year after year after year after year of fresh, vigorous ideas and passionate commitment, believing that the children of the Delta were as smart as any kids on Earth and had a right to the best education on Earth and become anything else they wanted to be on Earth.

I've had him sidle up to me with that sort of soft voice—*[laughter]*—you know, the way he kind of does his head like this, you know—*[laughter]*—I know him, man. I know him. I've been there. "Now, Governor, we just need a little money for this little thing here." *[Laughter]* "Now, you know how you love these kids. You don't want to let them get behind here."

What are you laughing about, Leon? You do the same thing. *[Laughter]*

So anyway, I was thrilled when he came here. You know, our tenures pretty well coincide. He came here not long after I became President. And I wasn't surprised when you approved that big bond issue, because this guy believes in your kids. He spent a lifetime, a lifetime that happened to coincide with this dramatic change in the economic and social organization of the Mississippi Delta. He spent a lifetime trying to lift up our kids, and I say thank you, my friend. I appreciate that.

Now, I rode over here with my good friend Ness Sechrest from West Memphis today, and we were thinking about all the trips we've taken to Earle. This sort of was an automatic stop for me. Whenever I'd get in a deep funk, I'd come to Earle and get to feel better—*[laughter]*—when I was Governor. And I miss so much—I want to say this before I leave Crittenden County—my man who was always my county coordinator here, Ron Owens, passed away in the last year, and I miss him terribly, and I wish he were making this trip with me today because I loved him like a brother.

But one time we came up here in 1982, and I was trying to get reelected Governor. And we went to the Church of God in Christ, Representative Jones' church. And at the time, Bishop Walker came with me, and at the time, Ron and Carrie Paige were pastoring the church there, back over there. And I see Finus; thank you for coming. Bless you. Thank you, Finus

Jones. So first, the choir got to singing, and Carrie got to singing. And then the bishop called my opponent "Old Hoghead" on statewide television. *[Laughter]* And I said to myself, "I'm either in or out after this. I don't know whether I am in or out, but something is going to happen now." There you are. Thank you, Bishop Walker.

In the bishop's defense, he only said that after the man I was running against said that African-Americans in Arkansas would vote for a duck if it was on our ticket. So it was a reaction, not an action. And God forgave him for his harshness. And so did the voters, I might add.

Anyway, I've been back to that church many times, and I've been back to this town many times, and I never come here without feeling renewed, because there's so much courage and hope and spirit. And today what I would like to say to you is this: First, thank you. Thank you for all the years we worked together, all the roads we've walked together, all the times you gave me a chance to serve.

I think that because of the times we went through, I was better prepared to deal with America as I found it in January of 1993: high unemployment, social decline, political division, discredited government. And now, thanks in no small measure to what I learned working with you, we've got the lowest unemployment and welfare rolls in 30 years and the lowest poverty rates in 20 years. We've got 20 million jobs and the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years. We are on our way to taking this country out of debt in 15 years for the first time since 1835. And along the way, we have immunized 90 percent of our children against serious diseases for the first time, and over 7 million young people have already taken advantage of the HOPE scholarship tax cut to go on to college. I think it's been a good 7 years for our country.

And underneath that, we see the beginnings of equality starting to emerge. Nationwide, we have the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment rates ever recorded. We have the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years.

This is all good news. But I came here today to ask the people of Arkansas, the people of the Delta, and the people of America one more time, what are we going to do with this prosperity? And one thing that I say over and over again is, countries are like—no different from

people and families and schools and football teams and businesses. It's easy to concentrate when you're in trouble and your back's against the wall.

The great British essayist Samuel Johnson said, "Nothing so concentrates a man's mind as the prospect of his own destruction." But when things are rocking along pretty good, people lose their concentration. And I've been saying to America, look, we've never had a time in our history when the economy was this strong and the society was coming together, and we don't have an internal crisis or an external threat. This is responsibility time. This is a time to look at those big questions that will affect the future of these children here, to take care of the retirement of the baby boomers now, to give all these kids a good education now, to bring economic opportunity to places like the Delta that haven't been part of this prosperity.

Now, if we can't do this now, we will never get around to doing this. Now is the time to be responsible and think about the long-term welfare of our country. And as I said, earlier today I talked about the economic issues, the thing I was going to try to do for east Arkansas, the entire Delta. And I want to give credit again where credit is due. I have been relentlessly pursued to do more and more and more by your Senator and your Congressman. Now, I get lobbied by 435 Members of the House and 100 Senators. Believe it or not, even the Republicans ask me for things from time to time. *[Laughter]* There is nobody any better or any more passionate than Senator Blanche Lambert Lincoln and Representative Marion Berry, and you ought to know that. They have taken care of you.

Today I want to talk just a little more about education and what we're trying to do and what we need to try to do to help you reach your full potential. In the last session of Congress, we got funds to double the amount of after-school programs that we have in our schools. That's really important for children everywhere.

I don't believe that we should promote people who don't learn, but I don't think we should punish people that the system—if the system fails them. We need to give the kids extra help, extra help. And the schools that can't afford it ought to have the resources they need to give that kind of extra help, so everybody can learn.

I think it is important that we hook up all of our classrooms to the Internet. First, all our schools, then all our classrooms. When Vice President Gore and I said in 1994 we want to wire all of our schools, including the poorest schools in America, and we're going to get the private sector to help us, and then we're going to make sure we train the teachers because, otherwise, the kids will know more about the computers than the teachers. And then, we're going to make sure that the poor schools can afford it.

And we passed something called the Telecommunications Act. For the first time in 60 years, we revised our communications laws, and the part of that we said we'll have this E-rate, which will give a discount to schools. Now, here, you connected the computers that you got from our technology literacy challenge grant to the Internet with the help of \$100,000 in discounts for the E-rate. That's what it meant to Earle: \$100,000 in discounts so you could afford to be on the Internet just like the wealthiest school districts in the United States of America.

In the budget I signed last month there will be another \$60 million in educational investments coming to the Delta, including \$7 million to hire 200 more teachers for smaller classes in the early grades, which I think is very important.

Now, to give you an idea—I'm kind of proud of this, but when we said—when Al Gore and I started working on this, only 3 percent of the total classrooms in America and 14 percent of the total schools had any Internet hookup. Now, over 50 percent of the classrooms and over 80 percent of the schools in America in just 5 years are hooked up to the Internet and can afford to be, thanks to this E-rate. So you're a part of the future. And I want to thank you for that.

Now, what I'd like to do now is to announce a generous new initiative coming not from the Government but from MCI WorldCom Foundation, to give the teachers at Earle High School and across the Delta region unprecedented access to the kind of world-class educational materials that in the past only the wealthiest school districts could afford. In cooperation with National Geographic and Mr. Ferris' National Endowment for the Humanities, the Foundation—the MCI WorldCom Foundation has developed a wonderful website called MarcoPolo.

It contains lesson plans and resource materials on everything from history to math to art. These lesson plans for teachers have been developed by some of our finest teachers and academics. And now they're available absolutely free over the Internet, thanks to MCI.

Now, to take advantage—who is here from MCI? Stand up. Everybody from MCI, stand up. Thank you. Give them a hand. *[Applause]*

Now, so that the teachers can utilize the website, the MarcoPolo foundation will train, free of charge, as many as 4,500 district curriculum specialists throughout the seven-State, Mississippi Delta region. They will then train 100,000-plus teachers on how to use the website.

A teacher in Earle, for example, will learn to go to the website, click on humanities, and be guided to a series of lesson plans on, say, the life of Socrates, developed by the experts at the National Endowment for the Humanities. The lesson plan then links to sites containing Plato's writing on Socrates, commentary by leading scholars. Then, it would provide questions teachers can ask students, such as imagining whether Socrates would have chosen to die for his ideas if Martin Luther King had been in a jail cell with him. It's a very interesting question. I think the answer to that is, probably. The site then links Dr. King's letter from the Birmingham jail, where King praises Socrates for being, and I quote, "A tension in the mind, so that an individual could rise from the bondage of myths and half-truths." Now, just imagine helping high school students explore the idea of civil disobedience from Socrates to Martin Luther King over a period of 2,500 years, and being able to do it in every single school, no matter how rural, no matter how poor, no matter how distant, anywhere in the United States of America because of the generosity of MCI and this program. We thank them again.

The idea is that you've got to train the teachers, because it is going to be more and more possible every day for every school in America to offer lessons like these, things that would have been undreamed just a couple years ago, simply because of technology, if all the teachers can access it and make the most of it and get the students involved in it. The second thing I want to say is we're going to hold two conferences to help rural communities gain access to all the Federal programs that exist today but that are too hard for many small rural towns

with part-time mayors and small staffs to keep up with.

On March 9 next year, in Jonesboro, the Department of Education—thank you, Secretary Riley—will host a conference to help law enforcement officers and rural educators learn how to apply for school safety and drug prevention grants to develop safer schools. Then the Department will host a conference in Helena to help rural colleges obtain grants and assistance from Federal agencies so that nobody will ever be denied access to college or a good college education because of where they live or what their income is. These things are very, very important.

Now, let me just say this in closing. We can do all this, but the students have to do the most. You've got to believe that just because you live in a part of the country that had a tough time in the last 15 years when the whole economy changed and the world dumped upside down, you've still got to believe that you're just as smart as anybody anywhere. I believe that, and you've got to believe that.

But you also have to believe what that great genius Sigmund Freud said. He said, "Genius is 90 percent effort." Or, you know, I can't remember which great athlete said, "You know, a lot of athletics is luck, and it's amazing; the harder I practice, the luckier I get."

So the students here have to be committed to this. We can give you the tools of the 21st century; we can give you a chance to dramatically leapfrog the economic as well as the educational prospects that might have otherwise been here for you; but you've still got to show up for work every day. You've got to suit up as students the way you suit up in athletics or in band or anything else. You've got to suit up.

Now, it's more fun with the computers; it's more exciting with these modern programs. But I'm telling you, the future of this country, not just the future of this community and this county and this part of our State, the future of this country is riding on whether all of our children, without regard to their race or their background, can make the most of their God-given abilities. And to do it, you've got to be willing to work; and to be willing to work, you've got to believe. Nobody will pay a price for a goal that he or she believes cannot be obtained anyway.

And the thing that I liked the best about this whole day was Jimmi saying when she got

to introduce me and shake hands with me and she thought about me meeting President Kennedy, she realized she could do anything. That's true for the rest of you, so go out and do it.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:40 p.m. in the gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to student Jimmi Lampley, who introduced the President, and Ricky Nicks, principal, Earle Senior High School; J.B. Crumbley, superintendent, Earle School District; Leon Phillips, superintendent,

Lake View School District; State Representative Steve Jones; Lt. Gov. Winthrop P. Rockefeller of Arkansas; Raymond J. Simon, director, Arkansas Department of Education; Mayor Sherman Smith of Earle; Crittenden County Judge Brian Williams; Robert M. Powell, president and chief executive officer, USA Truck, Inc.; N.S. (Ness) Sechrest, long-time friend of the President; Bishop L.T. Walker, Church of God in Christ; and Ron Paige, former minister, Little Rock Church of God in Christ, and his wife, Carrie.

The President's Radio Address

December 11, 1999

Good morning. The holidays are upon us, and across our Nation families and friends are gathering to celebrate the season. Today I want to talk about the steps we must take to make sure the food at these festivities, indeed, the food we serve every day, is the safest in the world.

For 7 years now, our administration has worked hard to strengthen our food safety standards for the 21st century. We've made significant strides by using the newest research and best technology available. We're using new, science-based standards for meat, poultry, and seafood. We've updated our standards for fruit and vegetable juices. We also established a nationwide early warning system for food-borne illness to catch problems sooner and prevent them from happening in the first place. We're making new advances each year, and are committed to moving forward on all fronts.

But the holiday season is only our latest reminder. When it comes to what we feed our families, there's really no such thing as too safe. We know certain foods carry a special risk for children, for the elderly, for those with weakened immune systems. My Council on Food Safety has identified eggs as one of those foods.

Every year, about 3.3 million eggs are infected with salmonella bacteria. This causes about 300,000 cases of illness. And when infected eggs still make it from the farm to the table, we know we have more work to do. That's why today I am taking new action on food safety to cut in half, over the next 5 years, the number of salmonella cases attributed to eggs. And our

goal is to eliminate these cases entirely by 2010. This aggressive action plan permits egg producers and processors to choose between two strategies of safety. The first happens at the farm, where extensive tests and rigorous practices will help prevent infected eggs from ever reaching your local grocery. The second happens at the packing plant, where new technologies like in-shell pasteurization will help keep eggs safe and free of bacteria.

I'm also announcing new steps to keep unsafe food imports outside our borders and out of our marketplace. We Americans are eating more imported food than ever, more than double the amount we consumed just 7 years ago. It used to be that only a dozen fruits and vegetables were available year round. Now it's common to find as many as 400 varieties, whether in the heat of summer or the chill of winter. Now, we have no reason to believe imported food is any less safe than the food we grow at home. But after several outbreaks of illnesses were traced to imported food, I directed the Department of Treasury and the Department of Health and Human Services to take action against unsafe imported food and to better protect our consumers. Today they're responding with a comprehensive plan. It set forth steps to prevent so-called port shopping so unsafe food stopped at one port can't find another way into our country. Customs and the FDA will also stamp rejected food with a clear label—"The United

States—Refused”—and step up our policy of destroying imported food that poses a serious threat to people's health.

Food safety is part of our citizens' basic contract with the Government. Any food that fails to meet clear and strict standards for safety should not make it to the marketplace; it's just that simple. With the actions we're taking today, our families can have the peace of mind they deserve every holiday season, and, indeed, every day of the year.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 6:35 p.m. on December 10 in classroom 57 at the Earle Senior High School for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks to the Florida State Democratic Convention in Orlando, Florida December 11, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you. Now, folks, you all sit down now. Can you sit down? I'm a little hoarse, so I can't shout you down, and you won't be able to hear unless you sit down and relax here.

First of all, I want to thank my good friend Charlie Whitehead for inviting me here and for being willing to take the reins of this party again. I came here in 1981, 1983, 1987, 1991; only Arkansas have I visited the Democratic Convention more than I have in the State of Florida, and I thank you very much.

I want to thank Representatives Hastings, Brown, Meeks; former Congressman Smith; the wonderful Lieutenant Governor of Maryland and I think the finest Lieutenant Governor in the United States, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, who spoke to you earlier today. And I want to say how proud I am that a person who has been a friend of mine a long time is going to be your next United States Senator, Bill Nelson. And Grace Nelson, thank you very much for your interest.

I also asked if Rhea Chiles was still here. It was almost exactly a year ago that Lawton Chiles passed away, and like his family and his friends and his beloved Floridians, I want you to know I still miss him. He was my friend. He was my mentor. He was my ally. His legacy is alive and well in the good things he did in Florida and the good things that we're doing in the United States. And I'm honored to be here.

Now, let me tell you, I know you probably noticed we're about to get into an election sea-

son here—[laughter]—and you may have noticed that I can't run for anything this year. [Laughter] So I want to tell you how come I came down here.

First of all, it was almost 8 years ago exactly when the Democratic Convention of Florida in December of 1991 put my campaign on the map. And I came to say thank you. With your help, when I was running fifth in the polls nationally, we won a decisive victory over a majority in the straw poll here in 1991. It was the first evidence that Democrats were ready to take America in a new direction. And I got to thinking about that last night and this morning. You were very wonderful to me, but I also want you to know you were a hard sell. [Laughter]

I don't know how many times I've talked to Jeff Eller and Craig Smith, who were among those who worked this convention for me, and Hillary and I remember how dog-tired we were when we got back to our hotel room after the speech, and then we had to go and visit all these caucuses. We must have gone to a dozen caucuses. And we were asked the most detailed questions over the most wide array of issues, and I just hope you're putting this crowd this year through this. That's all I want to say. [Laughter] It was unbelievable.

But I must say, you know, I had been coming here—I remember when then-Governor, now Senator Bob Graham invited me in '81 and '83 and '87—I loved this convention, and I loved that experience in '91. I love your energy, your intensity, your commitment, your caring about the issues and the future of this State and this

Nation. And if you can keep this energy—don't forget, we won in '92, and in '96 we won again, and in '96 we carried Florida for the first time in 20 years—you can win again here, and you can do it.

Every time I try to take a walk down memory lane, some of the political press says, "Oh, well, he's thinking about his term being over." Well, I'm not, either. I've got 14 months left, and I'm going to give it to them every day until I go. But since this is an election year, I think it's worth taking a little walk down memory lane.

In the 12 years before Al Gore and I took office, irresponsible policies in Washington piled up deficit after deficit. We quadrupled the national debt in 12 years. We had high interest rates, high unemployment, stagnant wages, growing inequality. By 1991, when I entered the race for President, we had economic distress, social decline, political division, and government was entirely discredited. And don't let anybody forget it.

Now, what a difference 7 years of working for opportunity, responsibility, and community with all Americans make. We are ending the century on a high note. And you can take great pride in it because you had a not insignificant amount to do with it.

Just last week we crossed a truly remarkable threshold: 20 million new jobs since January 1993. And more and more, they're good-paying jobs on which you can support a family, buy a home, take a vacation, save for college and retirement.

So I just want to take a minute here, and I'm going to give you a capsule of the last 7 years. I want you to know it; I want you to take pride in it, because you were a part of it; and I want you to share it with your fellow citizens. The Republicans can have all the rhetoric they want. Let people choose between their rhetoric and our record.

Number one, economically, we have the longest peacetime expansion in our history. In February it will be the longest economic expansion in the history of our country, including that in World War II. We have a 30-year low in unemployment, a 32-year low in welfare, a 20-year low in poverty rates. We have the highest homeownership ever, the largest surplus ever, the first back-to-back budget surpluses in 42 years, with the smallest Federal Government in 37 years.

There's more. We have the lowest Hispanic and African-American unemployment rates ever

recorded, the lowest Hispanic poverty rates in 25 years, the lowest African-American poverty rates ever recorded, the highest rate of small business starts in history, the highest rate of minority business ownership in history, the lowest female poverty—unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single parent household poverty in 46 years. We're going forward together.

Now, I might say—I was going to save this for later in my speech, but I think we ought to insert it here—and we've done it with the most diverse administration in history, the most diverse appointments to the judgeships, to the Cabinet, to the administration. And I think that the record, not me, the record America has established in the last 7 years proves that Mr. Connerly is wrong in wanting to end affirmative action.

Look, it's interesting, you know, affirmative action actually began under a Republican administration, back when both parties were really committed to civil rights. And like any system that went on for years unexamined, there were some problems with it and it needed to be fixed. And we worked very, very hard on a "mend it, don't end it" policy that I'm proud of. But you cannot look at the record the American people have established in the last 7 years—where we made an effort to include everybody, and we made an effort to make sure our economic policies benefit everybody, our political policies benefited everybody, our social policies benefited everybody—and make a serious case that we'd be better off if we were growing more divided by walking away from one of the tools that has helped to bring us together as a nation. Don't give up on affirmative action, and go out there and defend it.

Wait a minute. We're not done with the record yet. You all just relax. [*Laughter*] I want you to remember this. I'll send a copy of this to Mr. Whitehead, and he can send it out. We have—listen to this—we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years; 470,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not been able to get a handgun because of the Brady bill. All the things the NRA—let me tell you—but the NRA was wrong. There's not a hunter in Florida that's missed a day of the hunting season because of the Brady bill, but there are a lot of little kids in the inner city alive because of the Brady bill today. It was the right thing to do.

Wait a minute. Over 20 million people have taken advantage of the family and medical leave

law, a bill which was vetoed by my predecessor. And it hasn't hurt the economy. Over 10 million people benefited from the minimum wage increase. It hasn't hurt the economy. Over 7 million people right now have claimed their HOPE scholarship tax cut to pay for community college or the first 2 years of college so that we can open the doors of college to everyone in the United States of America.

Over 2 million more kids have been insured since the Balanced Budget Act passed in 1997 under the Child Health Insurance Partnership between States and the Federal Government—2 million more kids. Over 90 percent of our children are immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in the history of the United States. Over 150,000 young people have served their communities in Florida and throughout the country in AmeriCorps, our national community service program. It took the Peace Corps 25 years to get the number of volunteers we've achieved in 5 years in AmeriCorps.

Now, these are just some of the facts. Let's talk about the environment. The air is cleaner. The water's cleaner. The food is safer. We have the lowest production of waste materials in our country in 20 years, and 20 years ago we had 50 million fewer people. We've cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as the Republicans did in the 12 years before we took office—3 times as many. And we have protected more land, from the Florida Everglades to the California redwoods to the 40 million roadless acres in the national forests, more land than any administration in the history of this country except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt.

Along the way, we made a contribution to peace and humanity and democracy in Northern Ireland, in the Middle East, in Bosnia, in Kosovo, in Haiti. We expanded trade with Latin America. We're trying to do so with the Caribbean. We're trying to be a good neighbor to our friends in the Caribbean and to our friends in Africa.

We have reached out to reduce the nuclear threat, from Russia to North Korea; to establish a decent relationship with China, which is important to our future. And the world is a safer, stronger place than it was 7 years ago.

Now, I say this to you to say not how great we were, but that we had good ideas, focused on giving the American people the conditions

and the tools to make the most of their own lives; focused on creating opportunity for every responsible citizen; focusing on creating a community of all people in this country who are willing to work hard and be good citizens. And the American people did it. And I am very grateful. Hillary is very grateful. We are all very grateful.

But I want to say to you, I could not have done it, not any of it, without the Democrats in the Congress. And we need more of them, not fewer of them. Send Bill Nelson up there.

And I want you to know that it would not have happened without the Vice President. Again, I want you to listen to this, and you can see, I'm a little hoarse, so I can't—this is from the heart. Now, these are facts. From his vote to break the tie on the '93 budget—which is what gave us the ability to balance the budget, got interest rates down, got the economy going—to his vote to break the tie on the Senate's consideration of commonsense gun legislation to close the loophole in the Brady bill so we could also cover the gun shows—something you voted to do in Florida—from leading our efforts to connect every classroom to the Internet—let me tell you what we've done: 5 years ago, when Al Gore and I started working on this and I asked him to take it on, only 4 percent of the classrooms in the country were connected, and they were in 14 percent of the schools—5 years ago; today, over 50 percent of the classrooms are connected to the Internet in over 80 percent of the schools; I think he's done a good job in helping this to happen—from running our empowerment zone program to bring economic opportunity to poor areas to supporting our policies and developing so many of our policies to strengthen the American family to leading our reinventing Government effort—which has given us, I will say again, the smallest Federal Government in 27 years with a higher level of support for the American people—to supporting every tough decision I have had to make as President, from guns and tobacco to Bosnia and Kosovo, I can tell you that in the history of the country, he is the most effective and influential Vice President who has ever served.

He's got a lot of good ideas for the future, too, and now I want to talk about that. I just signed the first budget of the 21st century. Charlie said we had a do-nothing Congress. Well, that's not quite true. They tried to do

something; they tried to pass a tax cut so big that it would have kept us from ever paying down the debt and fixing Social Security and contributing to our children's education. And I vetoed that, and the Democrats stayed with me. That was a major achievement of the last Congress.

And then, when they got ready to go home, that's when the President and the Democrats acquired a little influence in the debate. So when we came out of the budget, even this year, we had a continuing commitment to 100,000 teachers, to 50,000 more police, to 60,000 housing vouchers to help poor people move from welfare to work. We doubled the funds for after-school programs. We got the first money the Federal Government has ever appropriated for States to turn around or shut down failing schools, so that we can help all our kids get a good education and still support the public schools and public school reform.

We had major advances on the environment, and we beat back major assaults on the environment. And we've paid our United Nations dues and agreed to help alleviate the debt of the poorest countries in the world. And we fixed some of the too-severe cuts in the Medicare law from the 1997 balanced budget, restoring funding to hospitals, to nursing homes, to other medical providers, needed to help the 29 million elderly and disabled Medicare beneficiaries.

We also passed a landmark bill I am immensely proud of, which allows people with disabilities to keep their Medicaid if they move into the work force so people can go to work, because they can't get private insurance.

Now, there's a lot of things we didn't do, and I'm going to be working to get it done. We didn't pass the Patients' Bill of Rights, and we should. It's wrong; everybody should be guaranteed quality care. We didn't raise the minimum wage again, and we should. We didn't close the gun show loophole and require child trigger locks, and we should. We didn't pass the hate crimes legislation or the employment nondiscrimination act, and I believe we should. We didn't pass my new markets initiative, which would give Americans the same tax incentives and loan guarantees to invest in poor areas in America they get to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa, and I think they should.

I hope that they will agree to let China join the WTO and give them normal trading status.

Why? Because you already know we've got a big trade deficit with China. This bill, this agreement I made gives more options for American farmers, American manufacturers, American investors. All they get out of it—and it's not insignificant—they get to be in the World Trade Organization, where we'll all have to live by the same rules. But we get dramatically greater access to their markets. It means big, big jobs and incomes for farmers and workers in America. And I hope it will pass.

Most importantly, I hope we will find a way next year to protect Social Security and Medicare in the face of the baby boomers' retirement. Now, I want to talk a little more about that. And this is what I want to tell you about the election. We've got a great record. We—you and me, all of us—we've got good ideas. We ought to be winning every poll by 20, 25 points in every race. Why aren't we? Well, they always have more money than we do. And they've been talking to a certain sector of our electorate for so long and telling them how terrible we are, some people probably believe it and forget to think before they vote. *[Laughter]*

But you can change that. So I just want to leave you with this. This I want to be my gift to you. I will do everything I can for the next 14 months, but you have to be good citizens in this election season. And the future of America is riding now on how the Congress' races and the Governors' races and the President's races and these other things come out.

Let me begin with a story. Over Thanksgiving, I got my whole family, my extended family, I gathered them up and took them to Camp David. Then after we stuffed ourselves on Thanksgiving, we had some more of our friends come up, and they had some little kids, too, to play with my two little nephews. And on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, this beautiful little 6-year-old girl looked up at me, and she said, "Now, Mr. President, how old are you anyway?" *[Laughter]* So I said, "Well, I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot. That's a lot." *[Laughter]* So I said, "Yes, it is a lot."

And let me tell you, from the perspective of those years, in my lifetime, in my whole lifetime there has never been a time when America had this much prosperity, this much social progress, this much national confidence, with the absence of a crisis at home or a threat abroad.

Now, what does that mean? [Applause] Wait, wait, wait, wait. We're done with the record. [Laughter] I want you to think about this. What that means is that for the first time in my lifetime, on the edge of this new millennium, we actually have a chance to shape the future of our dreams for our children in a way no previous group of Americans in our whole lifetime has had. And that imposes on us a terrific responsibility. You know, anybody can concentrate when their backs are against the wall. The great British essayist Samuel Johnson said, "Nothing so concentrates the mind as the prospect of one's own destruction." Your back's against the wall; you can focus.

When things are rocking along, hunky-dory, it's easy to get distracted. I was so proud of the American people for sticking with me when I vetoed that tax cut. I said, you know, you can understand it if people said, "Hey, man, we've been working hard out here. The eighties were tough; the nineties were tough. Cut us some slack, here." But they said, "Uh-uh, no; we don't want to go back to those old bad days. We'll stay on the path we're on." That was good.

So I ask you—here's what will determine whether we win this election or not, from the White House to the Senate to all the other elections. What will determine whether we win is, what is it about? And if it is about our common responsibility as a people to meet the big challenges of the 21st century, because we ought to and because we can now, for the first time in our lifetimes, then we will win.

What are they? We've got to deal with the aging of America. The number of people over 65 will double in 30 years. I hope to be one of them. [Laughter] It is unconscionable that the baby boom generation will walk away again from the opportunity to take Social Security out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boomers and to push the life of Medicare out there and to add a prescription drug benefit for the people who cannot afford their medicine today.

Second, you look around Florida; we've got the largest and most diverse student population in our history. We cannot walk away from our obligation to give all of these children a world-class education. We ought to pass my initiative to help people build or repair thousands of schools. We ought to keep on going until we connect them all to the Internet. We ought to give every child access to an after-school pro-

gram. We ought to make sure the teachers are certified and well-trained and well-compensated. We owe that to these kids. Nothing is more important.

Third, we ought to do more to help people balance work and family: more child care; insure all the kids with health insurance; equal pay for equal work for women. We ought to do that.

Fourth, we ought to make sure that we can grow the economy and still improve the environment. The world is in a grip, still, of a very bad idea that's wrong. All over the world, including in Washington, DC, people believe you can't get rich unless you put more coal and oil into furnaces or machines and burn them and pollute the atmosphere. It's not true anymore. It's not true anymore.

The farmers in Florida, I predict to you, within 15 years, will be saving all their waste products for biomass fuel. You'll be able to use a gallon of gasoline to make 8 or 10 gallons of biomass fuel with no greenhouse gas emissions. When that happens, the whole future of that will change. You can buy windows right now that let in 5 times as much light and keep out 5 times as much heat and cold.

We have undertaken to green the White House, and we have saved the equivalent of almost 700 cars on the highway by energy conservation at the White House. And it's working just fine. We're all warm in the winter and cool in the summer. It's a big deal. It will be a bigger deal to the future; you mark my words. If you don't want the Everglades to flood because of global warming, we'd better deal now with this. And we can do it.

Let me just mention one or two other things. We've got the crime rate down to a 25-year low, good; murder rate down to a 31-year low, good. Does anybody think America is as safe as it ought to be? No, of course not. Now, when I took office, most people didn't believe you could drive the crime rate down. We all thought the crime rate just went in one direction, up. So now we know it can be brought down.

So I say to you, the reason I fight hard for this, these commonsense gun measures and the 50,000 more police in the high-crime areas and more programs to keep kids out of trouble in the first place is I don't think it's good enough to say we've had crime go down 7 years. I think the Democrats ought to say, okay, now

we know we can do it; we have a new goal. We want America to be the safest big country in the entire world, and we're going to keep working until we do it.

Now, I want to say something about the economy. I think it is terribly important that we keep our party front and center on keeping this economy going. How are we going to keep it going? Number one is, don't forget what brought us to the dance. We need to keep paying down this debt. You know that we can be out of debt in 15 years if you stay on my budget path. For the first time since 1835 America will be debt-free. And we ought to do it.

Second, we've got to keep working within our party, within our country—with labor, environmentalists, and businesspeople—until we finally get it right on trade because, I am telling you, the world is better off today because there is 50 years of increasing trade. We are only 4 percent of the world's people; we've got 22 percent of the world's income. It just stands to reason that you can't hold that unless you sell something to the other 96 percent.

Furthermore, let me say something about imports. They are unpopular in general and popular in particular. We don't like imports in general, but we all have them: we wear them; we drive them, you know. [*Laughter*] What do they do for you? They keep inflation down with competition. That's why we've got the longest peacetime expansion in our history, because inflation didn't destroy it. So we've got to keep working until we get this right.

The third thing we've got to do—and this is something I feel so strongly about—if we can't bring economic opportunity to the poor areas of America that have not participated in this recovery now, we will never get around to doing it, never—to Appalachia, to the Mississippi Delta, to the poor rural areas of America, to the inner cities, to the Native American reservations. We've got to do it.

And with economic opportunity we also have to keep our focus on doing everything we can at home and around the world to get people together, to get people over these conflicts they have over race and ethnicity and religion and sexual orientation. It's crazy.

Let me just ask you to think about this. Don't you think it's interesting that whenever you read something about the new millennium, they talk about the wonders of the human computer, the wonders of the human genome? Hillary had

some people at the White House the other night, one of the guys that founded the Internet and one of the principal scientists working on the human gene. And the Internet guy actually sent the first E-mail 18 years ago, because he had a profoundly deaf wife, and he wanted to talk to her at work, and she couldn't take hearing aids. And he said, "The intersection of the study of the gene and the study of computers means we can do things that we never could do before." And he had his wife stand up, and she started speaking, and because she has a minor little computer chip stuck way down in her ear, she can hear for the first time in 50 years.

Now, last year we transplanted nerves from the legs to the spine of a laboratory animal for the first time and got movement in the lower legs. Some people think we'll be able to take a picture of spinal cord injuries and just design a computer chip to go in and replace the electronic impulses that the spine used to provide. This is the kind of stuff we're talking about.

In a couple of years, young mothers will come home from the hospital with their babies, and they'll have a little genetic map. And it will be a little scary. It will say, you know, your daughter has one of these genes that are predictors for breast cancer. That's the bad news. The good news is you know it now, and here are 10 things you can do that will cut her risk by 80 percent. A lot of my friends who are experts in the field really believe that, sometime early in the next century, American newborns will have a life expectancy of nearly 100 years.

Now, a lot of my other friends in the space program think we'll find out what's in the black holes in the universe. A lot of other people believe we'll continue to fight against war because we'll be more connected to the Internet around the world.

Let me ask you something. Don't you think it's interesting that in this most modern of times, the biggest problem in the world today is the oldest problem of human society: We don't trust people who are different from us. We fear them. It's easy to go from fear to dislike, from dislike to hatred, from hatred to dehumanization, and then to violence.

There was a picture yesterday morning in one of the big newspapers of a young gay soldier that was beaten to death with a baseball bat and, right next to him, the young soldier that

beat him to death—one 21, one 18. I was looking at these two kids thinking, you know, they're young enough that they could be my children. And both these young men put on the uniform of our country, and I could have sent them someplace to die. They both swore to go wherever I told them to go and do whatever I told them to do. And I was aching for the young man who had died and for the young man whose life is now destroyed, who wasn't born hating that way; somebody had to teach him to do that.

And so I say to you, you want to know what makes us different? The best politics in 2000 is doing right by the big challenges of the country. If people believe the election is about who's got the best record and who's got the best vision for the big challenges, lifting us up and pulling us together, listen, our crowd's going to do fine.

If we talk about the aging of America and Social Security and Medicare, if we talk about the education of our children, if we talk about growing our economy and helping our agricultural and manufacturing sectors while improving the environment, if we talk about balancing work and family, if we talk about bringing economic opportunity to poor people and getting this country out of debt for the first time since 1835, and if we talk about the most important thing of all, which is manifested in the hate crimes in America and in the continuing conflicts from the Balkans to the Middle East, and thank God, in the peace agreement in Northern Ireland, and we hope there will be one between Israel and Syria soon, because they're coming to meet next week—people have to find a way not just to tolerate but to celebrate their differences, and to be secure in doing it because they believe, down to the core of their being,

that what we have in common is even more important. We've got to let a lot of this stuff go. Our party can take the lead in doing that.

So go out there and talk to people about what's happened in this country in the last 7 years. Even more important, go out there and say, "Do you really believe in our lifetime we've ever been in this kind of shape before? And if you don't, what are we going to do with it?" Go up to total strangers on the street and say, "You're a citizen; what do you think we ought to do with this time? I think we ought to make the most of it." And ask them about the aging of America. Ask them about the children of America. Ask them about their parents struggling to balance work and family. Ask them about the economy and the environment. Ask them about bringing economic opportunity to poor places. And ask them about building one America. You make this election season about that, and we'll have another celebration next year.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in the Empire Room at the Wyndham Palace Resort. In his remarks, he referred to Charles A. Whitehead, chairman, Florida State Democratic Party; Senatorial candidate Bill Nelson and his wife, Grace; Rhea Chiles, widow of former Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida; Jeffrey L. Eller, former Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Media Affairs; Craig T. Smith, former Assistant to the President and Director of Political Affairs; Ward Connerly, chairman, California civil rights initiative; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Statement on Turkey's European Union Candidacy *December 11, 1999*

It is with great pleasure that I welcome the European Union's offer on Friday to Turkey and Turkey's acceptance of EU candidate status. The United States has long supported Turkey's bid to join the EU, in the belief that this would have lasting benefits not only for Turkey but also for all EU members and the United States.

On Friday the EU and Turkey took a big step toward bringing that goal to fruition.

I would like to congratulate Turkish Prime Minister Ecevit for his government's decision to accept the EU offer. Under Mr. Ecevit, Turkey has launched an impressive array of political, economic, human rights, and other reforms that

demonstrate conclusively its commitment to take its rightful place in Europe.

I would like to express my admiration to Greek Prime Minister Simitis for his statesmanship and groundbreaking efforts with Mr. Ecevit to improve relations between Greece and Turkey, efforts which were key to bringing about this momentous development.

Finally, I want to congratulate all the members of the European Union for their decision and to express my support for their vision of a Europe stronger and more united for its embrace of diversity. In particular, Finnish Prime Minister Lipponen deserves credit for his hard work and skill in helping to bring about this extraordinary achievement.

Remarks at a Reception for Representative Alcee L. Hastings in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

December 11, 1999

The President. Thank you very much. Whoa! You will have to forgive me; you can hear that I have a cold, and so I can't talk very loud. So if you talk, I can't talk. If you like my speech very much, I can't talk, because I can't get over all the cheers. But let me say to all of you, first of all, I want to thank the Keiser family and the leadership of this college for welcoming us here. I want to thank the president of the student body, Dean Samuels, who met me and gave me a gift from the students.

I believe in the audience we have, in addition to Representative Hastings, another candidate for Congress on our ticket in an adjacent district, State Representative Elaine Bloom. I think she's here, and there she is. I want you guys to help her.

Let me say to all of you, I have had a wonderful day in Florida. I don't think I ever had a bad day in Florida. This is the first time I've ever been in Florida in my life that I've been sick, and I had a good day in spite of it, because, this morning, I went up to Orlando to the Democratic State Convention. Now, I attended the Democratic State Convention in Florida in 1981 and in 1983 and in 1987, when I was just a Governor and a friend of your Governor's, and they were good enough to invite me. And I always had a big time, and Hillary had two brothers living down here then, and I was always looking for a reason to come and always learning about what was going on in Florida, and thinking, this is the beginning of what will happen in America.

So, anyway, 8 years ago this week—8 years ago—in December of 1991 Hillary and I came down to the Florida Democratic Convention,

which was holding the first election of the primary season, a straw poll. I was running fifth—fifth—in the country in the primaries at the time, but I got over 50 percent in the Florida Democratic straw poll. And it's been all uphill ever since, thanks to all of you, and I'm very grateful.

Now, I'm glad to be here tonight with Alcee Hastings, and I'll tell you why and ask you to help Elaine Bloom. Because I know the President sometimes gets the blame when things go wrong, but the President also gets the credit when things go right. And you heard Alcee talking about all those good things. I want to run over them again in a minute for you, but the good things that have happened here to the American people would not have happened had I not had the support of the Democrats in Congress, particularly those that were really strong-willed and outspoken, that had influenced the others, and Alcee Hastings is such a leader in the United States Congress.

And I want you to know that his influence extends beyond the Florida delegation, beyond the Congressional Black Caucus, because he is an intelligent man; because he cares about the rest of the world; because he believes that you can care about the education of our children and saving Medicare and Social Security for our seniors and protecting the Florida environment, and still care about decency and humanity all around the world and the end of not only racism at home but racial and ethnic and religious hatred all around the world. He is one of the most exceptional people in the House of Representatives, and I want you to help him.

Now, I'm going to give a short speech so I don't lose my voice, but you're more likely to remember it. I've got 14 months left, and then you're going to have an election to chart America's course in a new millennium. Here's what I want to say to you about it.

We just passed the first budget of the 21st century. We got 100,000 teachers for smaller classes in the early grades. We got 50,000 more police to keep the crime rate coming down. We got 60,000 more housing vouchers to help poor people move from welfare to work. We've doubled the number of after-school programs to help kids stay in school and learning and out of trouble. We gave States for the first time help to help turn around or shut down schools that are failing our children, because all our schools can do better. We moved forward on the environment. We paid our dues to the U.N. We gave debt relief to the very poorest countries in the world. We are moving forward.

Then, there's a lot of stuff we didn't do that I want to next year: the Patients' Bill of Rights, the minimum wage increase, the hate crimes legislation.

We had a great year in foreign policy. You know, I'm Irish. We saw the completion of the Irish peace process this year, and I'm very happy about that. And just last week, I announced that—earlier this week, a couple of days ago—that next week Israel and Syria will resume their peace negotiations in Washington, DC, in a couple of days.

So we're going to keep working to the last hour of the last day. But I want you to step back a minute, because what happens in these congressional elections, whether Bill Nelson gets elected United States Senator from Florida, whether Elaine Bloom gets elected United States Representative from Florida, whether we hold the White House—and I believe we will—but it all depends on—I wish I could be more whoop-dee-doo. I'm doing the best I can. It all depends on what the voters think the election is about.

Now, I want you to remember this. We put in our economic program in 1993, and the Vice President broke the tie in the Congress, and the Republicans said it would be a disaster. Now, we have 20 million jobs, the longest peacetime expansion in history, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the lowest African-American and His-

panic unemployment rates ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years. Now, that's the first thing.

The second thing I want to say is, we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years; 90 percent of our kids immunized against serious childhood diseases for the first time in history; over 2 million more kids covered under the Children's Health Insurance Program. We've cleaned up 3 times as many toxic waste dumps as the predecessor administrations, both of them. And we now have the lowest output of waste that is terribly damaging to the environment that we've had in 20 years. Twenty years ago we had 50 million fewer people.

We've had 150,000 young people serve this country in AmeriCorps, 7 million young people take advantage of the HOPE scholarship to go on to community college and to other college education. We've had 10 million people get the benefit of the minimum wage, and over 20 million get the benefit of the family and medical leave law. This is a better, stronger, more together country than it was 7 years ago.

But what I want to say—I'll stay the course. I want you to stay the course. And then what I want you to do—wait, wait—what I want you to do is go out here and find your fellow Floridians who may not be Democrats, who may not be voters, and not only do I want you to stay the course; I want you to teach the course.

You know, we had an idea that we ought to have a country with opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and a community of all Americans. And almost everything that we fought for we were opposed by the leaders of the other party. And I've been willing to work with them. And when we've worked with them, I've always given them credit for what they've done. But I think we have proved that we're a stronger country when we go forward together across racial lines.

So what are they trying to give you in Florida? Mr. Connerly wants to come here and try to abolish affirmative action when we've proved that going forward with affirmative action in the right way strengthens the economy and the society and makes us all better off. So I want you to think about that.

So the first thing I want you to tell folks is it's not like we don't have evidence here. It's not like there's no evidence about which approach works. I'll never forget how the NRA went after Congressmen in States like Florida

after we passed the Brady bill and I signed it, because my predecessor vetoed it. And they told the awfulest stories about how people are going to lose their guns. Well, 470,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers did lose their handguns, but not a single Florida hunter missed a day of hunting season because of it. They did not tell the truth about that. This is a safer country because of it.

Okay, so here's the issue. What's the election about? What's the election about? In my lifetime—in my lifetime—there has never been this much economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, with the absence of a domestic crisis or a foreign threat. It has never happened. So what's the election about? It's about what we're going to do with that.

What do we propose to do with our prosperity? The Republicans gave us their answer in the last session of Congress when they passed a tax cut so large it would have prohibited us from saving Social Security and Medicare and prohibited us from ever paying down the national debt.

But when I vetoed it, the American people supported me, and Alcee supported me, and the Democrats in Congress supported me because they said, "No, no, no, that's not what we're going to do with our prosperity. What we're going to do with our prosperity is ask ourselves an honest question: What do we want America to look like in 10, 20, and 30 years? How are we going to build the America of our dreams for our children? What are the big challenges out there?" And let me just tell you what I think they are.

Number one, you've got to deal with the aging of America. You've got to save Social Security and Medicare for the baby boom generation, add a prescription drug benefit, let people over 55 buy into Medicare if they don't have health insurance. We've got to do this. We have got to do this. I'm telling you, every baby boomer I know is plagued by the thought that our retirement will burden our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. Now, we've got the money now, folks, to take the Social Security Trust Fund out beyond the life of the baby boom generation, and we ought to do it.

Look at these young people. Look at the young people that are here, 18 to 23 or 24, the young people in that age group. Do you really think when they get old enough to have their children and they start raising families that

they should be burdened in what they can do for their children because they're having to take care of us, their parents, when there is no earthly excuse for it?

All we have to do is take the savings that we get from paying down the debt with the Social Security surplus and put those interest savings into the Trust Fund, and it will take it out beyond the life of the baby boom generation—no controversy, no heat, no nothing. We ought to do it, and we ought to do it next year.

The second thing we ought to do is to deal with the children of America. Ironically, we're growing at both ends, in our elderly and in our children. We've got the largest number of school children in our schools in our history. They are the most racially, ethnically, and religiously diverse school children in our history, and every one of them deserves a world-class education, and we ought to give it to them.

The third thing we ought to do is take a different approach to crime. Now, you all clapped when I said we had the lowest crime rate in 25 years; we've got the lowest murder rate in 31 years. Does anyone here think the crime rate is low enough?

Audience members. No!

The President. No. Now, when I became President, nobody thought we could get the crime rate down. They thought the crime rate went in one direction only—up. Okay, now we know it goes down. I propose that in the year 2000 we have a decent goal. We say we're going to keep working till America is the safest big country in the world.

I believe there are lots of other things I could say—and I'm trying to save the Everglades, you know—and I just want to say this one thing about the environment. The young people here, if they're going to have the kind of America they deserve, are going to have to accept the fact that you can improve the environment and grow the economy at the same time. And as soon as we—look, since I became President, the air's cleaner; the water's cleaner. We've set aside more land than any administration except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We've cleaned up all these dumps. Let me tell you something. We better start thinking that we should be improving the environment as we grow the economy, not destroying the environment as we grow the economy.

But the last thing I want to say is this. I'll just give you one other. You ought to go home tonight and ask yourself what you think the big challenges are. Go home and make your own list. But I'll tell you, if somebody said to me tonight, "Well, Mr. President, you don't have 14 more months; you've got to leave tomorrow. But I'm the genie, and I'll give you one wish. You can do anything for America you want, but only one." What I would choose is for us to be one America, across all the lines that divide us, for two reasons. First of all, we'll never be what we ought to be as long as we still have hate crimes where some guy in the Midwest that belongs to a church he says doesn't believe in God but believes in white supremacy, goes out and kills in rapid succession an African-American former college basketball coach, and then kills a Korean Christian walking out of his church; an angry guy out in Los Angeles shoots a bunch of Jewish kids going to a church school, a synagogue school, and then goes out and murders a Filipino postman, and the guy thought he had a two-fer: he had an Asian and somebody who worked for the Federal Government; James Byrd gets dragged to death in Texas; Matthew Shepard gets put on a rack.

Yesterday, all over America, there were gripping pictures of these two young soldiers, one 21, one 18. The 21-year-old, a gay soldier who the 18-year-old beat to death with a baseball bat. And I thought to myself, looking at these two young boys—keep in mind, I look at them in a certain way not only because they're young enough to be my own sons, but because I have a lot of your sons under my command. Those young men, when they put on that uniform—both of them—when they put on that uniform, they basically took an oath that says, "If Bill Clinton tells me to, I will go halfway around the world to fight and die." That's what it means. Let's not kid. That's what it means.

So here are these two kids. They make the same pledge. They've got their whole lives before them. One of them is dead, and the other one's life is ruined. And frankly, I ached for both of them. And the young boy that murdered the other one because he was gay, he wasn't born feeling that way; somebody taught him to do that. So that's the last thing I want to tell you.

You guys are smart. That's why I always say what government ought to do is create the conditions: get rid of the debt; give people the same incentives to invest in poor areas we give them to invest in poor areas in Latin America and Asia and Africa; give people empowerment, and they will do the job. But, first and foremost, we must be one America.

That is also the way we can have the biggest influence in resolving the crisis in the Middle East, in Kosovo, in Bosnia, the tribal warfare in Africa, you name it. This old world is still burdened down with people that can't get along without hating somebody who is different from them. And we all know better. We all know better.

So I tell you, if you go out there and you make the subject of the election the record of the last 7 years and what are we going to do with our prosperity—and the answer is, we're going to deal with the aging of America, the children of America, make America the safest big country in the world, put America out of debt for the first time since 1835, bring genuine economic opportunity to the poorest people in the country, and be one America—we will come home next time, too.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. in the auditorium at Keiser College. In his remarks, he referred to Ward Connerly, chairman, California civil rights initiative.

Remarks at a Unity Reception in Coral Gables, Florida *December 11, 1999*

Thank you very much. Thank you, Gene. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I hope you'll forgive me if I'm a little hoarse. I've been battling a big cold today. I've had an amazing few

days. A couple of days ago we announced that we were going to start the peace talks again, after 4 years of hiatus, between Israel and Syria, and it's been a wonderful thing. And then I

had a very sad duty to go up to Worcester, Massachusetts, to the funeral of those firemen—you may have seen. And then I went home to Arkansas yesterday. So somewhere along the way I caught a cold, and my voice is not the best. And I thank you for indulging me.

I'm always glad to be back here. I love this hotel. *[Laughter]* I love the golf course. *[Laughter]* I love the people. And Gene Prescott has been very good to me and to many members of my family, and I thank him for that. And I thank all of you for coming.

I know there were Members of the Senate and the House who were here earlier, and they've gone to the next event. I do want to recognize State Representative Elaine Bloom, who is running for Congress and who is going to be a Member of Congress if she gets adequate financial support to help her win. And so thank you very much for coming.

Let me say to all of you, this has been a pretty emotional day for me in Florida, because it was 8 years ago this week that I came to Florida to the Democratic Convention when they were having straw poll. And this straw poll had been mightily hyped because it was going to be the first vote of any kind in the 1992 Presidential season. At the time, as I remember, I was running fifth in New Hampshire in the polls.

And I had been to the Florida Democratic Convention already by 1991, three previous times in the eighties, thanks to Bob Graham and Lawton Chiles. I had been in '81, '83, and '87, and had a wonderful time. But on this special day, we had worked very hard, and the Florida Democrats worked me very hard. They made me go to all of these little caucuses and answer all these questions. I must have answered a thousand questions. I was so exhausted by the time I finished visiting more than a dozen of these caucuses, answering hundreds of questions, I got to where I wondered what I was doing in this business. But we won over 50 percent of the vote in the Florida straw poll, at a time when we were running fifth in the national polls. And a lot of you in this room were a part of that endeavor. I thank you for that.

And I came back today to go up to Orlando to the Democratic Convention just to thank those people who gave me my start on the road to the Presidency; and also to thank Florida for voting for me and for Al Gore in 1996,

which is the first time in 20 years this State had voted for a Democratic ticket.

Gene has already said a lot of what he might say about the record. I just wanted to make a couple of points. In 1991, when I decided to run for President, I did so not because I had anything personal against President Bush. I actually like him quite well, and I had often worked as the representative of the Governors, both the Republicans and the Democrats, with the White House, for years and years. I did it because our country was at a time of economic distress, social decline, political division, and the whole enterprise of government was discredited. And I had worked for more than a decade as a Governor to try to bring people together instead of driving them apart and to try to figure out what makes the economy tick in the modern world.

And so I asked the American people to give me a chance to create a society where there was opportunity for every responsible citizen, and where we had a community of all, where everybody could participate. And Gene mentioned a little of this, but you know, I think the interesting thing is—it is true that in February we will have the longest economic expansion in history. We already have the longest peacetime economic expansion in history, but, you know, in wartime, you're fully mobilized, so they tend to last longer. We're going to outdo all the wartime expansions if we keep on plugging until February. And that's a great tribute to the American people.

But it also happened because we made some tough decisions. We got rid of this deficit; we turned it into a surplus. We got the interest rates down. We stopped taking money away from you that you might need to borrow to expand a business or to start a new one or to make a home loan payment or a car payment or a college loan payment. And the strategy has worked.

But I think it's important to point out that we don't just have the lowest unemployment rate the actual figure is 30 years, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, but our society is coming together. We have the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years, the lowest Hispanic poverty rate in 25 years, and the lowest African-American poverty rate ever recorded and the lowest Hispanic and African-American unemployment rates ever recorded; we've been keeping statistics for about

30 years, now. So we're coming together as a society.

And we're also beginning to look at things that have been long ignored. We have 90 percent of our little children immunized against serious diseases for the first time in the history of the country. Two million more kids have health insurance now than they did in 1997. Seven million young people have gone to college under the HOPE scholarship, a \$1,500 a year tax credit that, in effect, opens the first 2 years of college to all Americans. Ten million got an increase in the minimum wage. More than 20 million took advantage of the Family and Medical Leave Act. These things are important.

In the last legislative session of Congress, we got 100,000 teachers to get the class size down in the early grades. We got 50,000 more police to keep driving the crime rate down. We got 60,000 vouchers to give to people on welfare so they can move from welfare to work and find a place to live where they work. We are moving this country in the right direction.

But I want to tell you why I'm glad you're here tonight, because I'm not much on looking back, except as it's evidence of where we're going. All elections are about tomorrow. I never will forget when I ran for Governor for the fifth time. I went out to the State Fair before I'd announced; and I used to have Governor's Day at the State Fair. And I'd just sit there at this little booth, you know, a fair booth, and anybody that wanted to come up and talk, could.

This old boy in overalls, who was about 70 years old, came up to me and he said, "Bill, are you going to run again?" I said, "I don't know. If I do, will you vote for me?" He said, "Yeah, I guess so. I always have." I said, "Well, aren't you sick of me?" He said, "No, but everybody else I know is." [Laughter] And I got kind of puffed up, and I said, "Well, don't you think I've done a good job?" He said, "Well, sure you've done a good job, but you drew a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?"—it's very interesting—"That's what we hired you to do. We hired you to do a good job." So what I want to say to you is, I hope you will go out and share this record. These statistics are stunning. But they are evidence of the direction we need to take.

It's been an honor to serve. And nobody's entitled—none of us, not even the Vice President—none of us are entitled to a vote because we did a good job. And I'm not running for

anything. But it is evidence of the job that will be done if we stay going in this direction.

It is not about whether we will change, but what kind of change we'll have. And I want you to know I could not have done anything if I hadn't had the support of like minded Democrats in Congress, people who wanted to change the Democratic Party and change the country. Elaine Bloom is one of those people. She was out here for me in 1991. I'd like to see her have a chance to serve. I think she could make a big difference. And that's why you're here; this is important.

This is the last thing I'm going to say. Tomorrow morning or next week or next month, somebody might ask you why you ponied up the money and came to this thing. And I hope you'll be able to give an answer, and I hope your answer is, number one, there's not much argument about whether these people delivered. They've had 7 great years for our country. The ideas they brought, the direction they changed was right. Number two, the next election should be about America meeting the big new challenges of the 21st century, not about short-term, divisive, narrowminded politics.

And let me just say, in my lifetime—I had a bunch of kids up to the house at Camp David Thanksgiving weekend, and this little 6-year-old girl who is the daughter of a friend of mine said, "Now, how old are you again?" And I said, "I'm 53." And this 6-year-old girl, her eyes got big and she said, "Oh, that's a lot." [Laughter] And I have to admit she was right. [Laughter] But what I want to tell you is, in these lot of years that I've had the privilege of being on this Earth, never before in my lifetime has our country had this combination of economic success, social solidarity, national self-confidence, with the absence of an internal crisis or an external threat. It had never happened to me before in my lifetime. And what I have learned in these 53 years is that no set of conditions last forever. This is a time of rapid change. We will never forgive ourselves if we do not use this moment to shape the future of our dreams for our children.

We've got to deal with Social Security and Medicare, the aging of America, take Social Security out beyond the baby boomers' lives, lengthen Medicare, add a prescription drug benefit so the 75 percent of the seniors who can't afford the medicine they need can get it.

We've got to deal with the education of the largest and most diverse group of schoolchildren in history, and we've got to do it in a very serious and disciplined way. We have to help people do more to balance work and family. Nearly every parent is working now. We need more investments in child care and health care for children and equal pay for women. We need to broaden the reach of the Family and Medical Leave Act. We need to do these things.

We need to continue to protect the environment while we grow the economy. I'm convinced, folks that this—I'm not running for anything, and I'm convinced this climate change problem is real. And you could have in five or six decades a substantial part of the Everglades under water if we don't aggressively move to try to reverse this. And what I want to tell you is we can grow the economy even quicker if we do the right things environmentally than if we don't. You don't have to give it up anymore.

Just two other things that I hope you will say. There are still people in places that this economy has left behind: Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, the Indian reservations, a lot of inner-city neighborhoods. But we have a strategy to try to bring free enterprise—not government jobs, free enterprise—to those places. And keep in mind, that's one way to keep growing this economy and keep this expansion going without inflation. If you invest in a new area, you create new businesses, new jobs, and new consumers. You're not adding to inflationary pressures.

And I will over simplify. Essentially, what we want to do is to give people who can come to political fundraisers the same incentive to invest in poor areas in America we give them today to invest in poor areas in Latin America or Asia or Africa. I'm for that, too, by the way. But I think if we can't give people the incentives to put free enterprise in America in places that are left behind, if we can't do this now, we're never going to get around to it.

You know, the national unemployment rate is 4.1 percent. Do you know what the unemployment rate on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation is in South Dakota, the home of the Lakota Sioux, the tribe of Crazy Horse? Seventy-three percent. I've been there now. There are plenty of intelligent people there. There are a lot of yearning young children who want a good education. There's plenty of things we could do there. And there's 120 years of history that

explains why this is so, and I won't bore you with it. But I'm just telling you, I hope that you will say, "I came there and I'm still—I'm glad I went, and I'm glad I wrote the check, because they've got a good record, and because they want to take on the big questions of the 21st century: the aging of America; the most diverse group of kids we've ever had; the balancing of work and family; the balancing of the environment and the economy; bringing economic opportunity to poor people; and" the last thing I'd say is "creating truly one America."

We had a fascinating time the other night. Hillary had these two guys come to the White House for one of these Millennium Evenings she has that we put out on the Internet all over the world. So this one man, Vint Cerf, was one of the men who created the architecture of the Internet, and he mailed the first E-mail 18 years ago to his profoundly deaf wife, who was so deaf she could not hear with the aid of even the most powerful hearing aids, and he wanted to talk to her when he was at work. That's how the E-mail started. And the other guy was Professor Lander from Harvard, who's one of the scholars of the human genome, this rapid thing we're doing to—you may have seen, we found 33 million components of one of the chromosomes. Did you see that last week? I mean, we're basically trying to map the whole genetic structure of the human body. So Dr. Lander knows about this.

Well, a lot of what they were talking about was how you couldn't do the science without the computer technology, and how the computer technology was going to amplify the science. For example, last year I was really happy that we transplanted nerves from the legs to the spine of a laboratory animal for the first time and got movement in the lower limbs. They now believe that a quicker answer to the problems of people who have spinal cord injuries, that maybe the development of microchips that are programmed to reflect an individual mapping of every person's injury, and to send out electrical impulses that replicate what the nerves do.

They believe that in 3 or 4 years, every young mother will come home with a baby and a genetic map. That'll be kind of scary; they'll tell you all the things that might happen to your baby, but they'll also tell you all the things you can do to minimize the chances that they'll happen. And most of my friends in the field believe

that some time fairly early in the next century, the average child will live to be 100 years old, have a 100-year life expectancy.

A lot of my friends who are interested in space say that we may find out what's in those black holes in the universe. And everybody knows that we're going to start having a lot more E-commerce and Internet connections, in ways we couldn't have imagined. I'll give you just one little example. Did you all ever buy anything on eBay? It's a trading site on the Web. There are now over 20,000 people that make a living on eBay. They don't work for eBay; they make a living buying and selling on eBay. And a number of them used to be on welfare. So if you can get Internet access to be as dense in America as telephone access, a lot of these poor people that worked their way out of poverty, they'll figure out how to do it.

So this is, anyway, to put it mildly, a very exciting time to be alive. And I think it is quite interesting that, with all this modern stuff going on, the biggest problem we've got is the oldest problem of human society with all this racial and religious and ethnic hatred, and hatred of gays. You know, it's just like, okay, so we're living in a modern world, but we can't let any of this stuff go. There are people and groups that don't think they count unless they've got somebody to look down on.

And if you look at what's taking my time as your President around the world—the Middle East, Northern Ireland, Kosovo, Bosnia, tribal wars in Africa, and a lot of things that are indirectly related to that—it's the biggest problem in the world.

One of the worst things you read about—crime rate keeps going down in America, but you've got all these hate crimes: black basketball coach in Illinois, Korean Christian coming out of his church, both killed by a guy who belonged to a church that said they don't believe in God; they believe in white supremacy. An angry guy up in L.A. shoots all these Jewish kids going to their synagogue schools and then goes and kills a Filipino postman. Matthew Shepard, James Byrd.

Did you see the pictures in the paper yesterday of the two soldiers, one 18 and one 21? The 18-year-old beat the one that was 21 to death with a baseball bat because he was gay.

I've said this a lot, but my heart broke for both of them.

People have to be taught this kind of stuff. And I'm very proud of the fact that I belong to a political party that believes everybody has a place at the table, everybody ought to have a chance, and we ought to take a little extra trouble to help bring people in that need a helping hand.

I believe that, and I think now you've had 7 years—and I hope you'll think about this when Mr. Connerly comes down here and puts his anti-affirmative-action initiative on the ballot—we've now had 7 years to prove that our way works better. America's better off when you help everybody to participate, not worse off.

And if I could have one wish, it would be—just one; if somebody came, you know, one of those little angels came to me at night and said, "I'm sorry, Mr. President, you have to check out tomorrow morning. You can't stay 14 months, but we'll give you one wish. What would you like?" As much as I want to do something about the aging challenge and the children and all these other things, I would say, I'd like to leave America united across the lines that divide us—not just tolerating our differences, but celebrating them; and reaffirming the fact that our common humanity is more important than all these interesting differences.

There's no country in the world as well-positioned as we are for the next 50 years of what's going to happen. But we have to be willing to deal with these long-term challenges. If this election is about that question—what are we going to do with this unique moment in our history?—then our side will win.

And I hope that when people ask you, why are you doing this, you'll tell them about the last 7 years, but you'll also talk about your dreams for the next 20.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 p.m. in the Altamira Room at the Biltmore Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gene Prescott, president, Biltmore Hotel; Ward Connerly, chairman, California civil rights initiative; Vinton G. Cerf, senior vice president of Internet architecture and technology, MCI WorldCom, and his wife, Sigrid; and Eric Lander, director, Whitehead Institute/MIT Center for Genome Research.

Remarks at a Unity Reception in Coral Gables December 11, 1999

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, I want to thank Senator Torricelli for that uncommonly generous introduction. He thwarted one of my rules of politics. Normally, when you get an introduction like that, it's from someone you've appointed to a good office. [Laughter] And so he just did it out of the goodness of his heart and a laundry list of what I'll have to do for New Jersey next year. [Laughter] And I thank him for that.

I want to thank Congressman Kennedy for his leadership. He's done a wonderful job. And his father, who is a very, very close friend of mine, is actually proud of him, but too proud to admit it—that he has a son as the only chairman in the Kennedy family.

I want to thank Bill Nelson and his wonderful wife, Grace, for making this race for the United States Senate. And I want to thank my longtime friend Elaine Bloom, who was on my committee when I started in Florida in 1991, for making this race for Congress. And she can win this race if she gets the kind of support that I see around this place tonight.

And most important of all, I want to thank Chris and Irene for letting me come back again to this humble abode—[laughter]—that makes the White House look like public housing. [Laughter] You know, you look out here and you expect Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn to come up on the *African Queen* any minute. [Laughter] I mean, it is amazing. I want to thank them for their generosity. I want to thank Andrew, Kristina, and Angela for being here—their wonderful children.

Thank you, Gene Prescott, for having us over to your and Coral Gables' great hotel, which I love so much. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for being here.

You might ask yourself, what am I doing here, besides the fact that I would come to see Chris and Irene at the drop of a hat? I'm not running for anything, and I can't. I'm here because, number one, the things that we've done in the last 7 years would not have been possible had it not been for the support of the Democrats in the House and the Senate. And I've worked with the Republicans whenever I could. I think the record will reflect, when all the evidence

is in, that I have been far more forthcoming toward them than they have toward me, although we had a pretty good little mutual deal going at the end of the last budget session.

But the truth is that when it came to the '93 budget, which started this economic recovery and started us on the road to getting rid of the terrible deficit, it was only members of my party that voted for it. We would never passed the Brady bill or the crime bill of '94, with its 100,000 police and its assault weapons ban, if it hadn't been for the members of our party. We would have never been able to defend the environment and continue to make the progress we have from the Everglades to the redwoods in California to setting aside 40 million acres, roadless acres, in our national forests, if it weren't for the Democrats.

We wouldn't have 2 million more children with health insurance since 1997 if it weren't for the Democrats. And if we had a few more Democrats—in this last session, we did get 100,000 teachers, 50,000 police, 60,000 housing vouchers for poor people to move from welfare to work. We doubled the after-school programs, and we got money for the first time for States to turn around or shut down schools that are failing. So we had a good run. But if we had a few more Democrats, we also would have gotten a Patients' Bill of Rights, an increase in the minimum wage, hate crimes legislation, and goodness knows what else, something that's very important to Florida: we would have gotten a national effort, the first national effort ever, to try to help school districts build or repair school facilities. This is very important.

You know, I went to Jupiter not very long ago—some of you may remember that—they had 12 house trailers out behind the grade school. And I was up in Tampa, and there was a woman who was in my high school class, and in my grade school graduating class, who is in the administration of the school district in Tampa. And we were great pals from the time we were 9 years old. And, you know, I went to Tampa High School, and they had four or five house trailers out behind the high school. And at a time when we think education is so

important, I think it's a good reason for having a few more Democrats.

I want you to understand that, number one, what we have done would not have been possible without them, the people they represent; and number two, the country has a lot more to do.

I've given a lot of speeches today. I started out at the Florida Democratic Convention where, 8 years ago this week, I got the first victory I received in the Presidential primaries, in the Florida straw poll where we got over a majority of the vote, and I went from being an anonymous person who was running fifth in the national polls to somebody who actually had a chance. And then it took us 4 more years of hard work, but we won Florida in the Presidential election in '96, Al Gore and I did. And I'm very grateful for that. So my heart is full of gratitude tonight.

But I want to just say a couple of things really quickly. First of all, people will probably ask you why you came here, and whether it was worth the money. And you need to have an answer other than that you wanted to visit Chris and Irene's house. I'm being serious now.

We are about to have the millennial election. This country has been around here for more than 200 years because more than half the time we make the right decisions.

And I want to tell you a story. One of my brothers-in-law is here. I got my big extended family together, including my two nephews, for Thanksgiving up at Camp David. And then after Thanksgiving, I had some of my friends come up because they had little kids to play with the nephews. And on the Saturday morning after Thanksgiving, this 6-year-old girl came up to me, this beautiful child, and she looked at me, and she said, "Now, how old are you anyway?" [Laughter] And I looked at her, and I said, "I am 53." And she said, "Oh, that's a lot." [Laughter] Which lamentably is the truth.

But what I want to say to you—and I'd like for you all to remember, search your own memories—in my lifetime we have never had a time like this, where we had this much economic prosperity, this much social progress, this much national self-confidence, and the absence of any overwhelming crisis at home or threat from abroad. It has not happened in my lifetime.

So I'm very glad that I could be President in these last 7 years, and that I've got 14 more

months to try to keep chunking away at this and move this country forward. I think we have built a bridge to the 21st century. I think we have turned the country around. I'm elated by it, and I feel gratified by it.

But the real issue is what are we going to do now? And I'll bet you anybody here who's lived any number of years can remember a time—in your personal life, your family life, or your work life—when things were going so well you lost your concentration. You thought it would last forever, but you got divided or distracted, and something bad happened; or at least you didn't maximize your opportunities.

Well, countries are no different from that. And this country, while things are going very well—it is true—we have the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years, the highest homeownership in history, 20 million jobs, and, come February, the longest economic expansion in the history of the country. Things are going well for us. But it is important that we all understand that this country is going to have big challenges and big opportunities early in the next century. And we have never had a chance before, in my lifetime, to shape the future of our dreams for our children.

So when people ask you why you were here tonight, I think you ought to say, "Well, it's not much of an argument anymore. That crowd did a pretty good job. They've got a good record, but more importantly, they're focused on the right things."

The outcome of the elections of 2000 will be determined, in my judgment, if we work hard enough not on whether they will have more money than we will; they will. They will have more money than we will. So the question is will we have enough? But the real question is the outcome, in my judgment—I've been doing this a long time—will turn on what the election is about, which is why you have to be able to say that to people. When people ask you why you were here, you have to be able to give an answer.

And what I think we ought to be focused on—you ought to say, "I'm for the Democrats because they've done a good job, and because they will do the best job of dealing with the big opportunities and the big challenges before this country. And I do not want to see us squander the opportunity of a lifetime, at least the opportunity of 53 years."

What are we going to do? You live in Florida. What are we going to do about the aging of America? There will be twice as many people over 65 in 30 years. We have got to run Social Security out beyond the life expectancy of the baby boomers. We've got to run Medicare out and provide a prescription drug coverage for these poor elderly people. Seventy-five percent of them can't afford their drugs.

We've got to do something to give all these kids. We've got the largest and most diverse student population we've ever had. We've got to give all of them a world-class education. One of the things I'm proudest of Al Gore for is that 5 years ago we decided we were going to hook up all the poor schools as well as the rich schools to the Internet. And we got the so-called E-rate, which gives discounts of up to 90 percent to the poor schools. Five years ago, 4 percent of the classrooms and 14 percent of the schools were hooked up. Today, over 50 percent of the classrooms; over 80 percent of the schools have an Internet connection. We're committed to this. But there's a lot to do.

Doesn't it bother you that we've had this great economic recovery, and there are still people in places that have been left behind? How are we going to keep it going?

Well, we ought to keep—first of all, we ought not to have a tax cut so big we can't pay the debt down. Under my budget we'll be out of debt in 15 years, for the first time since 1835. And that means lower interest rates on everything. The average American family today is saving \$2,000 a year in home mortgage costs, \$200 a year on car payment costs, and \$200 a year on college loan costs because we're paying the debt down, not running it up.

Number two, we ought to give big financial incentives, tax credits and loan guarantees, to people who will invest in poor areas in America. I've got a proposal before the Congress that says, look, let's give Americans who have the money to do it the same incentives to invest in poor areas in America they get to invest in poor areas in Latin America, in Africa, in Asia. I think it's very important. We have Indian reservations where the unemployment rate is over 70 percent. We have lots of counties where the unemployment rate is over 20 percent in rural America. We've got to do that.

And finally, we have to find a way to live together better. You still—all these hate crimes

are small examples of the big wars in Bosnia, in Kosovo, the continuing conflict in the Middle East. It's the same thing. People still, in this most modern of all age, define themselves in very primitive ways; they're scared to death of people who are different from them, different race, different religion, different ethnic group. Some are gay; some are straight. They get scared. And once you're scared of somebody, you didn't like them very much; you can't trust them; so it's a short step to dehumanize them, after which it's okay to be violent against them.

The number one challenge this country faces is building one America across all lines that divide us. And in some ways, I'm prouder of the work we've done in that than all the economic prosperity we've had. And if I had just one wish for America, it would be that we would be able to somehow unlock that mysterious set of factors that keep people apart. I wish every one of you had been with me in Kosovo the other day when I was over there with 2,000 kids in a school, and all these little kids coming up to me thanking me because the American soldiers had let them go home. And they had been—800,000 of them—driven out of their homes, ethnically cleansed. It would have made you so proud to be an American.

But just remember, when you see those things going on and then you see an African-American like James Byrd dragged to death in Texas, or a gay man like Matthew Shepard stretched out on a rack in Wyoming, or a crazy person kill a Korean Christian coming out of church in Indiana, right after he shot down an African-American basketball coach in Illinois, it's the same thing.

So somebody will say, "Well, why did you go there?" Say, "Well, that crowd did a pretty good job, and I'm better off than I was 7 years ago, and the whole country is." But the main thing is we have a profound responsibility to meet the big challenges of the future: the aging of America, the children of America, the balancing of work and family, growing the economy and the environment, bringing opportunity to poor areas, and building one America.

That's why I came down here tonight. I'm not running for anything, but I haven't done all this work to see it squandered by people who lose their concentration. If the election is about the right subject, we will win. And you have helped us immeasurably tonight. But I ask now for your voice, your compassion, and your

consistent commitment all the way to November of 2000.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks he referred to reception hosts Chris and Irene Korge and their children Andrew, Kristina, and Angela; and Gene Prescott, president, Biltmore Hotel.

Statement on Signing the Deceptive Mail Prevention and Enforcement Act *December 12, 1999*

Today I have signed into law S. 335, which contains the Deceptive Mail Prevention and Enforcement Act. Too often, consumers—especially the elderly—either understand sweepstakes mailings to mean that they have won large prizes or else spend their savings on unwanted merchandise and publications in the hope of increasing their chances of winning. Too often, mailing and sweepstakes practices seem designed to mislead.

This legislation will protect Americans against those who use sweepstakes and mailings to deceive and exploit the unwary. It will establish standards for sweepstakes mailings, skill contests, and facsimile checks; restrict “government look-alike” documents; and allow individuals to have their names and addresses removed from sweepstakes mailing lists if they choose. Disclosures will make clear that no purchase is necessary to enter a sweepstakes and that a purchase will not improve a consumer’s chances of winning a prize. The legislation also creates strong financial penalties for companies that do not disclose

all terms and conditions of a contest. Individuals will be able to request a stop to certain mailings that come to their homes, and companies will face liability if they do not honor these requests. The United States Postal Service will have enhanced authority to investigate and stop deceptive mailings, and companies will face greater penalties for failing to comply with a Postal Service “stop order.”

I am proud to sign S. 335 into law today to establish a “right to know” for sweepstakes mailing recipients and protect Americans against misleading mailing and sweepstakes practices.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 12, 1999.

NOTE: S. 335, approved December 12, was assigned Public Law No. 106-168. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 13.

Interview With Mark Knoller and Peter Maer of CBS Radio in Orlando, Florida

December 11, 1999

Domestic Challenges

Q. President Clinton, thank you very much for joining us for this special interview with CBS News. Heading into the next century, beyond your immediate goals for the rest of your term, what do you think are the one or two top domestic challenges facing the country?

The President. I think the aging of America and the children of the country. It’s ironic that we seem to be growing at both ends. We’re

going to double the number of people over 65, and yet, we have the largest group of school-children in our country’s history in our schools, the first group bigger than the baby boomers, and they’re much, much more diverse. They come from more different ethnic and racial and religious backgrounds. And I think that dealing with them are the two biggest things that ought to be on the front burner.

I also believe that, related to that, obviously, as you've heard me say many times, is the challenge of continuing to grow the economy while reaching out into poor areas, continuing to improve the environment, and paying the debt off. I think those are the big, big challenges.

New Millennium

Q. Mr. President, one of the things I've noticed about these celebrations that the White House, you, and the First Lady are planning is that it's propagating the myth that January 1st is the start of the new millennium and the new century. Are you guilty of creating that erroneous impression?

The President. Yes. I mean, I think basically, by common consent, everybody decided that we ought to celebrate the millennium on January 1, 2000, even though most of the strict correctionists say that it's January 1, 2001.

Q. Well, they're right, aren't they?

The President. Well, apparently, that was the prevailing view among the experts, but the people have expressed a different wish, so we're going with the folks. We've got a democracy here, and that's the way we're going. It will be nice for me. Maybe I can do it twice, and I'll be a President of two millennial changes.

Power of the Presidency

Q. Well, looking ahead into the next century, whenever it begins, where do you see the power of the Presidency itself evolving? Is it going to change?

The President. Oh, yes, it's always changing. But I think it will always—at least for the future that I can foresee—will continue to be an extremely important office. I think that a lot of the executive actions will be important, along with getting along with Congress. I think that building partnerships with the private sector will become more important. It will become more important to mobilize the American people and to organize them to meet the challenges in the future the way we've done.

For example, maybe a good example would be the way we've worked on wiring the schools, where we did—the main Government thing we did was to change the law so that we have this E-rate now in poorer schools and hospitals.

Q. You mean wiring for the Internet?

The President. Yes, wiring for the Internet. Poorer schools and hospitals can get a discount rate. Then we go out and try to hustle up all

the equipment and the Internet connections and get everybody to do that. So I think you'll see a lot more of that.

The other thing I think you will see is, I believe the world is growing ever more interdependent, so I think the President, in order to effectively lead the world, will have to be an increasingly effective negotiator, conciliator, bringing people together, working people together. And I think it will be just as important 30 years from now for America to be involved in the rest of the world as it is now. But I think it will be an increasingly interdependent world that will require powers of persuasion and not just unilateral power.

Final Year of President's Term

Q. Next year is also, as you well know, the final year of your Presidency. Do you find that in any way liberating to try and do things that you weren't able to do in the first years of your Presidency?

The President. I don't know if I find it liberating. I find it—it's concentrated my attention and my energies and, obviously, since I'm not running, I could do things in an election year that might be difficult to do otherwise. But if you go back, I mean, we've taken a lot of controversial decisions. That's one of the reasons we lost the Congress in '94; we took on the gun lobby and the health care lobby and the deficit issue at the same time, and it was more than the system could bear, I think.

But I do think that I am acutely mindful of the fact that I have 14 months left, and that I need to be out there squeezing the most out of every day. And I need to get as much done as I can for the American people, to try to leave our country in the best possible shape so that the next President and the next Congress will be even freer than they are to basically look with a visionary eye to the future and take on the big issues. That's the theme that I had today in Florida; that's the theme that I try to echo everywhere.

I believe that this really is the only time in my lifetime we've had so much prosperity, social cohesion, and national self-confidence, with the absence of internal crisis or external threat. I will get as much done on these big challenges as I can. But after I'm out of office and there is a new team in, I still think it's very important that they keep the American people focused on these big issues in the 21st century, because

a society rarely has the luxury of having the tools and the space to deal with these long-term challenges that we now have. And I think it's very important that we seize it.

Gays in the Military

Q. Let me ask you one specific, if I may, on the question of gays in the military. As you no doubt know, the First Lady this past week was critical of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy. She said it just doesn't work. You weren't going to institute that at the beginning of your Presidency, anyway. Why not use the last year of your Presidency to institute an end to discriminatory discharges against gays in the military? And what do you think of what the First Lady said this week?

The President. First of all, I'm quite sympathetic with what she said. I think—that was the position that both of us brought to the White House. But I think there's one thing that may be not clearly understood. The reason that I went for "don't ask, don't tell" is that it's all I could do because I had a clear signal from the Congress that if I implemented my policy, they would reverse it by overwhelming majorities.

I didn't implement "don't ask, don't tell" until the Senate voted 68-32 against the policy that I wanted. So I think it's very important. For me, what's important is that the policy, as implemented, does not work as I announced it and as the leaders of our military at that time in '93 pledged to implement it.

I can only hope this last brutal beating death of a gay soldier will give some sobering impetus to a reexamination about how this policy is implemented and whether we can do a better job of fulfilling its original intent.

Let me remind you that the original intent was that people would not be rooted out; that they would not be questioned out; that this would be focused on people's conduct, and if they didn't violate the code of conduct, and they didn't tell, that their comings and goings, the mail they got, the associates they had, that those things would not be sufficient to kick them out of the military or certainly subject them to harassment.

So what I would like to do is to focus on trying to make the policy that we announced back in '93 work the way it was intended to, because it's way—it's out of whack now, and

I don't think any serious person can say it's not.

Q. How are you going to do that, sir?

The President. Well, we're working with the Pentagon now to do it. I mean, I think there's a greater awareness now that it's just not—it's not being implemented as it was announced and as it was intended.

Now, as for—but I don't have any problem with what she says, because that's—after all, that's what I said back in '93, and if anybody—you know, if there's a sense in the Congress or in the next White House that that ought to be done, then maybe together they'll have enough votes to do it.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. You mentioned earlier the importance of future Presidents becoming even more mediators and conciliators on the world scene. This coming week, of course, Syria and Israel are going to be at the White House. And I know you told us, at the news conference, you've taken a blood oath to avoid discussing details of those long-stalled talks, the renewal of them, but how do you plan—just in general, since you don't want to go into details—how do you plan to get this process moving and keep it moving when you get these gentlemen sitting down again?

The President. Well, I want to get them together, let them talk, and get them to try to agree on an agenda and a timetable. They know what the issues are, and they know what the options are for resolving the issues. And my experience has been that competent people—and you're dealing with two highly competent people here; I mean, these people are good in what they do in representing the interests of their countries, and that when—they don't go into these negotiations without some idea about where they want to finish and some idea about where they'll have to give, and whether the other person will give, and how it will all play out.

So on the other hand, it is difficult, but not as complex, in my view, as the Palestinian negotiations with Israel. So I would like to see them get together, talk together, get to know each other a little better, and agree on an agenda and a timetable, and then take a couple of days off and go back and meet with their respective teams to decide where they're going to start and where they're going to stop, and come back

here and just look to burn through it, just keep going until we get the thing done.

Q. Why is the time right now?

The President. I think because both leaders, for different reasons, finally have this sense of urgency, and I think they should have a sense of urgency. And I think they know that the enemies of the peace process are gearing up; they want to try to derail it, and not just for the Palestinians. I think that they know that there is a sense of hope and possibility now, and I think they believe that Prime Minister Barak is committed to trying to resolve all this, just like he said he was.

Russian Espionage

Q. Mr. President, is there any doubt in your mind, sir, that Russia is responsible for the listening device that was discovered at the State Department? And to what extent are you disturbed by it? Don't we all do the same things, spy on each other?

The President. I think when—we have always taken spying seriously and taken appropriate action, and I think they will take appropriate action in this regard. And I have no reason to believe that the press accounts on this are not accurate.

Q. You must be concerned, though, about this big security breach in the State Department.

The President. Well, I certainly wish it hadn't happened, but I think they learned something about this. I think now they'll figure out how to deal with this technology, and it won't happen again. And I think we just have to—look, the consequences of all this, while certainly not good, are not as dire as they were in the dark days of the cold war when both of us were spying on each other in a much more sweeping way. And we had ways of dealing with it. And there's sort of an established protocol for dealing with this kind of thing, and I think we ought to do it. And the main thing we ought to do is learn whatever we can from the incident. How did they do this? How did they get away with it? How can we prevent it from happening again?

Q. What effect will it have on American relations with Russia?

The President. Based on what I now know, I think we should proceed where it's in our interest to do so in our relations with Russia; and where we have differences of opinion, we ought to proceed to articulate them. You can't

let every spy case affect the larger national interests in the country.

Private Life/Public Record

Q. Mr. President, a couple more reflective questions. Based on your own experiences over the years, going back to your first campaign, to what extent do you think a politician's private life should become part of the public record?

The President. Oh, I don't know. I think I'll let the press and the people decide that. I think—let me say it in a different way. I think that what I have seen too often is that the politics of personal destruction become the preferred option only when people think they can't win the old-fashioned way; they can't win on the issues or whatever.

Now, a person—I'm not talking about whether somebody's robbed a bank or something like that, but I think that the pendulum swung pretty far over in the last three or four elections, and I think it's swinging back now. And I think that's what the voters are saying, and they'll try to get it right. But something ought to be genuinely relevant, and we ought to not just target people for no good reason and just pound on them and use that because they couldn't win the old-fashioned way. I think that both the politicians and the press should be mindful of that.

But it will get sorted out. These things come and go. You know, early in the 1800's, we had several years where this sort of thing was all the rage, completely dominated the political debate. And then it sort of faded away again. And these things come and go, and the underlying health of our democracy and the common sense of our people have always been enough to see us through, and I think they will be here.

Former Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's Statement

Q. What do you make of the recent statement by Ken Starr that he thinks you ought to get right with the law by admitting in a public way that you were not truthful in your statements under oath?

The President. I'm not sure that I know what to make of Mr. Starr.

Q. You know, he's giving interviews. He's doing talk shows.

The President. No, but it's a free country.

Q. Why do you think he's still pursuing this after he's resigned his office?

The President. I just don't think I can serve any useful purpose by commenting on it now. Maybe I should follow his lead; when I don't have a job, I can comment on it more.

Post-Presidential Plans

Q. Speaking of that, as we wind up here, besides getting your Presidential library off the ground, what is Bill Clinton going to do with the rest of his life?

The President. Well, I hope I'll be a member of the Senate spouses club. That's one of the things I really hope I'll be. And I say that—we're laughing, but I'm dead serious about that. I want to do what I can to help Hillary. And getting this library and public policy center up and going and having it continue the best missions of my Presidency I think will be quite time consuming.

I hope I'll have a little more time for my family and my friends, but I still want to be a good citizen. I really admire what Jimmy Carter's done with his life. I wouldn't necessarily choose the same endeavors, although I've supported Habitat for Humanity, and I certainly believe that if someone needed me in the future to monitor an election or something like that, I ought to be willing to do it.

But the main thing I want to say is that he has said—the life he has lived has been a life of service, and he said—he's also had a very interesting life. I mean, he's had time to go climb up to the base camp of Mount Everest; he goes fishing and does the things that he loves to do; he goes skiing. But he has lived a life of service. And he has recognized that it is an incredible gift to have the chance to be President and that, when you have this gift for 4 or 8 years, you learn things; you know things; you have a perspective that no one else has the chance to develop. And you can't just walk away from it and not at least make yourself available. If people don't want you to do anything, that's one thing. But at least you ought to be available for public service. And Jimmy Carter has lived a life of public service.

I admire that, and I hope that when I leave here, I will be able to do a lot of the personal things I'm interested in but, fundamentally, help in a way. I don't want to be under foot for the next President. I don't want to get in anybody's way, but I do think there's a lot of good things I can do for the world and for our country, and I intend to try to do what I can.

Advice for Future Presidents

Q. Finally, sir, I know it's 14 months away, but what advice do you have for your successor and your successors as the last President of this century? What thoughts do you have to pass on to them?

The President. I think it's very important for a President to have a sense of history and a sense of the future. You have to know where your country is at this moment in our journey. You have to know what the lives of the American people are like. Then you have to have a vision of what you think it ought to be. And once you do that, once you're grounded in the facts and the history and you have a vision of what you think you ought to be, then you need to have a lot of ideas and a lot of energy and a lot of interpersonal skills, and you just need to go to work every day and never forget your mission, because all the pressures, in political life, on the Chief Executive is at the center of the vortex of—all of these things are designed to make you forget your mission. And those who remember their mission and stay on it tend to do very well, even under the most adverse circumstances.

You know, Lincoln once said in the Civil War, he said, "My policy is to have no policy; I am controlled by events." And to some extent, that was true. He was being very flexible, and the Government was a much more rudimentary enterprise than it is today. But to some extent, he was being disingenuous, because his policy was: "I am going to save the Union; if I have to burn every wheat field in this country and if I have to give up my own life to do it, we will not be split."

Okay, so he knew where he was in history. You know, if you listened to him, he talked about George Washington a lot. He had this sense of—he knew about the future. He signed the Morrill Land Grant Act. He was all for the railroads and the public improvements. He had a lot of imagination about the future, Lincoln did, and he said, "There won't be any future unless we hold together. No, that's my policy, and I'm willing to try anything or anybody or any general to get it done."

The thing that made him great was he never forgot what his mission was. He was grounded in history. He had the vision of the future. He used to say he kept regular office hours. My office in the White House on the second floor

is in Lincoln's waiting room, which was later the Office of the President through Theodore Roosevelt. But Lincoln used to keep regular office hours with people that wanted a job in a post office or something, because he said he wanted to be reminded on a regular basis of what the daily concerns of people were, and he wanted the war to be over so everybody could be restored to pursuing those daily concerns.

So anyway, that's one specific, very big example of what I think the general rule is. You've got to understand your country's history, have some idea of your country's future, have a vision of where you want it to go, come up with a set of ideas and a good team, and just pursue it with all the energy and focus you can and

have a good time doing it. That's my advice. Don't forget the mission; don't forget who you work for.

Q. We're honor bound to break this off, sir, but we're very grateful for your time.

Q. Thank you very much for doing this.

The President. I've enjoyed it. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 11:25 a.m. in the Human Resources office at the Wyndham Palace Resort on December 11 but was embargoed for release by the Office of the Press Secretary until 12:01 a.m. on December 13. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk al-Shara of Syria. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Telephone Remarks to a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Houston, Texas

December 13, 1999

Well, I'm glad I got to hear the last of B.A.'s speech, and let me say to all of you, I'm jealous of you. I wish I were there tonight. I had looked forward to being there very much, but I got quite sick with the winter flu, and I've got the Israelis and the Syrians coming in this week, and I have to be well for them. So the doctor said I couldn't get on the airplane.

So I wanted to call and just, first of all, thank all of you for honoring Lloyd and B.A. and for raising so much money for the Democrats in Texas. I think we're going to win the House back in the next election. And I'm doing everything I can to do my part.

But I also want to thank you because of the career and the public service of Lloyd Bentsen, that you honor tonight. Because there is a rea-

son we're trying to win the House back: because of the direction we want the country to take in the new century. And everything he has done in his entire career embodies that.

So Lloyd, I miss you, and I love you. And I love you, B.A. I'm sorry I couldn't be there. I'm sick I missed Ann Richards' jokes. [*Laughter*] And you all owe me a raincheck, just like I owe you one.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 p.m. from the Residence at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Lloyd Bentsen and his wife, Beryl Ann (B.A.); and former Gov. Ann Richards of Texas.

Remarks on the Lands Legacy Initiative

December 14, 1999

Thank you very much. Secretary Babbitt and George Frampton and all the members of our administration are glad to welcome the environmental leaders who are here today.

At the dawn of this century, Theodore Roosevelt defined America's great central task as "leaving this land even a better land for our descendants than it is for us." This is the vision

of environmental stewardship that has inspired our lands legacy initiative, the historic plan I unveiled earlier this year to protect America's threatened green and open spaces.

Two weeks ago I had the great honor of signing into law the funding for this lands legacy initiative. Although much of the news of that day concentrated on budget victories for education and public safety, it was also a remarkable day for the environment. With one stroke of the pen, we made it possible to add hundreds of thousands of acres to our children's endowment of natural wonders, places like New Mexico's Baca Ranch, home to one of North America's largest herds of wild elk.

Today I will be sending to Congress a list of 18 additional natural and historic sites we propose to protect with new lands legacy funding. Our list includes sections of Hawaii's Hakalau Forest, which supports hundreds of species of rare plants and birds. It includes critical habitat on Florida's Pelican Island, where Theodore Roosevelt established the Nation's very first wildlife preserve. It includes the birth home and burial place of Martin Luther King, Jr.

We now have funding to protect all these places. We have willing sellers, and we look forward to speedy review by the appropriate committees in Congress.

I'm also pleased to report on the status of yet another effort to protect the lands we hold sacred. A year ago I asked Secretary Babbitt to report to me on unique and fragile places that deserve to be protected as national monuments. This morning Secretary Babbitt presented me with his recommendation that I use my executive authority to create three new national monuments in Arizona and California and to significantly expand another in California. Each of the sites already belongs to the American people, and no land purchases would be

required. But giving these lands national monument status would ensure they will be passed along to future generations, healthy and whole.

The first of the proposed new monuments is located on the northern rim of the Grand Canyon, and it consists of stunning canyons and lonely buttes shaped by the hand of God over millions of years. The second, a desert region in the shadow of rapidly expanding Phoenix, is an archaeological treasure trove containing some of the most extraordinary prehistoric ruins and petroglyphs in the American Southwest. The third, off the coast of California, would encompass thousands of small islands and reefs that serve as essential habitat for sea otters and sea birds forced from the shore by extensive development. Finally, this proposal calls for expanding California's Pinnacles National Monument, the site of the spectacular volcanic spires and mountain caves.

Secretary Babbitt's recommendations come as a result of careful analysis and extensive discussions with local citizen, State and local officials, and with Members of Congress. And I will take them very seriously. I expect to make a decision on the sites early next year.

Like Theodore Roosevelt, I believe there are certain places humankind simply cannot improve upon, places whose beauty and interest no photograph could capture, places you simply have to see for yourself. We must use this time of unparalleled prosperity to ensure people will always be able to see these places as we see them today.

There is no greater gift we can offer to the new millennium than to protect these treasures for all Americans for all time.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:52 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 December 14, 1999

Thank you. Thank you, please be seated. At this moment, about all I can think of is merry Christmas. *[Laughter]*

Senator Rockefeller, Senator Collins, Representative Cardin, thank you all for being here. And Senator Chafee, thank you for being here,

and with you, the spirit of your father, for all his great work on this.

I want to say a special word of thanks to our mayor, Tony Williams, and his mom, Mrs. Virginia Williams. He has become America's exhibit A of the potential for foster care success. He is a good man, and she is a magnificent woman, and we thank them for being here. Thank you.

I thank Secretary Shalala and all of her staff, and I thank Alfred Perez and Kristi Jo Frazier and the other young people behind me, for whom they spoke. They spoke so well and so bravely and so frankly. What they have achieved in their own lives is truly heroic, and we should all be very grateful that they are determined to make that kind of difference in the lives of other young people.

I want to thank the groups that have done so much to champion the cause of foster children: the Child Welfare League of America, the Children's Defense Fund, the Annie Casey Foundation, the Casey Family Program. I want to thank especially—I won't mention them, but they know who they are—the people who have come up to me personally and lobbied me on this issue over the last couple of years. [Laughter]

I've got a cousin that's been a friend of mine over 50 years, all my life; we were little kids together. She runs a public housing program in the little town in Arkansas where we were born. And she came up here to a HUD conference on kids aging out of foster care, and she spent the night with me at the White House. I got up the next morning; I never know, you know, what's on her mind. This is about a year ago. And she said, "Bill, you have got to do something about these kids that are aging out of foster care." She said, "It's a huge problem in New York and California, but believe it or not, it's a problem at home, too. And nobody's doing anything about it." I want to thank all those people, and they know who they are.

And most of all, I want to thank Hillary. When we were in law school, she worked at the Yale Child Studies Center. Her first job was with what became the Children's Defense Fund. When I became Governor, in my first term she founded the Arkansas Advocates for Families and Children. She has always cared more about the welfare of all of our children than anything else and our mutual responsibil-

ities to them. And she challenged us a long time ago not to forget those foster children who leave the system each year with no financial or emotional support, no one to turn to. She put a lot of herself into getting this bill passed.

Hillary likes to quote the Chilean poet and teacher Gabriela Mistral about our responsibility to children: "Many things we need can wait. The child cannot. Now is the time his bones are formed, his mind is developed. To him, we cannot say 'tomorrow.' His name is 'today.'"

We are here today because all of you, and especially the Members of Congress from both parties, stood as one to say that America's foster children can finally have the name "today."

The Foster Care Independence Act expands access to health care, education, housing, and counseling for young people who must leave foster care when they turn 18. For the very first time, States will be able to pay housing costs and health insurance for people under 21.

The bill also gives States more resources and flexibility to help former foster children finish high school and go on to college, to help young people get jobs and vocational training, to provide counseling for young people learning to live on their own—you've already heard how important that is—and above all, to make sure young adults leaving foster care know they are not out there alone.

The bill makes \$700 million available to the States over 5 years under very flexible conditions. I challenge the States to use every penny of it, and I know I can depend upon the advocates here—[laughter]—to make sure they do.

You also have to help the States, though, to design good programs, to implement them so the money will be spent with maximum impact. We simply cannot afford to have our high school students sleeping in metro stations, as some of these young people had to do.

We cannot afford to lose our future entrepreneurs and teachers and lawyers to the kinds of obstacles the young people behind me have faced. We can't afford to give up on the future, and these young people are a big part of our future and our shared responsibility.

We have tried to help America's most vulnerable children grow up healthy and safe, to make the transition into happy, productive adults. We've tried to encourage adoption so that we can end the sadness of young people shuttling from house to house and never knowing a home.

We've made adoptions easier and more affordable, given States more flexibility, passed incentive programs for States to promote adoption. These worked so well, we actually ran out of money to reward the States. *[Laughter]*

I'm pleased that this bill also authorizes additional funds that program needs, because it is working. Our most recent figures show that adoptions are up 29 percent, the first significant increase in two decades.

Now when we get to the end of the session, sometimes we have to combine a bunch of things in bills, just to get all our work done. And I want to mention one other thing this bill does that is unrelated to young people aging out of foster care or to adoption. This bill includes a provision to honor and assist veterans from other lands who fought with and as a part of the United States Armed Forces during World War II. It creates a special cash benefit under Social Security for veterans who want to leave the United States and return to their homelands.

We have 10 such veterans, 10 Filipino veterans, who are here with us today. I want to thank them for their service, and I ask them to stand and be recognized. We thank you.

So this bill keeps a promise to our children and a promise to our veterans. It was passed with overwhelming support from both parties, proving that we can put partisanship aside, and when we do, it's good for America.

I hope that we will see more of this in the new year. I hope that we can use the historic millennial year to take the rest of the steps

we need to deal with the aging of America, by securing Social Security and Medicare; to give our children health coverage; to raise the minimum wage; to pass the commonsense legislation on gun safety and hate crimes; to do the things that we need to do to support working family, including the Patients' Bill of Rights.

These young people here should give us all a lot of courage and a lot of heart. They represent, out of the most difficult circumstances, the very best not only of our country but of what is at the core of human nature. And in this special season for so many of the world's great religious faiths, we should be very grateful for the gifts they have given us, the gifts they will give us, and the gifts so many other children will be able to give because of this legislation.

Thank you very much.

Now, I'd like to ask the Members of Congress to come up here. We'll sign the bill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Lincoln D. Chafee, son of the late Senator John H. Chafee; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Alfred Perez and Kristi Jo Frasier, who as children were in the foster care system; and Myra J. Irvin, section 8 program manager, housing authority, Hope, AR. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. H.R. 3443, approved December 14, was assigned Public Law No. 106-169.

Statement on the Transfer of the Panama Canal to the Republic of Panama *December 14, 1999*

Today we commemorate the transfer of the Panama Canal from the United States to the Republic of Panama. The official transfer will take place on December 31 in fulfillment of the Panama Canal Treaties of 1978. I am delighted that President Carter, under whose leadership the canal treaties were concluded and ratified, is heading a distinguished delegation of Americans to today's historic event.

To this day, the Panama Canal remains one of the great engineering marvels of the world.

The canal played a critical role in the development of global commerce and contributed to the rise of the United States as a great power. As we look back on this century, we should pay tribute to the skill, vision, and tenacity of those who conceived and built this magnificent waterway.

The decision made in the 1970's to transfer the canal to Panama, ratified by treaty and supported by a broad bipartisan consensus, demonstrated the good will of the American people.

It reflected the wisdom and foresight of American leaders who saw that our national interests at the end of the 20th century were best served by transferring the canal to Panama, that this act could help improve relations between the United States and its neighbors. Since that time, the United States has worked to strengthen democracy, prosperity, and cooperation in our hemisphere, and thereby, benefit our citizens at home. At the age of a new century, the canal, long a symbol of American power and prestige, now also symbolizes the unity and common purpose of the democratic nations of the Americas.

Today's ceremony underscores our confidence in the Government of Panama and the Panama-

nian people's ability to manage this vital artery of commerce. It also signals our continuing commitment to the security of the canal, as enshrined in our treaty obligations, and our determination to work with Panama and the many other countries that use the canal to ensure that it remains open to the world's shipping and commerce.

I commend the government of President Moscoso for its leadership and spirit of cooperation. The United States will continue to work closely with Panama to safeguard the canal and promote the well-being of our citizens and people around the world.

Statement on the Report of the Office of Management and Budget on the Federal Government's Readiness for the Year 2000

December 14, 1999

With the end of the year in sight, I am pleased to announce that OMB's final quarterly report shows that the Federal Government is ready for the year 2000. As of today, 99.9 percent of the Government's mission-critical computer systems are Y2K compliant. They have been fixed, tested, and certified as ready for operation on January 1, 2000. We have met the challenge of making sure that the Federal Government can continue to serve the American people as we enter the next century.

Three years ago when we started our intensive work on Y2K, only one-fifth of the mission-critical systems was ready. Many said that the Federal Government was not up to the job, that the deadline would not be met, and that the price tag would be exorbitant, as much as \$50 billion.

Today, the facts are clear: We have done our job; we have met the deadline; and we have done well below cost projections. I want to thank the thousands of dedicated men and women of the Federal Government who spent

long hours, late nights, and many weekends getting us ready for the new year. Many of these same people will be mobilized and working throughout the New Year's weekend. Thanks to them, we have every reason to approach the changeover with confidence about the operations of the Federal Government.

However, no amount of preparation can prevent glitches. For this reason, there are backup plans, so that the critical functions of the Federal Government can continue.

For many others, including smaller businesses and local governments, there is still work to do between now and the end of the year. I urge them to make every effort possible to fix as many computer systems as they can and to develop contingency plans if they are needed.

As we turn our thoughts to a new year, Americans have every right to be proud of the work of their Government and its employees. They will continue to work vigilantly through the holidays and into the new year so that America may celebrate the arrival of a new millennium.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Burma

December 14, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to

Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara of Syria

December 15, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Good morning. It is an honor to welcome Prime Minister Barak, Foreign Minister Shara, and the members of the Israeli and Syrian delegations here to the White House.

When the history of this century is written, some of its most illustrious chapters will be the stories of men and women who put old rivalries and conflicts behind them and looked ahead to peace and reconciliation for their children. What we are witnessing today is not yet peace, and getting there will require bold thinking and hard choices. But today is a big step along that path.

Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Shara are about to begin the highest level meeting ever between their two countries. They are prepared to get down to business. For the first time in history, there is a chance of a comprehensive peace between Israel and Syria and, indeed, all its neighbors.

That Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Shara chose to come here to Washington reminds us of one other fact, of course, which is the United States' own responsibility in this endeavor. Secretary Albright and I and our entire team will do everything we possibly can to help the parties succeed, for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East is vital not only to the region; it is also vital to the world and to the security of the American people, for we

have learned from experience that tensions in the region can escalate, and the escalations can lead into diplomatic, financial, and ultimately, military involvement far more costly than even the costliest peace.

We should be clear, of course, the success of the enterprise we embark upon today is not guaranteed. The road to peace is no easier, and in many ways it is harder, than the road to war. There will be challenges along the way, but we have never had such an extraordinary opportunity to reach a comprehensive settlement.

Prime Minister Barak, an exceptional hero in war, is now a determined soldier for peace. He knows a negotiated peace, one that serves the interests of all sides, is the only way to bring genuine security to the people of Israel, to see that they are bound by a circle of peace.

President Asad, too, has known the cost of war. From my discussion with him in recent months, I am convinced he knows what a true peace could do to lift the lives of his people and give them a better future. And Foreign Minister Shara is an able representative of the President and the people of Syria.

Let me also say a brief word about the continuing progress of the Palestinian track. Chairman Arafat also has embarked on a courageous quest for peace, and the Israelis and the Palestinians continue to work on that.

We see now leaders with an unquestioned determination to defend and advance the interest of their own people but also determined to marshal the courage and creativity, the vision and resolve, to secure a bright future based on peace rather than a dark future under the storm clouds of continuing, endless conflict.

At the close of this millennium and in this season of religious celebration for Jews, for Muslims, for Christians, Israelis, Palestinians, Syrians, Lebanese, all have it within their power to end decades of bitter conflict. Together, they can choose to write a new chapter in the history of our time. Again, let me say that today's meeting is a big step in the right direction, and I am profoundly grateful for the leaders of both nations for being here.

We have just talked and agreed that it would be appropriate for each leader to say a few

brief words on behalf of the delegation. We will take no questions, in keeping with our commitment to do serious business and not cause more problems than we can solve out here with you and all your helpful questions.

But I will begin with Prime Minister Barak.

[At this point, Prime Minister Barak and Minister Shara made remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. We're going to work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria; and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Barak and Minister Shara.

Remarks on Action by the German Government To Compensate Victims of Forced Labor of the Nazi Regime and an Exchange With Reporters *December 15, 1999*

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I want to make a statement about the very important work that Stu Eizenstat has been involved with. I have just received a letter from Chancellor Schroeder confirming that the German Government and German industry are prepared to commit 10 billion deutsche marks, the equivalent of more than \$5 billion, to a fund for those who were slave and forced laborers and suffered other injuries under the Nazi regime.

We believe this satisfies the requirements of those representing the victims. We close the 20th century with an extraordinary achievement that will bring an added measure of material and moral justice to the victims of this century's most terrible crime. It will help us start a new millennium on higher ground.

Those who will benefit are elderly survivors. Sadly, they're passing away at a rate of almost 10 percent a year. Some are living here in the United States, many are living in central and eastern Europe, double victims who endured the Holocaust first and then a half-century of communism. They have been waiting a long, long

time, and nothing can fully compensate their searing loss.

But we can accept our generation's responsibility to remember and to redress the injustices they suffered. We owe that to them and to future generations. I've been working with Chancellor Schroeder for some time to reach this point. We could not have done this without his truly remarkable leadership.

Germany already has made more than \$60 billion in payments to Holocaust survivors and to other victims of Nazi persecution. But this is the first important gesture made to those who were forced and slave laborers working for private industry, to those whose insurance policies were not honored, and those whose property was confiscated.

This was not an easy step for the German Government to take, but it reaffirms its commitment to human dignity, reinforces its partnership with the United States, and strengthens its ties with neighbors in central and eastern Europe. I want to thank the companies involved in the settlement for acknowledging their moral and historic responsibility.

I will do everything I can to provide legal finality for them and to remove the potential cloud hanging over German companies doing business here in the United States. I also thank the plaintiffs in this case for their persistence in a just cause and their patience in reaching a just solution. Given the age of the survivors, it was vital to reach this agreement now rather than wait for the outcome of lengthy litigation.

Finally, let me say I am deeply grateful to Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Eizenstat for the truly remarkable job he has done to bring us to this day. He has already done so much to help us shed light on this cruel period in human history and to bring justice to its victims. I know of few people who combine his commitment to doing the right thing with his actual skill at getting things done.

I'm sending Stu and his team to Berlin to meet with all the parties to finalize the agreement so that it can be implemented as soon as possible. After I complete this statement, he will go to the briefing room and answer your questions. Again, my deepest respect and appreciation to Chancellor Schroeder and the German

Government, as well as to Deputy Secretary Eizenstat. This is a very good day for the cause of freedom and a good day for the United States.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, what kind of compensation do you think the lawyers, if any, deserve who negotiated this deal?

The President. We're all going to get a cold if we stay out here. Stu can answer all those questions. Let's go in the briefing room, and he can answer them. Thank you.

Israel-Syria Talks

Q. Mr. President, before you go, could you give us a sense of how the Mideast talks are going today?

The President. They're going pretty well. But it's hard going, and we've got work to do, so I'm going back to work. Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany.

Statement on the Retirement of Cartoonist Charles M. Schulz

December 15, 1999

Like all readers of "Peanuts," I was saddened by the news that Charles M. Schulz will retire his beloved comic strip on January 4. But every one of his fans understands that this difficult decision is the right one for Mr. Schulz's health and for his family.

The characters Charles Schulz created are more than enduring icons. Charlie Brown, Linus, Snoopy, Pig Pen, and Lucy taught us

all a little more about what makes us human. Virtually every day for a half-century, Charles Schulz has shown us that a comic strip can transcend its small space on the page. It can uplift; it can challenge; it can educate its readers even as it entertains us. "Peanuts" has done all of these things. I wish Charles Schulz a speedy recovery and a fulfilling retirement.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployment of United States Military Personnel to the Kosovo International Security Force

December 15, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In my report to the Congress of June 12, 1999, I provided information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. military personnel as

the U.S. contribution to the NATO-led security force in Kosovo (KFOR) and to countries in the region to serve as a national support element

for them. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in Kosovo.

The U.N. Security Council authorized member states to establish the international security presence in Kosovo in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999, for an initial period of 12 months. The mission of KFOR is to provide a continued military presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement (MTA) between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY); enforce the terms of the agreement of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) to demilitarize and reintegrate itself into civil society; provide operational direction to the newly established Kosovo Protection Corps; and contribute to a secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) by providing, until UNMIK assumes these functions, for public security and appropriate control of the borders.

Currently, the U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is approximately 8,500 U.S. military personnel. This number is higher than previously reported due to normal personnel rotations and will return to approximately 7,000 U.S. military personnel when those rotations are completed. In the last 6 months, all 19 NATO nations and 15 others, including Russia and Ukraine, have provided military personnel or other support to KFOR.

In Kosovo, the U.S. forces are assigned to a sector principally centered around Uroševac in the eastern portion of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining public security is a key task, and U.S. forces conduct security patrols in urban areas and in the countryside throughout their sector. Approximately one-half of KFOR's total available personnel is directly committed to protection tasks, including protection of ethnic minorities. The KFOR forces are under NATO command and control and rules of engagement.

In addition, other U.S. military personnel are deployed to other countries in the region to serve in administrative and logistics support roles for the U.S. forces in KFOR. Specifically, approximately 1,500 U.S. military personnel are operating in support of KFOR in Macedonia and Greece and, on occasion, in Albania.

Since my report to the Congress of June 12, the FRY, in accordance with Resolution 1244 and the MTA, withdrew its military, paramilitary, and police forces from Kosovo. The KLA agreed to June 21, 1999, to a ceasefire, to withdraw from the zones of conflict in Kosovo, and to demilitarize itself. On September 20, 1999, KFOR Commander Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson accepted the KLA's certification that the KLA had completed its demilitarization in accordance with the June 21 agreement. The UNMIK thereafter established a civil emergency services entity known as the Kosovo Protection Corps that is intended to provide civic assistance in emergencies and other forms of humanitarian assistance. The UNMIK is in the process of considering applications from former KLA personnel for service in this Corps.

The UNMIK has made progress in establishing the international civil presence to provide an interim administration for the people of Kosovo. The KFOR, within its means and capabilities, is providing broad support to UNMIK. As UNMIK is still developing its structures in Kosovo, KFOR continues to support UNMIK at all levels, including public administration, and is represented at the Kosovo Transitional Council and the Joint Civil Commissions. The KFOR personnel provide a security presence in towns and villages. Checkpoints and patrols are organized in key areas in Kosovo to provide security, resolve disputes, and instill in the community a feeling of confidence. In addition, KFOR is providing assistance in the areas of demining, humanitarian relief, international civil police training, and the maintenance of civic works resources. Ethnic tensions in Kosovo, however, remain a concern, particularly in areas where Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians live in close proximity. Until UNMIK is able to field a full complement of civil police, public security remains principally a KFOR responsibility.

NATO has planned for the KFOR mission to be formally reviewed at 6-month intervals with a view to progressively reducing the force's presence and, eventually, withdrawing. Over time, KFOR will incrementally transfer its security and policing responsibilities as appropriate to the international civil administration, local institutions, and other organizations.

I have taken these actions pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief

Executive. I appreciate the continued support of the Congress in these actions.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

December 15, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) emergency declared in Executive Order 12808 on May 30, 1992, and

with respect to the Kosovo emergency declared in Executive Order 13088 on June 9, 1998.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

December 15, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy,

and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon

December 16, 1999

Well, thank you very much. First, I want to thank Mark and Peter and Andy and Charles for cohosting, chairing this. And I thank all of you for being here.

You said some very kind things in your introduction. I'd like to thank you for being my personal friend for many years and for all the issues we've discussed and all the things we've talked

about, including before I became President. I'd like to thank the people here from the White House who have helped me to make this the most inclusive administration in history. And I want to thank all of you for all the issues that we've fought on.

We actually had a very good year last year in many ways, and I got most of what I wanted in the budget at the end. But we didn't get the hate crimes legislation, so I ask you to stay with me and to make a good effort. I think we've got a much better chance to pass it in 2000, and I hope you will help me with that.

I also think we should keep trying to get a vote on the ENDA legislation, which I strongly support. And one final thing. Sandy Thurman's here; we talked about this on the way in. While we've made remarkable progress with HIV and AIDS in the United States, it is still raging out of control in much of Africa and increasingly in parts of Asia. And I think we ought to do more on that around the world, and we're going to try to do more.

But I want to ask for your support as we go to the Congress and ask them to take a strong stand on that. Otherwise, you're going to see whole countries collapse under the weight of AIDS-related death, AIDS orphans, and managing the situation. Those are three issues I wanted to mention.

The last point I'd like to make is this. I've said this a lot of times, and all of you have heard me give this speech, so I won't give the whole speech. But if we have enjoyed any success in these last 7 years—and I think we've had quite a lot of it—part of it was because I had an idea of what I wanted America to look like at century's end and at the beginning of the new millennium.

It is very important to have a vision and to pursue it and very important not to forget your mission when things happen which are designed to make you forget your mission. I think it is. Now, in this election season, I think it's very important for us, not only as Democrats but as citizens, to get the American people to focus on the importance of doing that all over again, of having a vision for the first couple of decades of the 21st century, of imagining what we want America to be like, what we want the world to be like, and developing a strategy and a set of ideas to get there.

We have never before, ever, in my lifetime and perhaps never in our history, enjoyed as

much economic and social progress and national self-confidence with the absence of domestic crisis or foreign threat. Therefore, we have the greatest opportunity in our lifetime and perhaps ever to shape the future for our children. We ought to spend a lot of time defining and debating what that future should be.

And when the next administration starts in the new century and the next Congress sits, they ought to sit and start with a mandate from the American people based on those big questions.

Now, I have been through enough elections to believe that the primary determinants of the outcome of the election are the quality of the candidates and the subject of the campaign, assuming that both sides have enough resources to get their message out. The other guys will always outspend us, and we know why they've got more money than we do. And it's okay as long as we have enough. But assuming we have enough, an election's outcome is determined by the quality of the candidates and the subject of the election. I believe if the subject of the election is, what are the big issues we have to deal with between now and the end of the next decade, we win, because the American people agree with us about the big things. And we just have to keep pushing forward.

The public opinion, the people of this country nearly always get it right if they have enough time and enough information. That's why we're still around here after 200 years. We wouldn't be if that weren't true. And just on the issue of equal rights and the absence of discrimination, there's been a sea change in public opinion in this country in the last 7 years. We're a long way from where we were in '92, when, to put it mildly, there were some fairly visceral responses to the positions that I took in the campaign. It's a very different world out there now.

So I ask you not only for your money—I'm grateful for that—but I ask you to think about all the various ways in which we can make sure that the American people use this moment to be responsible dreamers, instead of just to fritter the election away in some distracted, indulgent, or mean-spirited or shortsighted way, because if this thing is about the big issues and the long-time vision, we're going to do just fine. And you can have a big impact on that.

The only other thing I would say is, I think there is a very great deal we can accomplish

next year. Conventional wisdom is, in election years you don't get much done. That's not necessarily so. I can remember we got a great deal done in 1996 in the election. In '98, we got a lot done in the 11th hour, simply because Congress wanted to go home. [*Laughter*]

So stay with me, keep focused on this, too. We can get quite a lot done next year if we have the discipline to do it and the will.

The last thing I want to say is, I am very grateful for having had the chance to serve and to work with you and to be President at this particular moment in history, when doors were being opened and a new chapter in the civil rights history of America was being written, and I hope we can do more and do better.

But I'm very grateful for having had the chance to do this, and I have said many times I wish we could have done more, but I'm glad

we did what we did. And I feel very fortunate just to have had the chance to serve at this moment, thanks in no small measure because of the progress we've made on these issues, and I thank you for that, too.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Colonial Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to luncheon cochairs Peter Amstein, software developer, Microsoft Corporation; Mark Fox, finance strategy adviser, FOX Group; Charles Nolan, fashion designer, Ellen Tracy, Inc.; and Andy Tobias, treasurer, Democratic National Campaign Committee, who introduced the President. The President also referred to ENDA, the proposed employment non-discrimination act.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Foreign Minister Farouk al-Shara of Syria

December 16, 1999

Middle East Peace Process

Over the past 48 hours, Israel and Syria have taken a critical step in the journey toward peace. That journey will be a difficult one, but with courage and perseverance on both sides, the result will be deeply rewarding to the people of Israel and to the people of Syria.

In the course of their meetings with Secretary Albright and with me, Prime Minister Barak and Foreign Minister Shara agreed to make every effort to reach peace between Israel and Syria as part of a just, lasting, and comprehensive Middle East peace, based on United Nations resolutions 242 and 338 and the Madrid terms of reference. To that end, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister agreed to return to Washington to continue their negotiations on an intensive basis beginning January 3, 2000, about 2 weeks from now.

They have requested the United States to participate in these negotiations, and we are honored to do so. They agreed to take steps to ensure that these negotiations will be conducted in a productive and positive atmosphere.

We are witnessing a new beginning in the effort to achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. With Syrian-Israeli negotiations off to a good start, Israeli-Lebanese negotiations expected to begin soon, and the Palestinian track well underway, we can truly set our sights on a new and different Middle East.

As I emphasized from the outset, the journey will be tough. Nothing in the past 48 hours should lead us to believe otherwise. But the parties are embarked on this path. They have agreed there should be no looking back, for the sake of our generations and generations yet to come.

I thank the Prime Minister and his team. I thank Foreign Minister Shara and his team. I thank Secretary Albright and those on the American team. All of them have worked hard. And I want Israel and Syria to know they can count on the United States every step of the way.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the West Portico at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999

December 17, 1999

Thank you. Senator Kennedy, Senator Jeffords, we thank you for your leadership and your remarks today. And Senator Roth, we thank you very much. We know this couldn't have happened without you. And Senator Moynihan, Representative Lazio, thank you, sir. And Representative Waxman and Representative Brown who are here and Representative Dingell who isn't here, I want to thank all of you for your leadership in the House. Give them all a hand. *[Applause]*

I also want to thank the members of the administration who were particularly active in supporting this bill: Secretary Herman, the co-chair of my task force on the employment of adults with disabilities; Secretary Shalala; Secretary Summers; Social Security Commissioner Apfel. I'd like to thank, in the White House, my Chief of Staff, John Podesta; Chris Jennings; and Jeanne Lambrew, who had a lot to do with this bill, as all of you know.

I want to thank Senator Dole, especially, and through him all the citizens who came forward and made it possible for this to be a genuinely American bill. I want to welcome the members of the Roosevelt family who are here today, particularly Jim and Ann Roosevelt, my longtime friends. And now Jim is a member of this administration, something I'm very proud of.

I want to thank you, Justin Dart, and the members of the disability community who are here, for this and every other issue that we've worked on for over 7 years now. And I want to acknowledge—James Sullivan really spoke for three others who are here—Donna McNamee, Paul Marshall, and Wesley Vinner. I thank them for being up here, because every one of them represents a different, slightly different story of someone who will benefit from this bill, and I thank them for sharing their stories with us.

I think it's kind of interesting, don't you, that Mr. Sullivan from New Hampshire and Senator Jeffords from Vermont are the only two people up here without coats on? *[Laughter]* This is a warm December day in New England. *[Laughter]*

Senator Jeffords, you made that remark that President Roosevelt never carried Vermont. You

know, my family communes with the Roosevelts on a regular basis. *[Laughter]* You may remember that. Eleanor told Hillary last night, "You're forgiven; all is forgiven now." *[Laughter]* "This wipes the slate clean, this bill does." *[Laughter]*

John Sweeney, we thank you for being here. And we thank the labor community for their support of this legislation, as well.

I think it is wonderfully fitting that this is the last piece of legislation a President of the United States will sign in the entire 20th century. We do it at this magnificent memorial to Franklin Roosevelt, who from his wheelchair lifted our Nation out of depression and led the free world to victory in World War II, who laid the building blocks for world peace and security that we enjoy today, and accomplished it all as an American with a disability.

In his time, as we all know—and we've had a lot of debates about that in this memorial context—Roosevelt felt he needed to keep his wheelchair from public view. Most people believed being disabled meant being unable, though he proved them very wrong every day. Today, in the spirit of his leadership and the wake of his accomplishments, we move further along on our Nation's marvelous journey of equal opportunity for all.

This is a good time for our country. We're ending the century on a high note, with 20 million new jobs since 1993, the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years, the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years, in February, the longest economic expansion in our entire history. But in spite of this good economic news, we know that three out of four people with significant disabilities are not working. They're ready to work, they're willing to work, and they are very able to work. But as we have heard, they face the daunting barrier of losing their Medicare or Medicaid coverage if they get a job.

For many Americans with disabilities, medical bills, as you just heard from our previous speaker, may cost thousands more than what is typically covered by an employer's private health insurance. For some, including some on this

stage, those medical bills, because of the attendant care services, may add up to more than any reasonable salary a person with disabilities could ever hope to earn.

And yet, quite beyond the human cost of denying people the dignity of work, this defies common sense and economic logic. It doesn't make sense for people to be denied the dignity of work and for the taxpayers to pay the bills, whether they're working or not, and therefore, losing the benefit of the productivity, the contributions to our economy and society, and as you just heard, the tax receipts of working Americans.

Secretary Summers is here. You wouldn't believe how much time we spend arguing over how much longer this economic expansion can go on. How can we keep it going without inflation? How many expansions in the past have been broken because inflation finally burst through and had to be taken down, and that led to a recession?

Well, one way we can keep this economic expansion going is to take it to people and places who aren't part of it. That's what our new markets initiative to poor areas of America is all about. And make no mistake about it, that will be one big objective of this bill. This is an inflation-free way to keep America's economy growing. You are helping every single American, not just Americans with disabilities; every single American will be helped by this legislation today.

But of course, even more compelling than the economic argument is the human one. Today we say with a simple but clear voice, no one should have to choose between taking a job and having health care.

This legislation reorients our policy by saying health care ought to be a tool to getting a job, earning a salary, paying taxes, and living up to one's God-given potential. You don't have to worry about losing Medicare or Medicaid anymore.

This landmark measure will also make a real difference to people who are facing the early onset of diseases like AIDS, muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's, or diabetes. Right now, they may be able to work, but their work conditions are not deemed severe enough to qualify for Medicare. In other words, they may only become eligible for health care when they're no longer able to work. Now the problem is they're uninsurable because of the condition they have, even

though they're not disabled. So they're also in a different kind of double-bind.

With this bill—thanks again to bipartisan support in Congress and to the fact that the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee found a way to fund it—we are going to have a \$250 million demonstration program that will allow these Americans to buy into the Medicare program, so they can stay on the job and don't have to give it up to get health care when they're perfectly capable of working. This is also a very important feature of this bill.

And finally, both Senator Kennedy and Senator Jeffords mentioned the Ticket to Work legislation that's a part of this bill. This creates long-overdue reforms of the job-training program, so people with disabilities can make their own choices about vocational rehabilitation services, the ones that are best for them.

Taken together, clearly, this is the most significant advancement for people with disabilities since the Americans with Disabilities Act almost a decade ago. It continues our administration's efforts to replace barriers to opportunity with policies based on inclusion, empowerment, and independence.

That's why we reformed welfare, to reward the dignity of work, why we doubled the earned-income tax credit for low-income working people, particularly those with children, raised the minimum wage, enacted the family and medical leave law. This bill takes us another huge step in the right direction of both liberating and rewarding the creative energies of all Americans. But our task isn't done.

I often think it's ironic that, when we have these bill signings, the Presidents get to make the speeches and sign the bills, but the Members of Congress must be sitting out there thinking they did all the work. *[Laughter]* And in truth, they did the lion's share, and I was proud to support them.

But now it's our turn. We have to make it work in the lives of real people. I have instructed Secretary Shalala, Secretary Herman, and Commissioner Apfel to take immediate action to implement this legislation, to team up with the States advocates, businesses, and others who are crucial to make this bill work.

Now, all of you here who had a hand in this know that the way it's set up, States have a vital role to play. We want to take every opportunity to help every single State in America

take maximum advantage of the new options provided under this legislation. We want to encourage employees to reach out and tap the talented pool of potential workers that are now available. We want to work with all of you to ensure that we effectively get the word out to people who have disabilities so they actually know about the benefits of this legislation.

This is about more than jobs or paychecks—I'll say it again—it's about more than keeping our recovery going. It's fundamentally about the dignity of each human being, about the realization of a quality of opportunity, about recognizing that work is at the heart of the American dream.

In the end, the counsel of Franklin Roosevelt that's etched in the walls of this memorial guides us still. He said, "No country, however rich, can afford the waste of its human resources." That is ever more true as we cross the threshold into the new millennium.

I think Mr. Roosevelt would be proud of all of you today. I think we have honored his life and his legacy. In the new century, America

will realize even more of its promise because we have unleashed the promise of more Americans.

Congratulations, and God bless you all.

I'd like to ask the Members of Congress and the administration to come up for the bill signing now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:55 a.m. at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial. In his remarks, he referred to James Sullivan, Hudson, NH, who introduced the President, Donna McNamee, Cleveland, OH, Paul Marshall, Wheaton, MD, and Wesley Vinner, Riverdale, MD, citizens who will benefit from the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act; Representative Sherrod Brown; former Senator Bob Dole; Justin Dart, Jr., chairman and founder, Justice For All; Jeanne Lambrew, Senior Health Policy Analyst, National Economic Council; and John J. Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO. H.R. 1180, approved December 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-170.

Statement on Signing the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999

December 17, 1999

Today I am pleased to sign into law H.R. 1180, the "Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999." This landmark legislation will remove barriers that have placed many individuals with disabilities in the untenable position of choosing between health care coverage and work. It also improves and expands vocational rehabilitation and employment service options for this talented, but as yet not fully tapped, workforce.

This new law represents one of the most important legislative advances for people with disabilities since the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I have urged its passage for 2 years and was proud to include full funding for it in my FY 2000 Budget. The enactment of this law well illustrates what we can accomplish when we work together on a bipartisan basis to expand employment opportunities and affordable health-care options.

The Act will ensure that individuals with disabilities have a greater opportunity to participate in the workforce and in the American Dream. It offers new ways for the Federal Government to partner with the States and the private sector to help people with disabilities to work and to keep their health care coverage. Most significantly, H.R. 1180:

- Expands States' ability to provide a Medicaid "buy-in" to individuals with disabilities who return to work.
- Creates a new Medicaid demonstration to assess the effectiveness of providing Medicaid coverage to people whose condition has not yet deteriorated enough to prevent work, but who need health care to prevent or forestall that level of deterioration. This provision will allow States to help those individuals with diseases such as muscular dystrophy, Parkinson's Disease, diabetes, and HIV.

- Lengthens from 4 years to 8-½ years the period for which Social Security disability beneficiaries who return to work can continue to receive reduced-cost Medicare coverage.
- Provides grants to States to design and administer infrastructures to provide services that support working individuals with disabilities.
- Provides Social Security disability beneficiaries a choice of providers for employment-related services.
- Authorizes the Social Security Administration to test new and innovative ways to enable individuals with disabilities to return to work and make economic independence a reality.
- Enables individuals with disabilities to reestablish eligibility for Social Security disability benefits on an expedited basis if their attempts to return to work prove to be unsuccessful. These individuals will be able to request reinstatement of benefits without having to file a new disability benefits application—thereby reducing the risk of returning to work.

These provisions give people who want to work a chance to do so by ensuring access to health care insurance and modernizing the employment services system for people with disabilities. Together, these provisions affirm the basic principle manifested in the Americans with Disabilities Act: that all Americans should have the same opportunity to be productive citizens.

The Act also contains several provisions to extend expiring tax laws. These provisions continue incentives for the advancement of several national priorities and reaffirm our commitment to help American families and businesses. Most importantly, the bill extends the research and experimentation tax credit for 5 years, encouraging companies to undertake new multi-year research activities. This crucial tax credit will help innovative American companies build on my Administration's impressive economic achievements and will lead to new products and technologies to improve people's lives. In addition, H.R. 1180 extends for 3 years the provision that allows America's middle-income taxpayers full use of important personal tax credits—such as the child credit, the Hope Scholarship and Lifetime Learning credits, and the child and dependent care credits—without limitation by

the alternative minimum tax. This also will allow tens of millions more taxpayers to forgo performing complex calculations.

The Act extends a provision that will help improve school facilities in low-income communities by providing no-interest loans to school districts in needy areas for rehabilitation and repairs, educational equipment, curriculum development, and teacher training.

The Act will provide more economic opportunity to Puerto Rico by extending application of the research and experimentation tax credit to such activity undertaken in Puerto Rico, as I proposed. In response to another of my proposals, H.R. 1180 also will provide a greater transfer of excise tax revenue on rum not made in the States to Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands for 2-½ years to provide aid that the islands urgently need.

Furthermore, H.R. 1180 extends through 2001 critical tax provisions to:

- Encourage employers to pay for their workers' continuing education.
- Help disadvantaged people, including welfare recipients, find jobs.
- Encourage businesses to clean up polluted "brownfields".
- Stimulate low- and no-emission production of power.
- Assist first-time home buyers in purchasing a home in the District of Columbia.

It is unfortunate, however, that the revenue losses resulting from these provisions were not fully offset.

I am pleased that H.R. 1180 will do much to improve the lives of people with disabilities and will extend important tax provisions. I am deeply disappointed, however, that the bill includes a provision for a special allowance adjustment for student loans. This provision will expose the Federal Government, rather than lenders, to substantial financial risk due to the difference between Treasury and commercial paper borrowing rates, and will provide unnecessary and costly new benefits to the student loan industry with no benefit whatsoever to students.

My Administration has a deep and long-standing commitment to promote and increase the independence of individuals with disabilities. I would like to thank each individual who has been involved in the challenging work of developing this landmark legislation. Special thanks should be given to the congressional leaders,

who have contributed so much to the passage of H.R. 1180, particularly Senators Jeffords, Kennedy, Roth, and Moynihan, as well as Representatives Dingell, Archer, Rangel, Stark, Waxman, Thomas, Matsui, Bliley, Shaw, Bilirakis, Nancy Johnson, Cardin, Sherrod Brown, and Lazio. I also want to acknowledge the efforts of Alexis Herman, Secretary of Labor; Kenneth S. Apfel, Commissioner of Social Security; and Donna Shalala, Secretary of Health and Human Services; as well as Tony Coelho and other members of my Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities. These individuals, as well as many others throughout my Administration, worked tirelessly to bring this legislation forward.

Many individuals with disabilities want to work and become independent, and many can work if they receive the critical support they

need. For too long, the fear of losing health and cash benefits and the inability to obtain rehabilitation and employment services has prevented such individuals' work efforts. As a Nation, we are best served when all our citizens have the opportunity to contribute their talents, energy, and ideas to the workplace. I am pleased to sign into law today this important step to empower more Americans with disabilities to take their rightful places in our Nation's workforce.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 17, 1999.

NOTE: H.R. 1180, approved December 17, was assigned Public Law No. 106-170.

Statement on Flooding and Mudslides in Venezuela

December 17, 1999

I was deeply saddened to learn of the loss of life and physical devastation caused by flooding and mudslides in Venezuela. On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sym-

pathies to all those who have suffered losses. We stand ready to help with rescue and relief efforts in any way we can.

United States-European Union Summit Statement on Chechnya

December 17, 1999

The United States and the European Union are deeply concerned about the situation in Chechnya. We recognize Russia's right to uphold its territorial integrity and to defend its citizens from terrorism and lawlessness, and we condemn terrorism in all its manifestations. But we believe that Russia's military tactics in Chechnya are undermining its objectives, creating a humanitarian crisis, endangering innocent civilians, and jeopardizing stability throughout the Caucasus region. A military solution to the conflict is not possible. We call for an immediate and lasting cease-fire throughout Chechnya and a political dialogue that can lead to a durable solution to the crisis.

The indiscriminate use of force against civilians is unacceptable. Providing for the safety of innocent civilians is a fundamental obligation of all states. We call on Russia to respect this principle unconditionally.

We stress that the respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of neighboring states is a fundamental principle of the international system. We are concerned by the impact of the Chechnya conflict on security throughout the Caucasus and stress the importance of avoiding steps that would further undermine regional security.

Displaced persons should be allowed full freedom of movement. Russian and regional authorities must provide for their well being. The

United States and the EU strongly support the courageous efforts of international relief organizations, including the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), to provide humanitarian assistance to displaced people and others affected by the conflict. We ask Russia to work constructively with these organizations and ensure security for their personnel and access for their operations.

The OSCE Istanbul Summit Declaration noted that the OSCE could contribute to finding a political solution to the conflict. We are encouraged that OSCE Chairman-in-Office Vollebaek was able to visit the North Caucasus. We support his efforts to promote a political

dialogue as well as the continuing role of the OSCE in finding a lasting solution to the conflict. We believe that an office of the OSCE Assistance Group should be opened in neighboring Ingushetiya to monitor the humanitarian situation. We call on Russia to respect all of the commitments it has made in the framework of the OSCE. In that regard, we acknowledge Prime Minister Putin's statements that he has held talks with representatives of Chechen President Maskhadov and urge continuation of meaningful discussions with responsible Chechen leaders.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

United States-European Union Summit Statement on Southeast Europe *December 17, 1999*

We reaffirm our commitment to the emergence of a secure, democratic and prosperous Southeastern Europe. We agree on the central importance of promoting democratic change in Yugoslavia and will remain engaged in enhancing the security of the region until that happens. We will therefore work together with Yugoslav democratic forces, including the Government of Montenegro, to promote such change. We support the efforts of the freely elected government of Montenegro to advance political and economic reform within the FRY. We will also continue our support for the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1244 and for UNMIK and KFOR's efforts to establish in Kosovo a safe environment for all individuals regardless of their ethnic, religious or other affiliation. We will lay the foundations for an effective administrative and judicial system, just as we will continue our strong support for the work of SFOR and the High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We call upon Croatia to take steps to ensure that its parliamentary and presidential election processes are free and fair, in accordance with democratic principles and OSCE standards.

We are further strengthening our cooperation with all the countries of Southeastern Europe in fulfillment of the goals and commitments of the Stability Pact. Led by the European Union

and strongly supported by the United States, the Pact has achieved much since the Sarajevo Summit last July, including specific steps to improve the investment climate, fight corruption, control small arms and light weapons, implement commitments on weapons of mass destruction, and advance democracy and human rights throughout the region. The countries of the region will play an essential role in implementing the Pact and have recognized the importance of accelerating overall economic and political reforms. There is now much work to do in the months ahead to transform the commitments of each country into concrete progress and to prepare for a Regional Funding Conference to be held in the first quarter of 2000. The European Union and the United States have made clear their readiness to provide assistance for regional reform efforts and to fight corruption and organized crime, build sound public institutions, mobilize private investment, and expand trade. We intend to work closely with Southeastern Europe to take full advantage of the opportunity before us at the verge of a new century to forge greater stability and advance the region's integration into the Euro-Atlantic mainstream.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

United States-European Union Summit Statement on the World Trade Organization

December 17, 1999

The United States and the European Union consider the multilateral trading system one of the world's principal bulwarks of peace, sustainable development, and economic growth; and a primary engine for rising living standards and broad-based prosperity in the future. As we approach the new century, we must ensure that the trading system retains its dynamism and ability to respond to changing needs of an increasingly diverse membership.

Accordingly, both sides note their disappointment at the failure to reach agreement on a new Round of trade negotiations at Seattle, but they agree it is now important to find a way forward. In this context, the EU and the US both pledge continued readiness to work with Director General Mike Moore and our partners to launch an inclusive new Round as soon as possible. A new Round has to be definitively different from its predecessors. It should encompass the built in agenda of agriculture and services, further and effective market access liberalization, support our efforts to harness globalization by strengthening and extending WTO rules, and address the concerns of both developing countries and civil society.

With the Director General and all other members of the WTO, we need to take full account of the lessons of Seattle. In particular, work should be directed towards a set of measures that will: provide better opportunities for wider participation by all members (including developing countries) in the decisionmaking processes of the WTO; offer greater transparency (both within the organization and vis a vis the outside world); and improve public access, including through broader access to WTO documents and enhanced consultation procedures with civil society. This work should also consider measures to improve the efficiency of the WTO, and to boost overall public support for the organization. We should also seek agreement by all members on the separate review of WTO dispute settlement procedures, including measures to enhance transparency.

The US and EU are committed to maximizing the benefits developing countries gain from being in the WTO. We agreed to take forward a preferential market access initiative for least developed WTO members, initially with our Quad partners. We will work with other WTO Members to establish as soon as possible a new, revitalized program for capacity building and technical assistance undertaken by the WTO, beginning with the Integrated Framework established in 1996, and in cooperation with other international institutions. We also agreed to consider what we would do to address the concerns of a number of developing countries with implementation of existing multilateral trade agreements.

On issues of interest to our civil societies, we agreed that changes to global economy have brought new challenges to the trading system. Nowhere is that evident than the debate that is now joined regarding the relationship between trade and labor. The US and EU are committed to working with our partners to engage the WTO and ILO in a constructive dialogue, including consideration of the relationship between core labor standards, further liberalization, trade policy and social development, in order to foster understanding and consensus. And on trade and environment, we will work together to ensure that trade rules support and do not undermine the ability of governments to establish and achieve high levels of environmental protection.

The cooperative relationship between the US and the EU has been crucial to the development of the multilateral trading system over the past 50 years. We recognize our shared responsibilities to continue this work, but also the need to involve all our WTO partners more directly. This will pave the way for continued prosperity, sustainable development, and long-term growth for the 21st century.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Memorandum on the Use of Information Technology December 17, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Use of Information Technology to
Improve Our Society

The Internet and other information and communications technologies are changing the way we work, learn, communicate with each other, and do business. These technologies are shaping our economy and our society in the same way that the steam engine and electricity defined the Industrial Age.

In recent years, information technology has driven the U.S. economy. Businesses are scrambling to use the Internet to increase productivity, boost exports, cut the time required to develop new products, and forge closer relationships with customers and suppliers. My Administration has pursued a market-led approach to global electronic commerce that relies whenever possible on private sector leadership and seeks to eliminate legal and regulatory barriers to electronic commerce while protecting the public interest.

The Internet has the potential to enhance civil society as well as to boost commerce. Used creatively, the Internet and information technology can be a powerful tool for tackling some of our toughest social challenges as well as fostering economic growth. Information technology can and is being used to make it easier for working adults to acquire new skills, increase access to healthcare in isolated rural communities, improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, and strengthen our democracy.

My Administration has led the effort to explain and support the commercial and societal benefits of information technology to the American people. However, we can and must do more. To that end, I am directing executive department and agency heads in this memorandum to take certain actions. As they carry out these actions, they should: (a) adopt policies that will remove barriers to private sector investment in Internet applications; (b) explore partnerships with companies, State, local, and tribal governments, and other entities, such as non-profit organizations and universities; (c) explore innovative mechanisms for fostering a national discussion on the potential of the electronic soci-

ety; (d) consider other policies to promote the electronic society, such as the establishment of national goals; and (e) review the recommendations of the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee, particularly as they relate to support for information technology applications with broad societal benefits.

Therefore, to further promote the broader social benefits of the Information Age to the American people, I direct the officials in this memorandum to take the following actions:

1. The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall identify additional steps that can be taken to promote expanded access to higher quality, cost-effective health care to underserved rural communities and inner city clinics, and other health-care applications of information technology.
2. The Secretary of Education shall support and encourage States and local communities to make "school report cards" available on the Internet. The Secretary of the Interior shall make it possible for "school report cards" on Bureau of Indian Affairs schools and tribally controlled schools to be available on the Internet.
3. The Secretaries of Education and Labor shall work with States and institutions of higher education to remove legal and regulatory barriers to high-quality distance learning, to increase awareness of the availability of distance learning as an alternative means of education and training, and to find ways to promote the earning of credentials through distance learning. The Secretary of Education shall assist the Tribal Colleges and Universities in developing associate and baccalaureate programs in information technology, using innovative distance learning technology.
4. The Secretary of Education shall propose the next phase of my Administration's Educational Technology Initiative. The next phase should address teacher training, the integration of technology in the curriculum, the evaluation of technology, the market for educational software and web content, the need for more multimedia computers in the classroom, and the need

- for investments in educational technology research and development.
5. The Secretary of Labor shall determine how telecommuting might be used to help more disabled Americans get jobs and to provide jobs for Americans located in geographic regions outside traditional commuting areas, including isolated tribal communities.
 6. The Secretary of Education and the Director of the National Science Foundation shall develop a research agenda for making the Internet and information technology more usable by persons with disabilities. The Secretary of Commerce shall encourage the private sector to make web content, software, and development tools more accessible for people with disabilities by adopting technical standards consistent with the Web Accessibility Initiative.
 7. The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall develop a national strategy for promoting environmental applications of information technology (such as disseminating information about manufacturing techniques that reduce pollution, and increasing the timeliness of environmental information).
 8. The Secretary of Agriculture shall identify services that can be delivered electronically to rural Americans (such as the results of Federally funded research at our Nation's land-grant universities), and develop the policies needed to promote the availability of advanced telecommunications services in rural and tribal communities.
 9. The Secretary of Commerce shall identify policies that will encourage more effective use of information technology by nonprofit organizations.
 10. The Secretary of the Treasury, in coordination with appropriate Federal agencies and private sector stakeholders, shall identify policy initiatives that promote greater access to financial services through the use of information technology.
 11. The Secretary of the Interior shall identify policies that will accelerate the use of unclassified geospatial information systems at the State, local, and tribal level.
 12. The Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall work with research universities and the private sector to apply advances in information technology to managing the consequences of natural and man-made disasters.
 13. The Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, the Director of the National Science Foundation, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services shall work with the private sector and cultural and educational institutions across the country to create a Digital Library of Education to house this country's cultural and educational resources.
 14. The Attorney General shall work with Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to use information technologies to make our Nation's communities safer.
 15. Items 1–14 of this memorandum and my July 1, 1997, and November 30, 1998, memoranda shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations, consistent with the agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.
 16. The Vice President shall continue his leadership in coordinating the United States Government's electronic commerce strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of agencies report to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of the memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group (ECWG) in its annual report. To the extent that substantial new policy issues emerge, the analysis and action on those policies will be coordinated in a manner consistent with the responsibilities of the ECWG, the National Economic Council, and the Domestic Policy Council, as appropriate.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Memorandum on Electronic Government December 17, 1999

*Memorandum for the Heads of Executive
Departments and Agencies*

Subject: Electronic Government

My Administration has put a wealth of information online. However, when it comes to most Federal services, it can still take a paper form and weeks of processing for something as simple as a change of address.

While Government agencies have created “one-stop-shopping” access to information on their agency web sites, these efforts have not uniformly been as helpful as they could be to the average citizen, who first has to know which agency provides the service he or she needs. There has not been sufficient effort to provide Government information by category of information and service—rather than by agency—in a way that meets people’s needs.

Moreover, as public awareness and Internet usage increase, the demand for online Government interaction and simplified, standardized ways to access Government information and services becomes increasingly important. At the same time, the public must have confidence that their online communications with the Government are secure and their privacy protected.

Therefore, to help our citizens gain one-stop access to existing Government information and services, and to provide better, more efficient, Government services and increased Government accountability to its citizens, I hereby direct the officials in this memorandum, in conjunction with the private sector as appropriate, to take the following actions:

1. The Administrator of General Services, in coordination with the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, the Chief Information Officers’ Council, the Government Information Technology Services Board, and other appropriate agencies shall promote access to Government information organized not by agency, but by the type of service or information that people may be seeking; the data should be identified and organized in a way that makes it easier for the public to find the information it seeks.
2. The heads of executive departments and agencies (agencies) shall, to the maximum extent possible, make available online, by December 2000, the forms needed for the top 500 Government services used by the public. Under the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, where appropriate, by October 2003, transactions with the Federal Government should be available online for online processing of services. To achieve this goal, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall oversee agency development of responsible strategies to make transactions available online.
3. The heads of agencies shall promote the use of electronic commerce, where appropriate, for faster, cheaper ordering on Federal procurements that will result in savings to the taxpayer.
4. The heads of agencies shall continue to build good privacy practices into their web sites by posting privacy policies as directed by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and by adopting and implementing information policies to protect children’s information on web sites that are directed at children.
5. The head of each agency shall permit greater access to its officials by creating a public electronic mail address through which citizens can contact the agency with questions, comments, or concerns. The heads of each agency shall also provide disability access on Federal web sites.
6. The Director of the National Science Foundation, working with appropriate Federal agencies, shall conduct a 1-year study examining the feasibility of online voting.
7. The Secretaries of Health and Human Services, Education, Veterans Affairs, and Agriculture, the Commissioner of Social Security, and the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, working closely with other Federal agencies that provide benefit assistance to citizens, shall

- make a broad range of benefits and services available through private and secure electronic use of the Internet.
8. The Administrator of General Services, in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of Commerce, the Government Information Technology Services Board, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, and other appropriate agencies and organizations, shall assist agencies in the development of private, secure, and effective communications across agencies and with the public, through the use of public key technology. In light of this goal, agencies are encouraged to issue, in coordination with the General Services Administration, a Government-wide minimum of 100,000 digital signature certificates by December 2000.
 9. The heads of agencies shall develop a strategy for upgrading their respective agency's capacity for using the Internet to become more open, efficient, and responsive, and to more effectively carry out the agency's mission. At a minimum, this strategy should involve:
 - (a) expanded training of Federal employees, including employees with policy and senior management responsibility;
 - (b) identification and adoption of "best practices" implemented by leading public and private sector organizations;
 - (c) recognition for Federal employees who suggest new and innovative agency applications of the Internet;
 - (d) partnerships with the research community for experimentation with advanced applications; and
 - (e) mechanisms for collecting input from the agency's stakeholders regarding agency use of the Internet.
 10. Items 1-8 of this memorandum and my July 1, 1997, and November 30, 1998, memoranda shall be conducted subject to the availability of appropriations and consistent with agencies' priorities and my budget, and to the extent permitted by law.
 11. The Vice President shall continue his leadership in coordinating the United States Government's electronic commerce strategy. Further, I direct that the heads of executive departments and agencies report to the Vice President and to me on their progress in meeting the terms of this memorandum, through the Electronic Commerce Working Group in its annual report.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner December 17, 1999

Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, say how profoundly grateful I am to be ending 7 years in the Presidency with the support of people like you, in the home of my great friends Terry and Dorothy, with allies like Patrick Kennedy and Dick Gephardt. This is a holiday season, and it's most important for us to express our gratitude. And I am grateful, and I want to say thank you.

I also will give you a gift: a brief speech. [Laughter] All of you heard it before, anyway. [Laughter] That reminds me of a great moment in my political education. In the mideighties, Tina Turner came to Little Rock to give a concert; she was making her comeback. And she had just put out that "Private Dancer" album.

And she had a saxophone player who was a weight lifter. I don't know if you remember that. The guy could bench press me on a cold day. [Laughter]

So I went to this concert, and I took a bunch of friends of mine. And I was sitting on the front row because the guy that ran the place knew I liked her. So she sings all her new songs, and she does real well, and the crowd goes crazy. And in the end, the band starts playing her very first hit, "Proud Mary." And she comes up to the microphone, and the crowd goes crazy, and she said, "You know, I've been singing this song for 25 years, but it gets better every time I do it." [Laughter] So maybe you'll

put up with this speech one more time. [Laughter]

I wanted to say very briefly why I'm here. I'm not running for anything. I'm here because none of the things that our administration has been able to do for America would have been possible if it hadn't been for the support of the Democrats in the Congress. Whether in the majority, when we passed the economic plan of '93 without a single vote from the Republicans, when we passed the crime bill in '94 with just a few votes; or when we were in the minority in the Congress, but because they stuck with me—if the Republicans didn't want me fixing them Christmas dinner, they had to make a deal with us and continue to move this country forward. None of it would have been possible without them.

I'm here because of what Dick Gephardt said. I'll say it in blunter terms. I think I owe him. We would never have lost the House of Representatives if they hadn't had to vote alone on an economic plan that revitalized this country. We'd never have the balanced budget; we'd never have the surplus; we'd never have the low interest rates and the high investment and the economic growth if we hadn't announced, and then they hadn't ratified by voting for, that economic plan in 1993. And they did not deserve to lose the House because of the deliberate misrepresentations about what was in the plan and what it would do to America that the people on the other side made before—to be fair to the voters—they could know one way or the other whether it was going to work; they weren't feeling it.

I'm here because they had the guts—including a lot of Congressmen from rural areas—to say to the NRA, "There's nothing wrong with the Brady bill. We ought to do background checks before we give people handguns; there's nothing wrong with a waiting period. We ought to get rid of these assault weapons; kids don't need them on urban streets so that country kids can take a .22 or a 12 gauge and go hunting. This is crazy."

But when they voted for it in '94 they had to go right into the teeth of an election with people telling them they'd voted to take their guns away, and before the voters could possibly know. You have no idea. I'm here because they were brave enough to take on with me the problem of trying to extend health insurance to all Americans, and then they had to put up with

having our efforts mischaracterized. One member of the Democratic caucus told me the other day, he said, "You know, they said if I voted for the President's health care plan, it would lead to a big increase in uninsured Americans. And I voted for his plan, and sure enough, we had a big increase in uninsured Americans." [Laughter] So I think they got a raw deal after doing a great job for America.

But the third thing and by far the most important reason I'm here is, after January 20, 2001, I won't be President anymore, but I'll still be an American. And almost more than anybody else, because of the life I've lived, I have an informed opinion about what is necessary to make the most of the new century for these children here. And by far the most important reason to give the Democrats a majority; to give Jane Harman from California, who's here, her old seat back; and to restore them to the majority—you'd be amazed how many Senate seats we can win. This Senate thing is shaping up pretty well, because we're going to make some decisions in the next 5 years that will have a big impact on the next 50 years. And I want the members of my party, who have brought the country to where it is today from where it was 7 years ago, to be the leaders in making those decisions.

Now, little Mary was sitting here a minute ago. I've told this story a lot, but I've never fingered her before, so I'm going to finger her tonight. [Laughter] Terry and Dorothy and their kids came up and spent some time with us in the weekend after Thanksgiving. And we were all playing and having a big time. And little Mary looked up at me, and she said, "How old are you anyway?" [Laughter] And I said, "Well, I'm 53." And she said, "That's a lot." [Laughter] And I had to admit that it's a lot. [Laughter]

And I just want to echo something Dick Gephardt said. Never in my lifetime—never, not once, ever—has our country had the combination of economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence with the absence of an internal crisis or an external threat. We have, in other words, the best chance we have ever had—maybe in our history, but certainly in my "that's-a-lot" 53 years—to shape the future of our dreams for our kids.

Are we going to give all of them a world-class education, or not? Are we going to take the burden of the baby boomers' retirement off

their shoulders by fixing Social Security and Medicare, or not? Are we going to help all these working people who aren't as fortunate as those of us who can be here tonight balance work and family so they can succeed at home raising their kids and succeed at work, or not? Are we going to prove that we can grow the economy and preserve the environment, or not? Are we going to prove that we can continue to integrate the world's economies and expand trade but put a more human face on it so that everybody is benefited, or not? Is America going to continue to lead the world for peace and freedom, or not?

I'll just give you one example, and I hope you agree with me. I'm really grateful that in 1999 the United States led our NATO Alliance and all of our European allies in stopping cold the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo and letting over 800,000 people go home. I'm grateful for that.

The other day I heard one of the candidates, prominent candidates for President on the other side said, "Well, boy, if he got elected, they surely wouldn't be using American military resources to fool around in trivial, insignificant places." I think standing against ethnic cleansing, racial cleansing, religious cleansing, standing up for human rights is not trivial. I also think, to my Republican friends, well, it's good economics in the long run. It's morally right, but it happens to be good economics; because if you put the fire out when it starts to burn, before the house has burned down, you're way ahead.

But these are big questions. And what I want you to do for the next year is not just to come to these parties where we're all preaching to the saved, but every one of you has a span of influence, a circle of friends, people that you meet in nonpolitical context. And you ought to tell them, first of all, that 7 years ago—people actually don't remember; it's been so good so long people don't remember—you've got to remind them that in 1992 we were facing economic distress, social decline, political division, and Government was discredited. And now we've got the lowest unemployment rate in 30 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 32 years, the lowest poverty rates in 20 years and the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the lowest minority unemployment rate ever recorded, the lowest female unemployment rate in 40 years, the lowest single-parent household poverty rate in 46 years. And the air is cleaner; the water is clean-

er; the food is safer; and we've put aside more land than any administrations in the history of America, except those of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. We've got 150,000 young people who have served our country in AmeriCorps, and 90 percent of our kids are immunized for the first time against serious illness, and over 2 million children now have gotten health insurance under our Children's Health Insurance Program. And that's just half the story, and that we are asking the right questions, and we're the people to answer them for the future. They need to remember what it was like, what we've done, but, more important, what we think this election is about and why we're all running.

I'll tell you, I knew Dick Gephardt before I became President. He was my neighbor. He'd been to the Governor's Mansion to see me in 1988, when he was running for President. We were both less health conscious then. Remember? We sat and ate french fries from McDonald's. [Laughter] Dick spoke at this Democratic event where he was competing with an in-State basketball rivalry on television that night and he still did a good job. And he didn't eat, and so we sat in my big kitchen at the Governor's Mansion, and we stayed up half the night talking. He is a profoundly good human being.

The thing that I am so impressed about is that he continues to grow every year as a leader. You know, once you reach a certain age and you realize that physically you're not going to get any stronger and you've got to keep working just to keep up, it's easy to stop growing personally. It's easy to stop growing in your interpersonal skills, in your leadership skills, in what you know and what you think about. This guy just keeps on going and keeps on growing. He has been indefatigable. And I trust him with the future of this country.

So I want you all to think about this. And I want you to be able to go out, every one of you, and say, "Remember what it was like? Here is what they've done. Here is what they're going to do." Elections are determined by three things: the quality of the candidates; whether you've got enough money to be heard—it's okay if the other guys have more, you just have to have enough; and, third, and most important, once those two baseline things are satisfied is what do the voters think the election is about? What is the subject of the election?

If the subject of the election is whether America is going to use this once-in-a-lifetime

chance to meet the big challenges of the future, we will win because you've given us the resources to be heard and he's found the candidates to run. And believe me, you owe it to these little kids in this room and people like them all across this country.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:35 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Terence and Dorothy McAuliffe and their daughter Mary; saxophone player Timmy Capello; and former Representative Jane Harman.

Excerpts of an Interview With Peter Jennings of ABC News December 16, 1999

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Mr. Jennings. This room, sir, this fireplace and others in the White House obviously remind me of President Roosevelt. His relationship with the public was of such a magnitude that people, in many cases, thought he was a god, placed absolute faith in him. Do you think there will ever be a time when another American President gets that kind of commitment?

The President. If the country is under that kind of threat. It was in this room that President Roosevelt gave his fireside chats. And keep in mind, he took our Nation through two huge threats: first, the Depression, where 25 percent of our people were out of work, for the only time in our history; and second, in the Second World War, with Hitler and the Axis powers.

I think the people in this country are—they nearly always get it right if they have enough information and enough time. They're very hard to stampede. And I think they would follow a good leader in a tough time like that.

Cynicism

The President. When I leave the White House, I will be more idealistic about the American people and the American system of government than I was when I showed up here. And I think cynicism is a cop-out and a refuge now. I think skepticism is good. I think demythologizing is good. I think cynicism, because it's fundamentally a negative and self-defeating emotion and it gives you an excuse not to think, is stupid.

Mr. Jennings. I don't mean to belabor the point, nor will I, but I think many Americans believe that you contributed to cynicism about politics. And I assume if there's anything you could take back over the last several years it would be the Lewinski affair.

The President. Why should you be cynical? If someone makes a mistake, and they say they make a mistake, and they do their best to atone for it, then you can say, "Well, people aren't perfect, and I'm disappointed." But that shouldn't make you cynical about the American political system, the American system of government.

Berlin Wall

Mr. Jennings. I'd just like to pick a couple things that the century will always be remembered for and get your take on them. What did the Berlin Wall mean to you?

The President. It was the symbol of what was wrong with communism. It was about control and keeping people back and keeping people in. You know, John Kennedy had that wonderful line in his speech, "Freedom has many difficulties, and our democracy is far from perfect. But we never had to put up a wall to keep our people in."

Atomic Bomb

Mr. Jennings. What difference did the atomic bomb make?

The President. It reminded us that we had the capacity to destroy ourselves completely, and it humbled people. And I think that's very important, because people with power—and I include myself—you give anybody a lot of power,

and if they're not careful, they will make arrogant decisions, unheeding of the most fundamental desire of people: to have life and liberty and to enjoy the blessings of normal life.

The President. We will look back at the development of the atomic bomb in some ways as one of the most humbling events in all of human history, because we finally had to come face-to-face with the fact that we could take it all away. You know? Beyond the gas chambers, be-

yond the pogroms, beyond the killing fields of the Somme and the Marne in World War I, we could actually make it all go away. And I think it sobered the world up in a way that was oddly reassuring.

NOTE: The interview began at approximately 10 a.m. in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 18. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these excerpts.

The President's Radio Address

December 18, 1999

Good morning. The holiday season is a time when America's remarkable religious diversity shines brightest in so many homes and different places of worship and schools. Today I want to talk to you about the role of faith in our lives, in all of our religious diversity, and, particularly, in the education of our children.

America's Founders were men and women of faith, many of whom fled oppression overseas to find freedom on our shores. They believed the best way to protect religious liberty was to guarantee, first of all, the right to practice religion by the dictates of their own conscience; and second, to forbid our Government from imposing or establishing any religious belief. In their wisdom, they enshrined these two principles in our Constitution.

But of course, reconciling these principles has not always been easy, especially when it comes to our education system. Finding the proper place for faith in our schools is a complex and emotional matter for many Americans. But I have never believed the Constitution required our schools to be religion-free zones or that our children must check their faiths at the schoolhouse door.

Americans expect our schools to teach our children the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. We also trust our schools to strengthen the moral foundation of our society, to reinforce the values taught at home and in our communities.

Studies show that children involved in religious activities are less likely to use drugs. Expe-

rience tells us they're more likely to stay out of trouble. Common sense says that faith and faith-based organizations from all religious backgrounds can play an important role in helping children to reach their fullest potential. That's why I've always supported individual students' rights to voluntarily practice religious beliefs, including prayer in school or to engage in religious activities on school grounds, but not to have any kind of enforced such activities.

Now, in 1995 our administration released a set of principles for protecting religious freedom in our public schools. We did so in response to parents and educators who asked for help in knowing what kinds of religious activities are permissible in public schools and what is not permissible. They asked for help in respecting the rights and beliefs of all students, from the most observant from all religious backgrounds to those who choose freely, as is their right, to completely abstain from any religious activity.

Those guidelines we issued make it clear that students do have the right to pray privately and individually in school, the right to say grace at lunch, the right to meet in religious groups on school grounds and to use school facilities just like any other groups do. They have the right to read the Bible or other religious books during study hall or free class time and the right to be free from coercion to participate in religious activity of any kind. Now, since we first issued those guidelines, appropriate religious activity has flourished in our schools and continuing in our country. Today I'm announcing the release

of expanded guidelines, more practical help for teachers and principals, for parents and students, for the whole community. Guidelines like this will help teachers better understand how to teach about religions and help faith-based organizations join the effort to improve public education.

Across America, schools and faith-based organizations are telling us they want to build new and effective partnerships, like the large number of faith-based groups involved in America Reads or the Shiloh Baptist-Seaton Elementary School partnership, which offers after-school activities here in Washington, DC. Faith-based organizations in schools, though different in many ways, do often share important goals: expanding opportunities to learn, lifting children's lives. Our new guidelines will help them work together on common ground to meet constitutional muster, to avoid making students uncomfortable because they come from different religious tradi-

tions, while helping students make the most of their God-given talents. These guidelines also tell us that a consensus is emerging among educators and religious leaders and among defenders of the first amendment. So many of them have endorsed our efforts. Their voices echo the words of George Washington who said that Americans have, and I quote, "abundant reason to rejoice, that in this land every person may worship God according to the dictates of his own heart."

Today, as we count the days down to the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st, we know that this fundamental and precious liberty is still strong. We are determined that it will remain so, not just for our own children but for generations yet to come.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Grover Washington, Jr.

December 18, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn of the death of Grover Washington, Jr., one of America's greatest musicians. I will always be grateful for the honor of playing saxophone with Grover back in 1993, after a White House jazz concert, and for the wonderful music he performed at my Inaugural celebrations and my 50th birthday celebration. Grover Washington was as versatile as any jazz musician in America, moving with

ease and fluency from vintage jazz to funk, and from gospel to blues to pop. "I want to be able to visit any genre," he once said, "and converse there with my horn." Grover Washington did exactly that, and beautifully. I will miss both the man and his music. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Christine, and their two children, Grover III and Shana.

Statement on the Death of C. Vann Woodward

December 19, 1999

Hillary and I are deeply saddened by the passing of C. Vann Woodward, one of the most important and influential historians of our time. A native of Arkansas, Woodward not only wrote about history; he helped shape it. From living through and witnessing the era of Jim Crow to marching on Selma for racial justice, he brought a unique perspective to the teaching and analysis of Southern history. While in the

eyes of most he will best be remembered for his many books, his Pulitzer prize, and his long and distinguished teaching career, I believe his greatest gift was his tenacious pursuit of the truth and his warm and generous spirit. Dr. King once called one of Woodward's books the historical bible of the civil rights movement. His work influenced generations of Southern historians and social activists and had a major impact

on my own thinking. All Americans should look to the life and work of C. Vann Woodward, as we rededicate ourselves to building one

America in the 21st century. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

Videotaped Remarks on the Celebration for “America’s Millennium” *December 16, 1999*

I want to invite all Americans to join Hillary and me for “America’s Millennium,” a spectacular 3-day celebration in our Nation’s Capital to ring in a new year, new century, new millennium. Join us in honoring our past and imagining the future, by kicking off the celebration at 11 a.m. on December 31st with an opening ceremony at the Main Street Millennium stage at 12th and Constitution. Enjoy free performances and programs at many of the Smithsonian museums, and food and fun at the city’s block party.

Usher in the year 2000 at America’s Millennium Gala at the Lincoln Memorial, beginning at 9 p.m. It will include a stirring concert, a

premiere of a film on the 20th century by Steven Spielberg, and a spectacular finale of lights and fireworks. All events are free and open to the public. For more information, call 1-888-294-2100 or log onto Americasmillennium.gov.

From my family to yours, happy new year and a happy new millennium.

NOTE: The address was videotaped at approximately 10 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 21. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Remarks on Emissions Standards for Cars and Sport Utility Vehicles *December 21, 1999*

Thank you very much. First of all, I would like to thank the principal of this school, Dale Talbert, for welcoming all of us here. And all the members of the Maury school community, thank you, and thank you for the nice sign there. And I want to thank the kids back here for being with me and with you today.

I want to thank Gloria Hackman for the fine statement that she made and for 20 years of dedication as a nurse. As a son and the grandson of a nurse, I liked hearing her speak. And I also want to say a special word of appreciation for the work being done here.

I want to thank Ed Zechman, the CEO of the Children’s National Medical Center, for the wonderful work he does every day and, in particular, the last 7 years, the work that he and the First Lady have done together. And most of all, I want to thank Carol Browner, the EPA Assistant Administrator, Bob Perciasepe, and all

the other people at EPA who worked so hard to make this day come about.

If you knew how many times over the last 7 years, in how many different contexts, Carol Browner had said to me, “You have got to do something to reduce incidents of asthma and other respiratory diseases among young children. We’ve got to keep doing it. It’s the biggest problem out there most kids face.” If you had any idea how many private encounters we had had on that that led to this happy day, you would be very grateful that someone like her is in public service in the United States; I’ll tell you.

Vice President Gore has given me a lot of good ideas, as he always reminds me when we’re together—[laughter]—but the recommendation to appoint her is surely one of the best.

Let me say another word about Gloria Hackman. She was here speaking not only for herself and out of her own experience but in a way for all the children and families of this school

and schools like it all across America and, particularly, on behalf of the children and families who struggle each day with the challenges of asthma. I want to commend everyone here who is working in the American Lung Association's Open Airways program for all that you do to help our children breathe a little easier. As these children know only too well, a simple breath of fresh air is not something you can take for granted.

You know, back at the beginning of our century, a little air pollution was considered a small price to pay for the bright economic future the industrial revolution was bringing us. In countless communities, in fact, black smoke billowing from the factory smokestack was a welcome symbol of newfound prosperity. It went on a long time. I remember when I first entered politics in Arkansas, there was a papermill you could smell 80 miles away. And people didn't like it 80 miles away, but where it was really strong in the community they'd say it was the smell of money. And that's what people believed.

But after a while, the air became so fouled in places like Pittsburgh that the streetlights had to be kept on during the day so people could see. Businessmen traveling to New York knew to bring along a second white shirt, even if they were staying just a day, because by the afternoon the first one would be coated with soot. Americans soon came to realize that dirty air was not just a nuisance, that it threatened their health and their lives.

In the decade since that realization came to pass, through the actions of Government and the ingenuity of American industry, we have made tremendous strides. In the last 30 years, we have reduced air pollution in the United States by nearly a third, even as our economic output has more than doubled. Over the past 6 years alone, 43 million more Americans breathe air that meets Federal standards. Every day, thanks to these efforts, we are preventing as a society 600 premature deaths and 2,000 cases of asthma and bronchitis—every single day. And I want to say—I'm going to say this 15 times before I sit down—if you have noticed, it hasn't done any harm to the economy. I am very grateful for the opportunity that Vice President Gore and I have had to work with Americans in industry and environmental groups to make our air even cleaner, from taking actions to reduce powerplant emissions and clean the

air over our national parks to setting the toughest standards ever for soot and smog.

Again, I say, as with all of our other efforts in the environment over the last three decades, America has proven wrong the skeptics who claim that the cost of fighting pollution would be ruinous. In fact, listen to this, since 1970 the direct benefits of the Clean Air Act—lower health costs and fewer days work lost, for example—have outweighed the cost of the Clean Air Act by more than \$1 trillion.

Still, even as our city skylines emerge from the haze and even as millions of Americans are spared from debilitating disease, these hard-won gains could soon be put at risk. Why? A big part of the reason is that we Americans love to drive, and we are driving more than ever. A new car rolling off the assembly line today is 95 percent less polluting than the typical new car was back in 1970. But there are more than twice as many cars on the road today, and the number of miles driven each year has grown even faster.

What's more, fully half the new vehicles sold today are sport utility vehicles, minivans, and pickups, which produce 3 to 5 times as much pollution as the average passenger car. Driving now accounts for 30 percent of the total air pollution in America. And unless we take additional measures, air quality in many parts of our country will continue to worsen in the coming decades.

That is why today I am honored to announce the boldest steps in a generation to clean the air we breathe by improving the cars we drive. Working closely with industry, we will ensure both the freedom of American families to drive the vehicles of their choice and the right of American children to breathe clean, healthy air.

First, we're setting tough new standards that, over the coming decade, will reduce tailpipe emissions as much as 95 percent. Second, for the first time, we are applying the same stringent standard to cars and to sport utility vehicles, including the largest models. And third, because cleaner fuels also are critical to achieving cleaner air, we're cutting the sulfur content of gasoline by up to 90 percent.

These measures will assure every American cleaner air well into the 21st century. It will prevent thousands of premature deaths and protect millions of our children from respiratory disease. It will be the most dramatic improvement in air quality since the catalytic converter

was first introduced a quarter century ago. And manufacturers will be able to meet these new standards while still offering the kinds of models popular with consumers today.

I want to say a special word of appreciation for all those that worked with EPA in developing this new strategy. I thank the auto and the oil industries, the States, the environmental communities, the leading public health experts. The issues were not always easy, to put it mildly. But working together we have, I am convinced, come to solutions that are best for our Nation's health and for our Nation's economy. We will continue to work together also—and this is very important—to create cleaner diesel fuel, our next big challenge in this area. And I will do all I can to expand our efforts with the auto industry, which have already borne a lot of fruit, in the same spirit of collaboration to provide our consumers with vehicles that are not just less polluting but also far more fuel efficient. [Applause] Yes, you can clap for that. It won't be long until you'll be amazed what will be available on the market on that score.

It seems impossible to believe, but in just 10 days, we will close out a century of remarkable progress on a high note, and we will begin a new millennium. We will have new opportunities and new challenges. We, all of us, I think, wonder what the future holds for our children. As we unravel the mysteries of the human gene and search the outer reaches of black holes in the universe, there's no telling what's just around the turn in the new century. We are

very fortunate that we end the century and begin the millennium with, really, an unprecedented level of economic prosperity and social progress and national self-confidence, with the absence of overwhelming internal crisis or external threat. This combination of conditions has not existed before, at least in my lifetime.

But I would argue to all of you that because of the good times, we have a peculiar responsibility to think about the big long-term issues that will frame the lives that we dream for our children. And we have an opportunity to shape the future in a way that perhaps no generation before us has ever had. One of the things that we ought to do first is to make sure as many children as possible have a full future.

You know, any of us who have ever been in a hospital delivery room know that when a baby comes into the world, the first thing that's done is to make sure the infant can draw its first breath. As we embark on a new millennium, among all of our other responsibilities, surely it is our sacred obligation to ensure that each and every child, from the first breath on, will be drawing the cleanest, purest, healthiest air we can provide. Today's a big step in the right direction, and I thank all of you who have been involved in it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the multipurpose room at Maury Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to Maury Elementary School nurse Gloria Hackman.

Statement on Proposed Gun Control Legislation December 21, 1999

Today Senator Schumer released an important new report that shows us how vital it is for us to change the way the gun industry does business. The report contains more evidence that a very small proportion of gun dealers is linked to a very high proportion of crime guns traced by police. It also shows that most of the guns that end up in the hands of criminals first pass through a middleman, for instance, a straw purchaser or an illegal gun trafficker. That is why I have pushed Congress to pass commonsense gun measures to crack down on

traffickers who supply guns to criminals. And that is why my administration has begun to engage the gun industry on a range of steps the industry itself can take.

Thanks to the Brady law, our increased support for State and local law enforcement, and other steps we've taken, gun violence in America is down. But no one believes it is down far enough. The message of today's report is simple: It's time for Congress and the gun industry to help clamp down on bad dealers and stem the flow of guns to criminals. It's time for Congress

and the gun industry to help us make our country safer. I hope this report will help push that cause forward.

Message on the Observance of Christmas, 1999

December 21, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Christmas.

Saint Matthew's Gospel tells us that, on the first Christmas 2000 years ago, a bright star shone vividly in the eastern sky, heralding the birth of Jesus and the beginning of His hallowed mission as teacher, healer, servant, and savior. Jesus' birth in poverty proclaimed the intrinsic dignity and brotherhood of all humanity, and His luminous teachings have brought hope and joy to generations of believers. Today, as the world stands at the dawn of a new millennium, His timeless message of God's enduring and unconditional love for each and every person continues to strengthen and inspire us.

During this blessed season and the Jubilee Year it inaugurates, let us share the gift of God's love by giving of ourselves and by sharing generously with those in need. Let us reach out to those who are different from us, yet one in the human family, by living the profound and universal lesson Jesus taught us: that we are

to love our neighbors as ourselves. Let us, like Jesus, become true peacemakers, bringing the gift of peace to our homes, our schools, our communities, and our nation. And let us continue to reach out when and where we can to give new hope to the most impoverished and to help resolve conflicts, both ancient and new, in regions around the world.

Love, peace, joy, hope—so many beautiful words are woven through our Christmas songs and prayers and traditions. As we celebrate this last Christmas of the 20th century, let us resolve to build a future where all people learn to love one another and to live together in harmony; where our children know true joy; and where our hopes for peace, freedom, and prosperity for all are finally realized.

Hillary joins me in extending best wishes for a wonderful Christmas celebration and every happiness in the new year.

BILL CLINTON

Radio Remarks for the 1999 Walt Disney World Holiday Celebration

November 29, 1999

Hello, this is President Bill Clinton. I'm sure everyone around the world appreciates how special this year's holiday celebration is. We're about to enter a new millennium, an era of tremendous promise and opportunity. There is no better time than now to reflect on our hopes and dreams and the gifts we want to leave for the future. We can all do something to make the world a better place.

Hillary, Chelsea, and I want to wish everyone listening the happiest of holidays. And as we

celebrate the future, it is our hope that your dreams for the new millennium will come true.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 10 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 22. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters at the D.C. Central Kitchen December 22, 1999

Terrorist Activities

Q. Mr. President, how concerned should Americans be about terrorist attacks in the U.S. as we approach the new year?

The President. Well, because of the incident which has been widely reported, we, the authorities, are on a higher level of alert. For the citizens, I would say they ought to go about their holidays and enjoy themselves and make the most of it. But I would ask them to just be aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything suspicious to report it immediately, and meanwhile, to know that we are doing everything we possibly can. We're taking extraordinary efforts in the Government to act, based

on the incident out in the Pacific Northwest and what we know, and we're going forward.

I don't think the American people should stop their holiday activities. I think they ought to go on and enjoy the season. But because we, the Government, are taking extra steps and we're on alert, I think it would be good for them and good for us if they would just be careful and—not suspicious but aware—aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything that doesn't look right, to report it to us. And if they do that, I think we'll have a good holiday, and I think we'll maximize our safety.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:40 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the D.C. Central Kitchen December 22, 1999

Thank you so much. Well, let me begin by thanking Robert Egger and all the students, the graduates, the staff, the volunteers who have made D.C. Central Kitchen one of the greatest sources of community strength in our entire Nation. I want to thank Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, your Member of Congress; and Representative Tim Roemer from Indiana, for joining us today. I want to thank my longtime friend, your DC Council Chair, Charlene Drew Jarvis. And I think we have four other city council members here; thank you all for coming. And I want to thank Harris Wofford, the gentleman who runs our national service effort, and the AmeriCorps members who are here today. And Harris, thanks for the jacket. We now have over 150,000 young Americans who have served in AmeriCorps since we established it in 1994. That's a pretty good record, and I'm very proud of them.

I just wanted to also say, most importantly, thank you to Donna Simon. I am very proud of her. And she did a good job today, didn't she—and her daughter. Now, last year we made lasagna. Today I had to put the filling in the

bell peppers. And I did it with Steve, Melody, and Michele; they're all better than I am. But I love working again this year. I had a good time, and I learned about three other people.

I want to say three things about D.C. Central Kitchen and its recipes. First of all, this place offers a recipe for opportunity. It's an empowerment classroom. You heard Donna's story, and one of the things I learned a long time ago in life is that everybody's got a story. Everybody's got a story. And most of them are pretty interesting. And they're all still being written. And the nice thing about your life story is you get to get up and write a page every day, and you have to decide; no matter how bad things are, no matter what bad has happened to you, no matter what mistakes you've made, you still get to get up and write a new page every day. And this place helps people write good pages in that story.

I want to tell you, last year, in addition to Donna, I met a lot of other interesting people here last year. I met a man last year named Francis Hill; stand up here. I want to tell you about this guy. He had been living on the streets

for 10 years before he got into this program. Right after he graduated he went to work at the Cafe Atlantico, a pretty high-tone joint not very far from here. [Laughter] Within weeks he was promoted. In fact, someone on my staff talked to his boss, who said he is by far the best worker he has ever had. He has now moved into his own apartment, bought his own car, just got engaged to his long-time girlfriend, Wanda. Good for you; that was a good thing to do. And he proposed while cooking a meal for her at home, a side benefit of being in this program here. [Laughter] So this place is a recipe for opportunity. Thank you for being Exhibit A.

The D.C. Central Kitchen also offers a recipe for service. Every year—listen to this—every single year here, 5,000 volunteers roll up their sleeves and give something back to their community, people like Jose Andres, one of the premier young chefs in America. Is he here today? Stand up here, Jose. Now, despite the, literally, crazy demands of his job, he comes here every single week to share his passion and skills with all the students, and he encourages other friends to join him every time he comes.

Just imagine what we could achieve if everyone in this community and in every community where there is a need like this rose to the call of citizen service the way you have. Thank you very much. We honor you, sir.

Finally, I'd like to point out D.C. Central Kitchen also does offer a recipe for alleviating hunger. And I want everyone in America to pay attention to this, too. We're ending this century on a very high note. We have the strongest economy in my lifetime. We have the lowest unemployment in 30 years, the lowest African-American and Hispanic unemployment ever recorded, the lowest poverty rate in 20 years. All those statistics are very good, and it's all true, and it's wonderful.

But when I left church Sunday morning, there were still a lot of people in Lafayette Park lined up behind those vans waiting to get fed. And I think it is very important that we not forget that with all of the increasing number of jobs—and some of you represent that—with a decreasing poverty—some of you represent that—the number of people that are in really dire straits is still very, very significant, for—a lot of them have a lot of medical reasons, mental health reasons, other reasons. But they're still out there. They're on the streets. They have no food

to eat. Requests for emergency food in this community have, in fact, been increasing in recent years. So I want to thank you for that.

This place takes food that would otherwise go to waste and provides 3,000 meals a day—think of that—just the D.C. Central Kitchen, 3,000 meals a day. Now, I want to send out another message to America. There are people who need food in every community of any size in this country. The Department of Agriculture estimates that 96 billion pounds—let me say that again, 96 billion—not million, billion—pounds—of food is lost every year that could be consumed, from slightly bruised fruit at wholesale markets to unsold trays of lasagna at restaurants; not my lasagna. [Laughter]

So you remember what Mr. Egger said at the beginning of this. He said, "You know, last year when I was here there were 21 community kitchens like this one around the country. Now there are going to be more than twice that many in this year." And you should be very proud of that. Among all the other messages, I hope this message will get out: In every community, civic-minded people ought to take an inventory of how much food is being wasted, where it is, how to gather it up, how to give it to the churches, the synagogues, the mosques, and whoever else has a homeless mission that will take care of that food and get it out. When you think about the amount of food that has been wasted and the number of people you see lined up at every soup kitchen, at every community stop, at every place, not just here but around the country, it is appalling.

And all we need is a system like you have in every community in America, and there wouldn't be any hungry people in this country. Ninety-six billion pounds of food is more than enough to feed all the hungry people in America, and it's just being wasted.

So I hope that communities—I hope that where this message goes out, if this is a problem in other communities, they'll look at the D.C. Central Kitchen model, and they'll go to work trying to save the wasted food. This is a job that all of us have to do—government but also community service organizations. And I think that what we've tried to do is to emphasize the role of the community organization and to make sure that they knew what we had in terms of resources that could help.

A few years ago, I signed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act, which now

makes it a lot easier for private companies to donate food and for people like you to prepare and distribute it. Our Agriculture Secretary, Dan Glickman, has gotten the whole Government working on food rescue programs like this one. And now the Agriculture Department is working around the country to form new grassroots partnerships to fight hunger, to increase local food production, and to help low income families move into independence. But we've got to have the support of volunteers, and we have to have the willingness of the community.

We come here at holiday season because everybody's thinking about this. But what we should do at holiday season is to make commitments that last all year long, not just at the holiday season. The AmeriCorps members here—I want to say again how proud I am of you and what a testament you have been to the proposition that working with others is not a burden, it is a joy; it is not just a duty; it is a privilege. And whether you are preparing

meals or teaching a child to read or painting an old school, you always get more than you give. And most of us get out of this life ahead of where we would be if all we got is just what we deserve. [Laughter] And I think this is really an important thing to remember at this season.

So again, I want to thank all of you. Thank you, Robert Egger; thank you, graduates; thank you trainees; thank you, staff and volunteers and supporters of the D.C. Central Kitchen. You have captured the spirit of the season, and I hope others will catch it from you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:12 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Harris Wofford, chief executive officer, Corporation for Public Service; and Robert Egger, director, Donna Simon, graduate, and Steve Pritchett, Melody Swint, and Michele Rhyne, trainees, D.C. Central Kitchen.

Statement on Lifting the Ban on Direct Flights Between the United States and Nigeria

December 22, 1999

Earlier today, Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater announced that the United States is lifting our ban on direct flights to Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, Nigeria.

I congratulate President Obasanjo and his government for taking the steps necessary to remove this ban, including the overhauling of Nigeria's airport security system. These important reforms provided one more indication of the Nigerian administration's commitment to good governance. They offer new evidence that

Nigeria is reversing the damage that years of corruption and mismanagement inflicted upon its international reputation.

I am deeply gratified to see a government chosen by the Nigerian people earning the trust and respect of the world. I look forward to strengthening our partnership with Nigeria even further over the coming year.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria.

Message on the Observance of Kwanzaa, 1999

December 22, 1999

Warm greetings to everyone celebrating Kwanzaa.

With roots in the ancient history and cultural traditions of Africa and celebrating such fundamental American values as unity and self-deter-

mination, this joyous annual festival reflects the diversity that gives our nation much of its strength and resilience. Each year during Kwanzaa, millions of African Americans gather with family and friends to celebrate their rich

heritage, to reaffirm the bonds of family and community, and to give thanks to our Creator for the beauty and bounty of life.

As we look forward to the new millennium, we must not lose sight of the values and traditions that have strengthened and sustained us in the past. The seven principles of Kwanzaa—unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose,

creativity, and faith—can be invaluable tools in teaching us how to live together in the 21st century as a community, in harmony with one another and our environment and in humility before God.

Hillary joins me in extending warmest wishes for a joyous Kwanzaa and every happiness in the coming year.

BILL CLINTON

Interview With Larry King of CNN's "Larry King Live" December 22, 1999

Cabinet Room

Mr. King. Good evening. We're in the Cabinet Room at the White House in this Christmas season. It's a great pleasure to have as our special guest, as part of our millennium month, the President of the United States, Bill Clinton. Do you spend a lot of time—do you have a lot of Cabinet meetings?

The President. I do. And I have a lot of other meetings in here, like with individual Cabinet members. I met this week with three or four different Cabinet members and extended staff here. So we have large meetings in here.

Mr. King. This room is, like, right off the Oval Office?

The President. That's right, right off the Oval Office.

Mr. King. Did they plan it that way so the President could run right in and meet with—how often do you have Cabinet meetings?

The President. I don't have too many full Cabinet meetings, because we have 23 members of the Cabinet plus Chief of Staff. So I have a few of those a year, when we have to do a review and get all geared into one issue or another. But I have a lot of meetings with various Cabinet officials in this room and with maybe more than one who are all working on a common project.

Year 2000 Problems

Mr. King. We have a lot to talk about, and I want to get an overview as we look ahead to this millennium but cover some current things. I guess the thing everybody is talking about is, should we be frightened? That's the basis of the State Department yesterday—should

we travel; should we stay home? We're told the Cabinet members have been asked to stay home or stay in Washington. Is that true?

The President. The Cabinet members are staying here, but it's really just as a precaution, because we feel a high level of confidence about where we are with the Y2K problems. We've been working on this for years. We've spent a lot of money on it; we've tried to get all the private sector involved. All the big systems in this country, I think—airline travel, banking systems, electrical systems, Social Security checks—all those things I think are in good shape. We're here partly as a precaution and partly so, if any of our friends in other parts of the world have any trouble, we can all be there to give whatever help we can.

Year 2000 Terrorism

Mr. King. And how about the terrorism threat, where people are asked to be careful, especially overseas, and we have these arrests occurring in Washington and Vermont?

The President. Well, what I would say to the American people about that is that we know that at the millennium, a lot of people who may even be a little crazy by our standards or may have a political point to make, may try to take advantage of it. So we are on a heightened state of alert. We're working very hard on it. No one can guarantee that nothing will happen. But all I can say is we're working very hard.

And my advice to the American people would be to go on about their business and do what they would intend to do at the holiday season but to be a little more aware of people and

places where they find themselves. And if you see something suspicious, well, call us and let us know. Call the authorities. We're working very, very hard on this. And if it were me, I would not just refrain from activities. I'm going to go out and do my Christmas shopping. I'm going to do what I normally do.

Mr. King. Are you saying if you have a hunch about something, go to the hunch?

The President. If you have a hunch about something, if you see something that's suspicious, you should report it, just to make sure that we do everything we possibly can to maximize our protection. But I wouldn't just hunker down until it was all over.

Mr. King. Colin Powell says that maybe by doing all this, you've scared them off. You know, if you make people fear the alert so much, that might cause terrorists to have a second thought.

The President. Well, they should have a second thought, because we're working it hard.

Mr. King. In cooperation with other nations?

The President. Absolutely.

Vice President Al Gore's Offer To Debate

Mr. King. All right. Let's discuss some things political—one of your main—you know that. Do you agree with Al Gore's request to have debates? "Forget all the advertising. Let's debate."

The President. Well, I think it's an interesting idea. I don't want to get into handicapping the campaign. I think that the more debates they have, the better. I'm very proud to be a member of my party when I see those two debate. They're smart. They have their ideas. You know I favor the Vice President and not just because I feel personally loyal to him. I think he's been by light-years the best Vice President this country has ever had, by a long, long way. But I think the fact that he and Bill Bradley are out there talking about education; they're talking about health care; they're talking about biomedical research; and they know what they're talking about; and they've thought about these things—I think it's a very substantive, good thing. And that's what I think elections ought to be about, so I'm proud of that.

Mr. King. Were you surprised at the idea, though, to say, let's forget—you know, Goldwater and Kennedy were going to do that.

The President. I was surprised. And I must say I find it quite interesting. I was intrigued by it. If someone had offered me that in 1992, I probably would have done it.

Mr. King. Would have taken it?

The President. Yes, probably, because I think we need to find out whether we can have elections without the kind of money that they cost today, and we can't have them without that kind of money unless people can have access, the candidates can have access to the voters. That is, what costs all the money is access to the voters.

Mr. King. Barry Goldwater had told me that he and John Kennedy had arranged that if Goldwater would be the nominee in '64, had Kennedy lived, they were going to travel around together.

The President. I think it would have been wonderful. I still think it would be great. And I'd like to see it happen in a general election. I don't think it's necessary for the voters to be for one person but think that the other person is a bad person. And I think it's very bad development in our politics. I think it's one reason that the voting percentage goes down; people think, ugh. So if there could be a way to be more and more debates, not only now but in the general election, I think it would be a good thing for American democracy. I did three last time and three the time before, but I would have done six or seven or however many. I believe in this.

Candidate Bill Bradley

Mr. King. You say, of course, you're supporting your Vice President. What do you think of Bill Bradley, though?

The President. Oh, I've known him for many years. I like him. He's a very smart man. He's had a very interesting life, and he's got an interesting take on things.

Mr. King. Do you ever think they might run together?

The President. They'd be a good ticket. [Laughter] It would be a good ticket.

Challenges of a Vice Presidential Campaign

Mr. King. Kennedy could run with Johnson. You picked a man from a neighboring State to run with you. Do you understand the difficulty of a Vice President running?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. That's not easy, is it?

The President. No. But it gets easier as time goes on and people focus on it. And it's easier now than it was 100 years ago, I think. But I think that, as I said, when Harry Truman

became President, he didn't even know about the atomic bomb.

Mr. King. Did not.

The President. And we had already lost five or six Presidents in office by the time he became President. Since then, there has been an increasing level of seriousness given to the job. Lyndon Johnson was a major figure, and Richard Nixon was a major figure. Both of them had responsibility in office. Then President Carter upped the ante more; Vice President Mondale had far more responsibility than anybody had before. President Reagan, to his credit, gave President Bush a lot of responsibility. But no Vice President has ever had the range of responsibility and the level of achievement, accordingly, that Al Gore has had, whether it was in our technology policy, our environmental policy, our foreign policy, the economic empowerment of poor areas. I could just go on and on.

Mr. King. So there is nothing he isn't abreast of?

The President. No.

Mr. King. If something happened to you, there's not surprise we have to tell him?

The President. No. There would be nothing—if something were to happen to me tonight, he could become President, and there would be nothing he wouldn't know, no person he hadn't met, no issue he hadn't dealt with.

Mr. King. We'll be right back with the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, at this Christmas season. Don't go away.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

Trade Debate and the Seattle Round

Mr. King. Speaking of debates, it was Vice President Gore's idea, we just reminded each other, to debate Perot. And I understand you were the only one here that agreed with that.

The President. In the beginning.

Mr. King. There was a lot of disagreement.

The President. They all thought there was a lot of downside to it. But I wish we had more debates in recent years on trade policy, because it's such a controversial thing. Everybody is for selling more of our exports. Everybody has the feeling, because we have a big trade deficit, that people take advantage of us. People are worried about losing their jobs, even though the unemployment rate is at a 30-year low. And I think we need to continue to debate this.

I wish we had more of them. I hope there will be some trade debates in this election.

Mr. King. Did Seattle throw you, Mr. President? I ask that because Governor Bush was with us last week, and he agrees completely with you on the trade issue, but he said he thought—I'm paraphrasing—that you kind of copped out, that you didn't forcefully attack those people who were demonstrating; you sort of rode the middle.

The President. Well, first of all, I attacked those who were violent in no uncertain terms. And I said to those who were demonstrating for a cleaner environment or for decent labor standards that I thought their concerns were legitimate but their opposition to the trade agreement was wrong. And that's what I believe. And I think that we're a little different on that. I mean, I strongly agree, and most Republicans that apparently agree with me that we ought to have expanded trade.

We benefit, not just from the exports; we also benefit from the influence. You've got an—time, so do I. We benefit in that an open market enables us to grow and still have to compete, and that keeps inflation down. One of the reasons—in February we're going to have the longest economic expansion in the history of the country, and we did it with three things. We did it with getting rid of the debt—deficit; we did it with investing in technology and people; and we did it with opening our borders in trading and continuing to compete, because usually, when you have this kind of economic growth, inflation takes over and kills the recovery. That hasn't happened. So I think this is very important.

But the difference between me and most Republicans is that I believe that globalization is inevitable. But people are scared of all this change, and what we have to do is to convince them that change can be their friend. And the way to do it is to say, "Okay, we're going to compete, and we're going to win over the long run, and we're going to win in the short run. But we should grow the economy in a way that improves the environment, and we should do it in a way that respects core labor standards: no forced labor, no child labor, no abusive working conditions."

Mr. King. Did Seattle surprise you?

The President. No. I think—I knew there would be a lot of people there. I was surprised the first night at the level of violence. I didn't

know that there would be so many, basically, creeps there who would try to—

Mr. King. Who instigated it, you mean?

The President. Yes, throw rocks—there was just a very small percentage of those thousands of people who were doing this. There were probably a couple of hundred people who were prepared to throw rocks at stores and take other violent action.

Most of them were there to express their opposition to some aspect or another of this process of globalization, but they cannot turn the clock back. The world is better off than it would have been if we hadn't had 50 years of increasing economic integration, and America has won big these last 7 years by being involved. And we are making a huge mistake, in my judgment, if we don't continue to both expand trade and work for better core labor standards in a better environment.

Mr. King. Do the unions then not understand this? They're the biggest supporters your party has—the trade unions in America have been.

The President. They're divided. If you look at Seattle, for example, there are 170,000 union members in and around Seattle. And most of them have jobs in part because their companies are so tied to trade. I went to York, Pennsylvania, the other day to the Harley Davidson motorcycle factory, something most—at least most guys and an increasing number of women can identify with. They've got a year's backlog, and 25 percent of the Harleys are sold overseas, and the biggest foreign market is now Japan, which makes the only competitors to Harley and motorcycles. So I think it just depends.

Some unions feel that their jobs might be undercut by the importation of textile or clothing goods or shoes or whatever, but on balance, we have won big as a country by opening our markets, showing we're not afraid to compete, and asking others to open their markets, too, to be fair, whether it's farmers or manufacturers or people in entertainment or people in the information technology business.

Final Year of the President's Term

Mr. King. Is it tough going into a last year? I ask that because we sat together here quite a few times. I remember once we were looking out, and you said to me, "You know, my bad days are good days."

The President. Absolutely. I love this job.

Mr. King. You love this job.

The President. I do.

Mr. King. You—

The President. And I'll miss it. People ask me all the time, "What will you miss most? Will it be living in the White House, going to Camp David, getting on Air Force One?" The job is what I'll miss most, the work. There is no place in the world where you can come in contact with so many different kinds of people and so many different kinds of issues and have so much opportunity to do good or stop bad things from happening.

But the hard thing about it now is you want to do everything, and you have to be disciplined. You have to figure out what can I do? What can I put out there that the country ought to do that maybe can't be done while I'm here? I never want to sleep. I realize the days are going by, and I just want to keep working. I just want to do everything I can.

Mr. King. We'll be back with the working President right after this.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

Gays in the Military

Mr. King. We are reevaluating, are we, "don't ask, don't tell?"

The President. Well, I think the candidates are. A lot of them are saying it should be changed.

Mr. King. What do you think?

The President. I tried to have a different policy. I tried to say gays should be able to serve in the military—

Mr. King. Period?

The President. Without lying about it. But if the military code of justice says that homosexual acts are illegal, if they keep it, then they'd have to observe that. But when we went to "don't ask, don't tell," it was all we could get through the Congress. The Congress had a veto-proof majority to reverse the policy I recommended.

Now a new administration and new Members of Congress, they're free to do something different. What we're doing now—in August, we issued some new guidelines to try to correct some of the abuses, because the policy, as it was articulated in '93, has been often abused, and that's what's led to some of these expulsions, some of this harassment.

The Secretary of Defense is absolutely committed to faithfully implementing the policy. It's

really “don’t ask, don’t tell,” don’t pursue, under those circumstances.

Mr. King. So it’s not the policy that’s wrong?

The President. No, I didn’t say that. I recommended a different policy, but the policy is better than the results. That is, if the policy were faithfully applied, we would not have many of the problems that we’ve had these last few years. And I think the Secretary of Defense and the leadership of the Pentagon is now—with these new guidelines and with the work they’re doing to try to make sure people are trained and they understand they’re not supposed to go in and harass people and what can and cannot trigger an inquiry, I think we can make it better now.

Gay and Lesbian Rights

Mr. King. How much—we know about your interest and the gains we’ve made in the racial area and still a long way to go. How are we doing in that area, in the homosexual area in this country, with regards to acceptance, do you think?

The President. I think we’ve come a long way. We’re a long way from where we were just in ’92 and ’93. I think vast majorities of the American people support hate crimes legislation that protects gays as well as people with different racial and religious backgrounds. I think most Americans strongly support nondiscrimination in the workplace and would vote for the employment nondiscrimination act if they were in Congress. I hope that the Congress will vote for it this year, this next year.

I think that—the real problem, I still believe, is the absence of open, personal contact. I think—

Mr. King. We don’t know it—

The President. I think there are too many people who don’t know gay men and lesbian women in the ordinary course of their lives, and they don’t see that there are people who—their friends, their sisters, their brothers, their sons, their daughters, their co-workers, and that it is—my judgment is it’s not a lifestyle people choose. It is the way people are. It’s too hard—it’s too hard a life for people to just up and—

Mr. King. Why choose it?

The President. —up and choose it. I think that—and I think that my view is that every American that works hard, obeys the law, plays by the rules ought to be treated with dignity

and respect and have a part in our American family. That’s what I believe.

Mr. King. Do you agree with the Vermont judiciary that while marriage may be wrong, they are entitled, couples who live together who are gay, to equal benefits?

The President. I do. I think that’s a good thing. That’s always been my position, that—you’ve got gay couples that, for example, have been together for years now. One of them—and I’m beginning to think about this, because I’m moving into this age bracket now; one of them has a heart attack; one of them gets sick; one of them is in the intensive care unit in the hospital; and only family members can come in; and sometimes they’re not allowed in—that kind of thing.

You know, I think that, in terms of health care coverage at work or in terms of property and willing of property to your closest family member, that sort of thing, I think they ought to be able to do that.

Mr. King. But not marry?

The President. Well, marriage in our culture and to me has a certain connotation, meaning for me, that has not gotten me to where I could accept that, because I think it’s basically a union for the purpose of, among other things, having children, and so that’s why I’ve never supported the term of marriage, although there are a lot of increasing numbers of people, even in the clergy, who believe that they should be able to do that.

Mr. King. We’ll be back with more of President Clinton. We’ve got an overview here on the millennium and some other things after this.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

Reimbursement of Legal Fees

Mr. King. We’re in the Cabinet Room at the White House with President Clinton. Touch some other bases. The Washington Post said that you’re applying to the Government to reimburse for legal fees. True?

The President. That’s not true.

Mr. King. Not true?

The President. Not true. I’ve never—I’ve never considered doing that.

Mr. King. So where did that story come from?

The President. I think it was leaked from the Independent Counsel’s Office. That’s the way the story read to me. But—

Mr. King. You don’t want—

The President. I think that they've cost the taxpayers enough money already.

Mr. King. So even if you were entitled legally—

The President. I may be entitled to it, but my instinct is not to do it. But I've really never had a discussion about it. My instinct is not to do it. I've been very fortunate. I've had this legal defense fund; people have helped me pay for my legal fees. The travesty in this thing is the way the law is written. You can only get your legal fees if you're a target of an investigation but you're not charged. So if you're charged and acquitted, you can't get them, and if you never were a target, you can't get them.

So the thing that I think is just tragic is you have no idea how many completely innocent people that were harassed repeatedly and called into hearings and called into this, that, and the other thing. Everybody knew they never did anything wrong, but I mean, not just one interview which you could understand but over and over and over again, so that they have these massive legal bills, and they're not eligible for any reimbursement at all.

So I've been trying to figure out how to help them pay their legal bills. That's what I wish I could apply for. I wish there was some fund where I could get some money for them to pay their bills, because a lot of these people, they're not President; they're not like me; they can't have a legal defense fund that would pay their bills off.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. King. How did you emotionally hold up through all that?

The President. I'm here. [Laughter]

Mr. King. I know. What is it? Some sort of inner thing in you, get up off the floor, the comeback kid approach? Is that part of your structure? Where does that come from?

The President. I think there are two things, really. One is what you said. All my life, I was raised to believe that you should never give in and never give up. If somebody hits you and knocks you down, you were supposed to get up, not give up. And I also deeply believed—one thing I knew, the Whitewater thing was a total fraud, and I thought the people who were pursuing it knew it was a fraud at some point. They had to, especially 4-something years ago, when the Government report came out, the RTC report saying that neither my wife or

I had done anything wrong and had detailed millions of dollars in explanations showing that.

The other thing was that I'm—in the last couple of years, I had to come to terms with a lot of things. I prayed a lot; I thought a lot; I sought a lot of advice. I had a lot of help from really good people, here and around the world. A lot of the people I served with, world leaders, called and talked to me.

Mr. King. Are you surprised at that?

The President. I was touched by it beyond belief. Some of the conversations I had with people like Nelson Mandela, I've carried with me all my life. It's just unbelievable.

Mr. King. They were there for you?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. And that was part of the—

The President. But here—but also, letters I got from, you know, kids around America. You wouldn't believe the letters I got from—

Mr. King. Really?

The President. Yes, unbelievable letters. And letters I got from religious leaders and people that taught philosophy and thought about these things. It was just—and I also had a lot of counseling, a lot of help from these ministers who came in and met with me, and my wife and daughter had a lot to do with it. Hillary and Chelsea had a lot to do with it.

Former Advisers in the Media

Mr. King. Are you hurt by the Dick Morris, the Stephanopouloses who write books, who write columns, become part of the media sometimes, in Morris's case, often a very critical—a guy you were pretty close to? Does that hurt you?

The President. Well, first of all, I am very grateful for the overwhelming loyalty that I've enjoyed from people who could have made a lot of money by dumping on me because that's what sells and the kind of media culture they were in. And I have enjoyed an extraordinary degree of it.

I've also had a lot of stability. A lot of people have stayed with me the whole time. So let me start with my gratitude. When Dick first started going on television and saying those things, he used to call somebody here in the office and apologize in advance and just say, "You know, I've got to do this. It's the only way I can get on television."

Mr. King. Really?

The President. Oh, sure. I mean, it's a game. It's a game. I know that. And so it's hard for me to take it seriously. I think that a lot of the things that he has said, he knows downright aren't true, and I feel bad for him because I think you pay a terrible price when you do that over and over and over again.

Mr. King. You feel bad for him?

The President. Yes, I do. I feel really bad for him.

Mr. King. He's attacked your wife a lot, too.

The President. Yes. And he's said a lot of things that he just knows aren't so. And so I feel badly for him. But I don't—I can't be mad at him.

With George, it's a different story. I think he's a brilliant man and basically a good person. But when George entered politics, he entered as a boy wonder. He came right in with Dick Gephardt, you know, and he assumed great responsibilities because he's a person of—he works like crazy, and he's smart, and he's basically good-hearted in a lot of ways. But he was, I think, always affected by being basically a Washington politician.

I remember when I was attacked in the New Hampshire primary, and everybody said, "He's dead, and he ought to get out," and all that, George was asking, "Well, should we withdraw?" And James Carville and I, who grew up in the country, you know, out there with the folks, we looked at him and said, "George, if the people want me to withdraw, they will withdraw me at election time. That's what you've got elections for."

And I think that—I think he's probably more comfortable now being a part of the professional critics of the Washington establishment, the media establishment. I think that's where he's—I think he's comfortable there. That's where he started in politics, and I think that's just where he is.

Criticism of the President

Mr. King. Do those pundits in general bother—do they get at you? Some guy—Truman wrote that famous note when he got mad. Some people let it slide off.

The President. I've got that note, you know.

Mr. King. You have the actual note?

The President. Yes. One of the great little stories of my Presidency is Steve Forbes gave me that letter that Truman wrote.

Mr. King. Steve Forbes?

The President. I've always been grateful to him.

Mr. King. SOB he called that writer.

The President. Yes, he said, "You'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a"—[laughter]—

Mr. King. Do you ever watch "Larry King Live" or "Meet The Press" or somebody—do you get mad?

The President. No, the truth is I never watch them. I never watch the Sunday talk shows.

Mr. King. You don't watch Sunday morning?

The President. Never. And the only time I ever see any of these other programs is if I'm channel surfing late at night and I happen to run into them. I watch your program sometimes when you're interviewing somebody I want to hear from.

Mr. King. But basically, you don't turn on "Meet The Press" or—

The President. Never. Never. And if I did, what good would that do me? I mean—

Mr. King. Except make you mad.

The President. Yes. If someone—if I read a column, like an op-ed column, of someone who says, I think the Clinton administration policy is all wet on this for these reasons, I read that, because Benjamin Franklin said, "Our critics are our friends. They show us our faults." But I cannot—you can't afford to be angry as President. If you're angry all the time over things people say about you—you can be angry about what happens to the American people. But if you're angry about what happens to you, then you're wasting a lot of time and emotional energy that belongs to the American people. And you're not going to make good decisions. So nothing really good can come with that.

Mr. King. You really feel like an employee of the people?

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. We'll be back with some more moments with President Clinton from the Cabinet Room in the White House. Don't go away.

[At this point, CNN took a commercial break.]

President's Legacy

Mr. King. We're back with President Clinton. I want to read something that was given to me today. The last time—not the last time, we've been together many times, but the night

Vince Foster died, you were on television together, in this building. We were the last two to know about it.

The President. Yes. We were going to go another half hour, and McLarty came on and said, "You can't do it."

Mr. King. Mack McLarty came in and said, "You've got to get off now." And you were mad. Why? Because you even said, "Am I not doing well?" But anyway, that aside, the last question to you that night was called in by someone asking you, even though you had only been a year, less than a year in office, what do you think your legacy will be? Here's what you said: "I'll be happy to tell you. Number one, I'd like to get the economy moving again." This is 6 years ago. "Number two, I'd like to provide health security for all Americans. Number three, I want my national service plan to pass to open doors of college education to millions of Americans. Number four, I strongly want to pass a welfare reform bill that will move people from welfare to work. And five, I want to reform the political system."

Reading this, how have you done?

The President. We've done well.

Mr. King. Three out of five.

The President. Yes. And we've made—we've done some really good things in health care; we just haven't been able to have universal access. And I finally got—I'm very proud of this—we had 100 percent of my party vote for the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform. So we now have unified the Democratic Party for our campaign finance reform, and it's just a question of whether the other party will come along now. So I think that will happen.

I feel very good about what's happened these last 6 years. We've done a lot of other things as well, and we've been able to advance the cause of peace in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, the Balkans.

President's Disappointment

Mr. King. Biggest disappointment?

The President. I don't know what the biggest disappointment is. I'm sorry we were not able to have more progress in health care, but we may have some this year. The main thing is I feel this enormous gratitude because I think our country is ending this century on such a high note, and I really do think we built our bridge to the 21st century.

Hillary Clinton's Senate Campaign

Mr. King. And are you going to campaign for Hillary?

The President. If she wants me to, and if I can be helpful, I am. But I think that there's a time for that. I think in the beginning people want to know who she is, what she believes, what she will do as a Senator, and they'll want to see her. And I need to be as supportive of her as I can. There will come a time when I can perhaps help her in the campaign. The people of New York have been wonderful to me, and I'm very grateful for that. But they want to make an independent judgment about her, so I have to be careful about when I do it and how I do it. But if and when I can help, I will do whatever I can to help, because first of all, for her, I want her to win. But secondly, she would be absolutely unbelievable if she were a Senator. I mean, it would be unbelievable. It would be such a gift for the people of New York and America. I've never known anybody, ever, who had her combination of intellect and passion and organizing ability and absolutely consuming devotion to public service.

Mr. King. Our common friends in California tell me you were going to move to New York, you and Hillary, no matter what.

The President. That's correct. She told me—when we got elected in '92, I said, "Okay, ever since we've been married, we've lived where I wanted to live; we've done what I wanted to do. Now, when we get out of here, I've got to go home; I'm going to build my library and build my center, but that's my gift to my State. And I'm going to spend some time there, and we'll spend the rest of the time wherever you want to say." And she said, "I want to go to New York." That's what she told me when we moved up here. I bet it was the first week or 2 we were here.

Mr. King. Seven years ago.

The President. Yes.

Mr. King. Happy holidays.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 5:56 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later broadcast and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Colin Powell, USA

(Ret.), chairman, America's Promise—The Alliance For Youth; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; the President's former political consultant Dick Morris; former Senior Adviser for Policy and Strategy George Stephanopoulos; and former Chief of Staff Thomas F.

(Mack) McLarty. The President also referred to Vice President Al Gore's debate with Reform Party candidate Ross Perot on the North American free trade initiative on November 9, 1993. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical Weapons

December 22, 1999

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, adopted by the Senate of the United States on April 24, 1997, I hereby certify in connection with Condition (7)(C)(i), Effectiveness of Australia Group, that:

Australia Group members continue to maintain an equally effective or more comprehensive control over the export of toxic chemicals and their precursors, dual-use processing equipment, human, animal, and plant pathogens and toxins with potential biological weapons application, and dual-use biological equipment, as that afforded by the Australia Group as of April 25, 1997; and,

The Australia Group remains a viable mechanism for limiting the spread of chemical and biological weapons-related materials and technology, and the effectiveness of the Australia Group has not been undermined by changes in membership, lack of compliance with common export controls and nonproliferation measures, or the weakening of common controls and nonproliferation measures, in force as of April 25, 1997.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23.

Statement on the Death of Tom Henderson

December 23, 1999

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Tom Henderson, a member of my Advisory Council on HIV and AIDS and a senior staff person at the Environmental Protection Agency. Tom was a longtime friend to both of us and combined great intelligence with a sharp Texas wit. He was a strong and effective advocate for our efforts to combat AIDS, the

disease that eventually took his life. We will miss Tom, as will members of the Council, his colleagues at the EPA and the White House, and the hundreds of people around the country who were blessed to know him as a friend. Our thoughts and prayers are with his partner Michael, his daughter Melissa, and all of those like us who grieve his loss.

Statement on Providing Disaster Assistance to Venezuela December 23, 1999

Today I authorized a \$20 million drawdown of emergency disaster assistance to support relief operations in Venezuela. This assistance, to be drawn from existing Department of Defense inventories, will augment the \$5.5 million we have already committed to Venezuela. These funds will support continued search and rescue operations by U.S. military helicopters now on the scene, airlift of food, shelter, and medicines, water purification systems, and other critical needs.

As I told President Chavez when I spoke to him by telephone on Tuesday, we are deeply

saddened by the loss of life and devastation that has taken place in Venezuela. The heroic response of the Venezuelan people to this calamity has left a profound impression on all of us. Through the efforts of our military and USAID, we will continue to do everything possible to help the people of Venezuela. Providing this assistance is not only the right thing to do; it also promotes our interest in ensuring stability in a nation that is a key partner in the hemisphere.

At this holiday season, the people of Venezuela are in our thoughts and prayers.

Christmas Greeting to the Nation December 24, 1999

The President. On this holiest of holidays, Hilary and I would like to wish all of you a very merry Christmas. This is a season of joy, a time for family and friends to rejoice in one another's company and in the magic of Christmas. This is also the season of peace.

On behalf of all Americans, I'd like to send a special greeting to the brave men and women in uniform who are serving our country in lands far from home. Thank you for the greatest gift of the season, for protecting our Nation and safeguarding the blessings we all hold dear.

The First Lady. At the dawn of this new millennium, let us reflect on our hopes, our dreams, and the gifts we can give to the future. So let all of us cherish the gift of every child

among us and pledge to build a world where all children, no matter where they are born, can make their dreams come true.

The President. From our family to yours, merry Christmas, happy new year, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The greeting was videotaped at approximately 2:30 p.m. on December 23 in Room 459 in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

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The First Lady. At the dawn of this new millennium, let us reflect on our hopes, our dreams, and the gifts we can give to the future. Let us all cherish the gift of every child among us and pledge to build a world worthy of all our children.

The President. May the spirit of the season be with you today and throughout the new year. From our family to yours, merry Christmas, happy new year, may God bless you all.

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in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building for later broadcast. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 12:01 a.m. on December 24. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this greeting.

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Radio Remarks for the “Lost Lives” Christmas Eve Broadcast

December 24, 1999

3625, Maura Monaghan, from Tyrone. A Catholic girl, just 18 months old. To her family, little Maura Monaghan was known simply as “Mossie.” She was the youngest victim of the Omagh bombing. Her mother, Avril, her grandmother, Mary Grimes, and her unborn twin sisters also were killed on that Saturday afternoon, the 15th of August 1998, at 10 past 3 p.m., when that terrible bomb exploded.

They had gone to Omagh town as a special treat, to celebrate Mary Grimes’ birthday. They had even been to church earlier that day, the same church where their funeral services would be held just a few days later.

I still feel a personal connection with this tragedy. Two weeks later, Hillary and I visited Omagh. We saw the scene where 31 people were killed in the worst single incident of the Troubles. And then we went to the Leisure Center, where the families of the victims had had to wait for news of their loved ones. They

were again to meet us, as were many victims who had been terribly injured on that day.

That meeting was one of the most difficult and moving experiences of our lives. But I have to say, it was also one of the most uplifting. Again and again, people who had been injured or lost loved ones said, “Keep going with the peace process. Keep going, and don’t give up on it. Do whatever you can to make sure that nobody else suffers as we are suffering.”

I know they suffer still. I know the first dawn of the new millennium will be a sad time for those who remember the family and friends who should still be with them. But I never forgot their courage and their faith in the new beginning for Northern Ireland and neither did so many of you, who raised your voices and said, “Enough is enough.”

And so we kept going. And now it looks as though, after all the difficulties, the new day we’ve been talking about for so long is finally at hand.

And so today, on Christmas Eve, we remember little Maura Monaghan, "Mossie," a beautiful, curly-haired angel who was loved by everyone. She lives not only in our memory but in our determination to build a better Northern Ireland for all the children of tomorrow.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at 11:28 a.m. on December 18 in the Oval Office

at the White House for later broadcast on RTE in Ireland. Maura Monaghan was the 3,625th victim of the Troubles. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until 3:30 a.m., December 24. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

The President's Radio Address *December 25, 1999*

Good morning. Hillary, Chelsea, and I join millions of American families celebrating Christmas today. For Americans of many faiths, this is a season of renewal, of light returned from darkness, and despair transformed to hope. And as the year ends, and this millennium draws to a close, we all have a chance and a responsibility to reflect on our lives and rejoice in our blessings.

On this holiday morning, I know many of us are thankful for the love of family and friends and the richness of the world around us. We're grateful for the advances in science and medicine that are letting us live longer, healthier lives. We enjoy freedom and prosperity at home and peace with our neighbors. And we are privileged to be a leader for peace and liberty around the world, from Bosnia to Kosovo to Northern Ireland and the Middle East. And we're very thankful for the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, especially those who can't be with their families as they stand on the frontlines of freedom far from home.

Most of all, we're blessed by the millions of Americans who take time out from the holiday season, and all year round, to remember those in need, those who are sick, those who are troubled. In the spirit of the season, Americans are reaching out to victims of disaster, like our neighbors in Venezuela, where floods and landslides have killed thousands and left tens of thousands homeless this Christmas. I'm proud that the United States is leading the international relief effort there and that so many Americans are donating food, clothes, and medicine for the survivors.

Here at home, we're reaching out to the poorest among us, to those who do not yet share in America's growing prosperity. We're making new efforts to reach out to the homeless, to help them find housing, medical care, and jobs. Today I am glad to announce that we will be providing nearly \$1 billion in new Federal grants for housing and social services to help the homeless in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Those grants will fund proven, successful programs that help homeless families, veterans, and children, and people looking for work. They are a Christmas gift all of us can all be proud of.

I want to end my talk today with a Christmas story. A few days ago, I helped prepare holiday meals at the D.C. Central Kitchen, a community kitchen that prepares 3,000 meals a day for the homeless and hungry and trains people to work in food services, to hold down jobs, to turn their lives around.

I worked with a man named Steve Pritchett. As a young man, Steve had a scholarship for college, and his future looked bright. But he made some mistakes, and as a result, he's been homeless for much of his adult life. At Christmastime, he might go see his mother for a day, but if it was cold, you'd most likely find Steve spending Christmas under a bus shelter or beside a steam grate.

But this year, Steve found the D.C. Central Kitchen and discovered it's never too late to change. He's been in their training program for 2 months now, and already he's been offered a job. He's clean and off the streets. Best of all, his mother, who never gave up on her son, is so proud. She told him, "Steve, you don't

have to be a doctor or a lawyer. I just want to know that when I close my eyes, you'll be able to stand on your own two feet." They're together today celebrating Christmas.

D.C. Central Kitchen had the help of 5,000 volunteers this year; each one of them deserves a little credit for the success of Steve and so many others like him. That's America at its best, when neighbor helps to lift up neighbor and together we shine a light in the darkness. That is also the true spirit of Christmas.

So let us all resolve to take this spirit with us into the new millennium. We'll be better people and a stronger nation for doing so.

Happy holidays, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:43 p.m. on December 23 in the Map Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 23 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Interview With Charlie Rose of CBS' "60 Minutes II"

December 22, 1999

Terrorism During Millennium Celebrations

Mr. Rose. Mr. President, because of the recent arrest and heightened security concerns at airports, do you expect, worry that there will be an incident of terrorism before the first of the year?

The President. Well, we are on a heightened state of alert, and we're doing a lot of work on this. But I would say to the American people, they should go on about their business and celebrate the holidays as they would, but they should be aware. You know, this whole millennial idea draws out a lot of people who are maybe, by our standards, deranged, and other people maybe want to use it for their own political ends. So if people see anything suspicious, they should report it to the authorities as quickly as possible. But otherwise, I should say, they should go on about their business. We're working very, very hard on this.

Mr. Rose. It worries you?

The President. No, I'm concerned, but I think we have, I think, the best law enforcement folks we could have, and they are working very hard. And we're doing quite well so far. So I have every hope that we'll get through it. But I think that what I would ask the American people to do is not to stay at home and hide but just to keep their eyes open. If they see something that looks fishy, tell the authorities and we'll get on it. But they should know that we're working this very hard.

Last Year of President's Term

Mr. Rose. All right, let me—I look around this office, and I see a desk over there that President Kennedy sat at. And I remember the story he said about the Presidency, and one of the great things about the Presidency was he could walk to work. As you think about leaving this building, what will you miss the most?

The President. I think what I'll miss the most is the work, the job, the contact with all kinds of people and all kinds of issues, the ability to make a difference, to solve problems, to open up opportunities for other people. There's almost no—not almost, I suppose there is no job like it in the world. It's been an unbelievable thrill and a profound honor, and I will miss it very much.

I'll miss a lot of the other things. I love living in the White House. Hillary, I suppose, has done more work on the White House than anybody since the Truman administration, redoing rooms and building a sculpture garden and doing things like that. And we love living here. I love going to Camp David; I love Air Force One; I love all of the perks of the job. But the thing I love most is being President, doing the job every day. It just—to me, it's an almost indescribable honor. I would never grow tired of it, and I feel graced every day.

Term Limits

Mr. Rose. If you could change the 22d amendment, would you?

The President. I don't know. It's probably not fair to ask. On balance, I think the two-term tradition has served us well. I'm glad President Roosevelt served the third term, because of the war. But on balance, I think it's served us well.

Now, you know, I'm young, and I'm strong, and I'm, as far I know, in good health. I love the job. And so if I could serve again, I probably would. But I think that's the reason we have this limit, so that people like me don't get to make that decision. [Laughter]

Mr. Rose. Are you going to leave a note in that desk over there for your successor, and what will you say?

The President. I will, and I don't know what I'll say. But probably most of what I'll say will be predictable. I'll be wishing my successor well and talking a little bit about the job and offering to be available if I can ever be of any help.

National Economy

Mr. Rose. Prosperity. Economic prosperity and growth has been a hallmark of this Presidency. How long can it last, and will it be a part of our future, our near future?

The President. Well, it certainly will be part of our future. Now, how long it will last? The truth is no one knows. I believed when I got here that there was a chance that we could have a very long period of economic growth. Now I couldn't have known, when we started and we started slashing the deficit and investing more in technology, that we would have the longest economic expansion in history that would even outstrip wartime when we had been fully mobilized. And in February we will.

But I think that there are some fundamentally different things now. If the Government can follow good policies and the Federal Reserve will follow smart policies, there is this enormous power of productivity we're getting out of the revolution in technology and information technology. It's just now working its way into every sector of the economy, and it's also continually advancing itself. So I think if we can keep that going and if we can keep our markets open, that's very important, not just the exports we sell but the imports we buy, the open market keeps the American economy highly competitive and tends to keep inflation down. And I think that's one of the things that's been under appreciated about this. I never will forget, back in '94 I got really alarmed when lumber prices went way up in a hurry, and I thought home-

building prices were going to explode. And then all of a sudden, we had this big infusion of less costly imports.

Now, we have to work on fair trade rules; we've got to have—we can't be taken advantage of, as some tried to during the Asian financial crisis, but on balance, these open markets are very good for us. They give us growth and competition, keeps inflation down. And I think that's very good.

Globalization and the Technology Gap

Mr. Rose. What we want to do here in this conversation is really focus on the future. You've done a number of conversations about this century and your term in office. Thinking about the future and the economic health of the country, there is also this process. In 10 years—10 years ago the wall came down; 5 years ago the web went up. Globalization is part of our life.

The President. It is.

Mr. Rose. Some worry—and Seattle might be an indication that we're looking at the possibility of a great gap between a two-tier system, between the haves and the have-nots of the world, those who get it with technology and those that don't.

The President. Well, first of all, the worry is well-founded, but it's a constant. That is, we have had a great gap in opportunity, even though it's sometimes closed and sometimes open, but there has been a huge gap between the haves and have-nots since the dawn of the industrial revolution and the creation of middle class societies with mass wealth. Some have had it, and others have not ever created it.

There is a chance that what will happen now is that it will become more pronounced across countries and within countries because of the advantages that technology-literate people and entrepreneurs with access to money will have in a rapidly changing world. That is, it's liable to accelerate.

But I would remind you that in the United States we had an increasing gap between the rich and the poor for about 20 years, as we moved into this new economic phase. The same thing happened when we changed from being an agricultural economy to an industrial economy. In the last 2 or 3 years, we started to see the gap close again. And the answer is not to run away from globalization. The answer is to make change our friend. The answer is to

have broad access to information and information technology, to have broad-based systems of education and health care and family supports in every country, and to continue to try to shape the global economy.

You mentioned Seattle. I think that you had a lot of people out there protesting globalization, but they can't reverse it, and it's done a lot more good than bad. It's created—over the last 50 years, as the world has become more interconnected, we've moved away from the specter of war as holocaust, even though there have been a lot of smaller wars, and we've seen millions, hundreds of millions of people lifted into the middle class. So the answer is how to make this globalization more human, more humane, and how to shape it so that everybody has a chance to be a part of it.

Response to American Hegemony

Mr. Rose. Do you hear around the world now, as I'm sure you've heard from heads of state and others, this kind of unilateralist—America in the future is too strong, too dominant, and the fear of a backlash against us.

The President. I agree with that. And I think—I've tried to be very sensitive to that—I think we have—and to make sure that we fulfilled our responsibilities. I think that, on the one hand, people are glad that we won the cold war, if you will; they're glad that the forces of freedom won. All over the world people are embracing democracy and market economics. But if you enjoy the level of military and economic strength we have and the level of political influence, people are going to resent you.

And I must say—and again, I don't mean to be partisan here, but I think the resentment is deeper when the Congress takes as long as they did to pay our U.N. dues and puts the conditions on it they did, when we don't ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, when we basically preach to other people around the world, you ought to do this, that, or the other thing. But instead of helping them, we continue to have a very large military budget, but we spend the smallest percentage of our income on assistance to other countries to help them succeed economically and politically of any advanced country in the world. So we do some things that breed this resentment.

Now, a lot of them resented me at Seattle because they think that when the United States says we ought to have core labor standards and

we ought to have good environmental standards in a world trading system, that I'm trying to keep poor countries down, that I just want them to open their markets to us, but they won't get rich because I'm going to try to force them to give up their comparative wage advantage or their ability to grow. That's not true. So some of the resentments against America are not fair. But it's all perfectly understandable. I mean, look how fortunate we are compared to most other countries. And when people get in a tight spot, they want us to come help; Bosnia, Kosovo, the Middle East, you name it.

Prospects for the 21st Century

Mr. Rose. Do you think this century coming up will be America's century, as the 20th century has been described?

The President. Well, I think it can be. But I think we have to think very carefully about how we want to define that. I mean, look what we know will happen. We know that, barring some completely unforeseen event, China and, sometime thereafter, India will have economies that look bigger than ours, because they've got so many more people than we do, 4 times as many people; in the case of China, even more. We know that Europe will grow more integrated, I think, in the 21st century. And the European Union will be more and more a union. And they have 50 percent more people than we do, and they could have a lot more than that if they continue to bring in other countries.

So I do not believe that we will have the relative economic dominance we have today. We've got about 4 percent of the world's people and almost 22 percent of the world's income. But I think we can be still very prosperous. I think we can still be the strongest individual country in the world in many ways. But I think we will have to build partnerships with some of those who resent us now. We will have to have an increasingly interdependent world. Because, whether we like it or not—it's like globalization; interdependence is another word for globalization—we will become more interdependent, and we'll have to learn to be adroit at that. We won't be able to just say, "Well, if we like it, we're here, and if we don't, we'll walk away." We'll have to really work on our partnership skills.

Future Allies

Mr. Rose. You touched on something that I've thought about. This century was marked by our friends becoming our enemies—France and Germany—our enemies becoming our friends. Is that going to be part of the 21st century, people we now look on as rivals become friends, friends become—

The President. I think it is highly likely that some of the people that have been our most recent rivals will be our friends.

Mr. Rose. Like?

The President. Well, I know a lot of people are very skeptical about Russia now, because of the problems they've had. But they just had a genuinely democratic election with a lot of debate, vigorous opposition, brutal campaign ads, you know, the whole 9 yards.

Mr. Rose. Did the results surprise you?

The President. No. It's about what I thought they'd be. You know, still only 25 percent of them are voting for the old Communist Party; the rest of them are for something else, in spite of the economic hardship that they have faced in the last few years. So I still think there's a chance that if the leaders of Russia define their national greatness in 21st century terms, that is in terms of their ability to unleash the creative capacity of their people rather than their ability to dominate their neighbors, which was their 19th and 20th century definition of greatness, that they will be—we'll have a real partnership there. It's also possible that we'll have one with China.

Mr. Rose. A partnership?

The President. Absolutely. It just depends on how they view us and their own self-interest.

Future Rivals

Mr. Rose. Do you see, on the other hand, people who we might consider friends, like Western Europe, becoming more rivals because—

The President. I think the only way that would happen is if it were provoked by greater protectionism, economic protectionism outside the borders of Europe. That is Europe could get so big, and they could integrate the economy of Europe, and they'll have a lot of poor countries coming in just like we have poor States and poor regions. If they close their economy, rather than open it, that could be a difficult thing. But I think it's far more likely that our former enemies will become at least friendlier,

if we're not friends, and that all of us together will face the enemies of the nation-state in the 21st century.

Mr. Rose. The enemies of the nation-state?

The President. Yes. The organized enemies of the nation-state that have vast money and vast access to weapons and technology and travel: the organized crime syndicates; the narcotraffickers; the terrorists. And I think the likelihood that all these people will be integrated—there may be some rogue states that will support them, but I think you're more likely to see the nation-states trying to uphold stability in their national lives, increasingly open and democratic. Even China, I think, will become more open and more democratic. They're already electing mayors in a million little towns, literally.

Mr. Rose. In democratic elections?

The President. Yes. And so I think—by their standards. They don't have a Republican or a Democratic Party like we do, but they are having these elections. I think in the future the likelihood is that nation-states will be allied against the enemies of the organized society and the open society.

Chemical and Biological Threats

Mr. Rose. Do you expect in the next 10, 20 years to be a terrorist attack in the United States, thinking about the recent events, thinking about the potential for germ warfare, the potential for biological attacks, and the potential—

The President. Oh, absolutely. I think that's a threat.

Mr. Rose. A likelihood?

The President. Well, I think it's highly likely that someone will try. And keep in mind, the World Trade Center was blown up just a few years ago. We were fortunate to catch the people who did it. Oklahoma City had the terrible explosion.

What I think will happen—let me back up a minute. I have done everything I could as President to try to organize the permanent Government, the people who will be here when I am gone, and the Congress to deal with the long-term threat of biological, chemical, and small-scale nuclear war, as well as the increasing sophistication of traditional weapons. And we are doing a massive amount of work now in preparation to try to minimize the chances that it will occur and—God forbid if it should occur—to try to minimize the impact of it. I

think, parenthetically, one of the benefits of our research into the human genome is that we'll be able to analyze these viruses much more quickly and come up with antidotes much more quickly than we used to be able to. Even now, when new strains of diseases—whether it's AIDS or anything else—come up, we can identify them so much more quickly than we used to be able to.

So what I think will happen—let me just make this point—the organized forces of destruction will take maximum advantage of new technologies and new scientific developments just like democratic societies do. So I think, just like the computers are all being miniaturized and people carry these little pads around that have—and now you've got these gadgets where you can use as a telephone or a typewriter, do E-mail, and all that. Well, the same miniaturization will apply to biological and chemical weapons. And if people should get nuclear materials that can be made into a bomb, to nuclear materials, which is why we've worked so hard with Russia to control access to that stuff.

So we've just got to be ready. There will always be bad guys out there in the world who will try to take advantage of people's vulnerabilities.

Mr. Rose. But aren't the odds against us, when you describe that kind of technological advantage—I mean, and just recently two people trying—in separate cases—trying to get inside America's borders with explosives—it gets more and more easier to conceal, and more and more the likelihood that an American city—

The President. Well, if you go back through all of human history and you look at conflicts in weapons systems—and that's what we're talking about, biological, chemical weapons—offense always precedes defense; that is you've got to know what you're defending against.

So my goal in this whole thing, trying to mobilize the country on biological, chemical weapons, and make sure the Government is doing everything possible, is to close the gap between offense and defense. And the answer to your question is we won't be severely—there might be incidences. I mean, the World Trade Center was blown up; Oklahoma City was blown up. We've got a guy in the laboratory in the Middle West, almost 5 years ago, who was trying to develop biological agents, political extremist.

Mr. Rose. And there are scary ideas coming out of science, where viruses can attack certain ethnic groups?

The President. Yes, there are people that—

Mr. Rose. The potential of science to do harm is alarming.

The President. But you know, it's always been that way. I mean, it's always been that way. And I think that I'm actually more optimistic than—keep in mind, no one believes that someone's going to come in and kill everybody in America. That's what we worried about during the cold war. And we still have to deal with these traditional threats. That's why India and Pakistan is perhaps—the Kashmiri issue is perhaps the most dangerous one in the world today because you've got two nuclear powers there who are somewhat uncertain about one another and why we have to work hard to avoid that.

But yes, there will be problems. Yes, there could be terrible incidences. But I would say to the American people, they should, on balance, be hopeful. But what they should do is to support the leadership of this country in putting maximum resources into research and development so that we're prepared. And I think we will grow increasingly sophisticated in picking these people up, increasingly sophisticated in detecting these weapons, and what we can't afford is to have a long period of time where these offensive capabilities of the new age are better than the defensive capabilities. If we can close the gap between offense and defense, we'll be fine.

Mr. Rose. What's interesting about a conversation about the future with you is that because of this office and your curiosity, you see and know more than almost anyone. I mean, you are aware because you talk to the scientists; you talk to people responsible.

The President. I think about it a lot.

Mr. Rose. You do?

The President. Sure. I have to. See, I think one of the jobs of the President, because of the unique opportunity of the office you just described it, is to always be thinking about what will happen 10, 20, 30 years from now, and to allocate some time and effort to make decisions for which there will be almost no notice.

You know, right now, I mean, hardly anybody reports on or thinks about the work we're doing in biological warfare or chemical warfare—the speech I gave at the National Science Foundation—but it's fine. It's what my former national

security aide, Tony Lake, used to call "the dog that doesn't bark." And there is a sense in which there's a bunch of dogs in this old world you don't want to bark.

Mr. Rose. It's the old notion about if the tree falls in the forest and nobody hears it, did the tree fall? Can you—are there things that we don't know about that alarm you, this sense of science and where it's at and what's coming down the pike, that gives you great pause?

The President. Well, there are a lot of things that concern me. You know, we've done a lot of work—the other thing that, besides the chemical and biological weapons—trying to protect computer systems.

Year 2000 Problems

Mr. Rose. Speak to Y2K. Where are your concerns, and do you think that most of those—

The President. My concerns, well, they're much more traditional in Y2K. I think we've done a good job here. We've spent a lot of money—I say we, the American people, not just the Government, the private sector—we've spent a lot of money, tried to be ready. I feel a high level of confidence. It wouldn't bother me a bit to get on a commercial airline, for example, on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day and fly around. I think our systems are in order here.

My concerns really are for some of our friends around the world that have more rudimentary computer networks and capacities and whether they will have a shutdown that they won't be able to immediately fix or get around.

Mr. Rose. And make them vulnerable to what?

The President. Well, if there were problems in the financial system, what if records disappeared and people lost money? That would be destabilizing in some countries. If power systems—

Mr. Rose. And make them vulnerable to outside forces, to kinds of elements you mentioned earlier?

The President. Well, maybe, but I think more internal destabilization. What if a power system shuts down in a big country with a hard winter? How long will it take to get back up before anyone would freeze to death? I mean, these are the kinds of practical problems that I'm concerned about.

But I think that—I'm talking about something far more insidious, though. What we have to—

this is, again, offense and defense. What we have to do—this technology of computers is changing so fast, and we've got a lot of whizbangs out there, and they can make a ton of money working for bad guys. So what we've got to do is to continuously work on protecting the cyber security, the infrastructure of the information economy, just like we're trying to deal with chemical and biological warfare and the miniaturization of weapons and all this.

But most people are good people. We've got plenty of talented people. We just need to be imagining the future, thinking about all the problems as well as all the opportunities, and then prepare. Society always has problems; there are always misfortunes. But basically, I believe the future is quite promising and far more exciting than any period in history. I wish I were going to live to be 150; I'd love to see what happens.

Possibilities of the Future

Mr. Rose. Would you like to be cloned?

The President. No. I wouldn't wish that on anybody. [Laughter]

Mr. Rose. There is this thing, too. I mean, think about Chelsea's children, your grandchildren, say the year 2050, whatever the appropriate time might be. What's this world going to look like? Is it going to be more interesting, more challenging? How will we travel; what kind of food will we eat; will we go to other planets?

The President. I think we'll be eating food that's like what we eat now. I think it will be safer. I think we'll know a lot more about it, even safer than it is now. I think that in big, urban areas, I think we'll still have our love affairs with cars. I think they will be much more safe. They'll be made of composite materials that are much more resistant to wrecks. And I think where there is a lot of heavy traffic, I think that we'll all travel by a computerized plan.

I also think there will be a lot more rapid rail transit. I think it will be safer. It'll be better, and I think we'll be able to do things while we travel and spend more time. I think we will go into outer space, and at sometime in the next century, I think there will be large, permanent platforms sustaining life in outer space that will basically be jumping-off places to distant planets and maybe even beyond. That's what I think will happen.

Q. Hold on one second. I know you've got to change tape. Okay.

Mr. Rose. You said computerized plan—

The President. No, I meant cars. You want me to say it again?

Mr. Rose. How much time do we have?

The President. I just misspoke myself.

Mr. Rose. How much time do we have here?

The President. I don't know, 10 minutes, 5 minutes?

You want to do that again?

Mr. Rose. The last question? All right. Okay.

Think about the future of your grandchildren, Chelsea's children, the year 2050. What will life be like then? What kind of food; what kind of transportation; will we be living on other planets? Will we still be concerned about things that concern us now, like overweight, stuff like that?

The President. I don't think all of the problems will go away. I think the food will be pretty much like it is now, but even safer. I think that on Earth, we'll travel in automobiles, still, but in traffic jams, we'll have automated systems. I think there will be a lot more high speed rail. I think we'll travel in ways that give us more free time to do things while we travel.

I think that there will be large platforms in outer space that will be jumping-off places to distant planets, and I think that the biomedical advances will be stunning. I think a lot of cancers will be cured. I think there will be a vaccine for AIDS. I think that the research in the human gene and the revolution, the continuing revolution in microchips will enable people to probably cure spinal cord injuries by having a programmed chip that goes into the spine and replicates all the nerves that were damaged.

I think that it'll be a fascinating time. And I think there will be lots and lots of continuous daily communication with people across national and cultural lines.

Mr. Rose. Would you go to space if you had the opportunity?

The President. I might. I'm real interested in it. I like it a lot. I think it's important.

Post-Presidential Plans

Mr. Rose. What one thing do you most want to accomplish—I've got to go—when you leave this office? What's the single most important thing for you to accomplish when you leave?

The President. You mean, after I'm not President anymore?

Mr. Rose. After you're not President.

The President. I think the most important thing is for me to be a useful citizen of this country and of this world, because I've had opportunities here only my other living predecessors have had. And I think that for me to be able to continue the work I've done in racial and religious and ethnic reconciliation and trying to convince people that we can grow the global economy and still preserve the environment and trying to empower the poor and the dispossessed, in trying to spread the universal impact of education and use technology to benefit ordinary people, these kinds of things—I think I should continue to do this work and trying—I want to get young people into public service. I want them to believe this is noble and important work.

So I think, in a word, I have to be a good citizen now. That's the most important thing I can do when I leave office is to use the maximum—to the maximum extent I can, the knowledge that I have, the experience that I've gained to be a really good citizen.

Mr. Rose. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 5:10 p.m. in the Oval Office for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 28. The text of this interview follows the transcript as released by the Office of the Press Secretary. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on Zero Tolerance for Prescription Drug Internet Sites That Harm Patient Safety and Health

December 28, 1999

Prescription drug sites on the Internet have given consumers new options to obtain needed medications, sometimes at a more affordable price. This industry is in its infancy, however, and rogue operators pose a threat to the health of Americans. Today we are unveiling a proposal

that sends a signal that we have zero tolerance for prescription drug Internet sites that ignore Federal and State laws and harm patient safety and health. Dispensing medications through the Internet without prescriptions or licenses must stop.

Statement on Housing Vouchers

December 29, 1999

I am pleased to announce that my budget for FY 2001 will include \$690 million for 120,000 new housing vouchers to help America's hard-pressed working families. These housing vouchers subsidize the rents of low income Americans, helping them to move closer to job opportunities. Housing vouchers are a critical part of my administration's efforts to reform welfare, reward work, support working families, and provide affordable housing for low income families.

In today's booming economy, about two-thirds of new jobs are being created in the suburbs, far from where many low income families live. These new housing vouchers will enable families to move closer to a new job, reduce a long commute, or secure more stable housing that

will help them get or keep a job. We should use 32,000 of the 120,000 new housing vouchers to help families moving from welfare to work and to use 18,000 vouchers to help homeless individuals and families secure permanent housing.

Last year we worked with Congress to secure 50,000 housing vouchers, the first in 4 years. This November we fought hard to provide 60,000 additional vouchers for hard-pressed working families in the final FY 2000 budget agreement, after having been eliminated by both the House and Senate bills. As we work on the next budget, I urge Congress to join me in a bipartisan effort to fund new housing vouchers that will make housing more affordable for more working Americans.

Letter to the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Reporting on the Venezuela-United States Tax Convention

December 29, 1999

Dear Mr. Chairman:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Venezuela for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, together with a Protocol, adopted by the Senate

of the United States on November 5, 1999, I hereby certify that:

In connection with Declaration (1), New Venezuelan Tax Law:

- (i) the new Venezuelan tax law has been enacted in accordance with Venezuelan law;
- (ii) the Department of Treasury, in consultation with the Department of State, has

- thoroughly examined the new Venezuelan tax law; and
- (iii) the new Venezuelan tax law is fully consistent with and appropriate to the obligations under the Convention.
- Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: The letter was sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 30.

Message on the Observance of a New Millennium *December 30, 1999*

Warm greetings to all Americans as we welcome a new century and a new millennium. This rare moment in our history is a time for hope and reflection, a time to recognize both the challenges and the opportunities that will face us in the coming years.

We have much to celebrate on this wonderful occasion and many reasons to be proud. Today we are enjoying the longest sustained period of economic growth in our nation's history, offering greater opportunities for every American. We can be rightfully proud, too, that the history of our democracy, with its widening circle of human freedom, still inspires the world and that America continues to serve as a leader in promoting peace and human rights across the globe.

Even as we celebrate our successes, however, we must also acknowledge that we face many challenges in the century ahead. While we are making great strides toward achieving full equality and justice for all Americans, we must ensure that in the coming century all our people live in One America—an America where we are not separated from one another by prejudice, by economic injustice, or by a digital divide.

We must have the vision to use new technology to improve our schools and stir the creativity of our young people; and we must ensure that every school and every child has access to the treasury of electronic resources that lies just beyond our keyboards and computer screens. We must continue our efforts to find cures for the diseases that still afflict us and that ravage many parts of the developing world. And we must put new resources at the disposal of our artists, scholars, and scientists to help them make new discoveries, preserve our historic legacy, and light tomorrow with the fire of their imaginations.

The theme for our national millennial celebration is "Honor the Past—Imagine the Future." By resolving at this moment to make a lasting difference in the lives of others, both in our communities and around the world, we will keep faith with our great past and ensure that America's future will reflect our fundamental ideals of freedom and opportunity for all.

Best wishes for an unforgettable celebration.

BILL CLINTON

Remarks on the Resignation of President Boris Yeltsin of Russia and an Exchange With Reporters *December 31, 1999*

The President. Good morning. Not long ago, I had about a 20-minute phone conversation with President Boris Yeltsin, who today ends his historic tenure as Russia's democratically elected President. Under his leadership, since 1991, the Russian people have faced the unprec-

edented challenge of building a new democracy and a new life after decades of corrosive Communist rule. His lasting achievement has been dismantling the Communist system and creating a vital democratic process within a constitutional framework. The fact that Prime Minister Putin

assumes responsibility today as Acting President, in accordance with the Constitution, is the latest example of President Yeltsin's achievement.

The relationship between the United States and Russia under President Yeltsin has produced genuine progress for both our people. Five thousand strategic nuclear weapons have been dismantled. Our nuclear weapons are no longer targeted at each other. We have worked together to eliminate nuclear weapons from the other states of the former Soviet Union. Russia has withdrawn its troops from the Baltic nations, and now its troops are serving alongside Americans to maintain peace in the Balkans. In fact, Russia was instrumental in achieving the peace agreement in Kosovo.

Of course, we have also had our differences, but the starting point for our relationship has always been how Russia and America can work together to advance our common interests. In that spirit, I look forward to working with Acting President Putin, as the Russian people begin the process of making the transition from one democratically elected President to another.

To President Yeltsin, let me convey my appreciation again for the work we have done together. Hillary and I extend our warmest wishes to him, Naina, and their family.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to Moscow in February, at the invitation of the Prime Minister/Acting President?

The President. I have made no plans to do that yet.

Q. Mr. President, can you share some of your personal recollections of Boris Yeltsin? You seemed to have a warm personal relationship

with him. What did you admire? What are your thoughts about him as a person now?

The President. Well, I liked him because he was always very forthright with me. He always did exactly what he said he would do, and he was willing to take chances to try to improve our relationship, to try to improve democracy in Russia. He took the Russian troops out of the Balkans. He recently agreed to take them out of Moldova and Georgia. We got rid of all those nuclear weapons in the other states of the former Soviet Union. We got rid of thousands of nuclear weapons. He's committed to START II, and I hope it will be ratified by the Russian *Duma* so we can quickly move to START III and reduce our nuclear arsenals even further.

I liked him because I think he genuinely deplored communism. He lived with it; he saw it; and he believed that democracy was the best system. I think it was in every fiber of his being. And we had our arguments; we had our fights; we had our genuine disagreement about our national interests from time to time. But I think that the Russian people are well-served to have a leader who honestly believed that their votes ought to determine who was running the show in Russia and what the future direction of the country should be.

I have to go. I'm sorry.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. on the South Grounds at the White House prior to departure for millennium celebrations. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who became Acting President on President Yeltsin's resignation; and Mr. Yeltsin's wife, Naina.

Statement on the Resignation of President Boris Yeltsin of Russia December 31, 1999

Today President Yeltsin ends his historic tenure as Russia's first democratically elected President.

Under his leadership, since 1991, the Russian people have faced the unprecedented challenge of creating new institutions and building a new life after decades of corrosive Communist rule. His lasting achievement has been dismantling

that Communist system and building new political institutions under democratically elected leaders within a constitutional framework. The fact that Prime Minister Putin assumes responsibility today as Acting President in accordance with the constitution is but the latest example of this achievement.

The relationship between the United States and Russia under President Yeltsin has produced genuine progress for both our people. Five thousand strategic nuclear weapons have been dismantled, and our nuclear weapons no longer are targeted at each other. We have worked together to eliminate nuclear weapons from the other states of the former Soviet Union. Russia has withdrawn its troops from the Baltic nations. Now its troops are serving alongside Americans to maintain the peace in the Balkans, and Russia was instrumental in achieving peace in Kosovo. We have also had our differences, such as on Chechnya. But President Yeltsin and my starting point has always been how Russia and America

can work together to advance our common interests. In this spirit, I look forward to working with Acting President Putin as the Russian people begin the process of making the transition from one democratically elected President to another.

To President Yeltsin, let me convey my appreciation for the work we have done together. Hillary and I extend our warmest wishes to you and your family.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Vladimir Putin who became Acting President on President Yeltsin's resignation.

Remarks at the Opening of the "America's Millennium" Celebration *December 31, 1999*

Thank you very much. Thank you. Good morning. Happy new year. Thank you, Senator Daschle, to other Members of the Congress who are here. Thank you, Mayor Williams, for your kind comments to Hillary and to me and your outstanding leadership in this city. Thank you, Robert Pinsky, for being here today and for opening the ears and eyes and hearts of so many young children to the wonders of poetry. Thank you, Dean Baxter. I want to thank the children's choir and the military band; they were wonderful today—and the singing sergeants who have left. I want to thank Ellen Lovell and the members of our millennial council, and Terry McAuliffe and all those who made it possible for us to have all these wonderful events today. I also want to thank the Lord for this wonderful weather, so we all feel good being out here.

The New Millennium Choir sang "Rising Like the Sun." Their vitality and their voices are living proof that the light may be fading on the 20th century, but the Sun is still rising on America. Even though this is an opening ceremony, what we celebrate did not begin today, and it won't end tomorrow. Two years ago Hillary and I created the White House Millennium Council to bring Americans together, in her words, "to honor our past and imagine our future." Since then, she has hosted Millennium Evenings at the White House with some of our Nation's most gifted scholars and artists, and people all

over the world have participated on the Internet. She has crisscrossed America to save our historical treasures, from Harriet Tubman's home to Thomas Edison's factory to Native American pueblos. This morning we kick off not only a weekend of celebrations but a whole series of events throughout the coming year that will further mark our new millennium.

This is more than a unique moment for our calendar. It is also a unique moment for our country. Our economy is strong; our social fabric is on the mend. We're moving forward on America's remarkable journey of creating a more unified nation, a more just society, a more perfect Union.

There is no better moment to reflect on our hopes and dreams and the gifts we want to leave our children, no better opportunity to open a new chapter of progress and possibility for all people, no better time to join hands and build the one America of our dreams, no better time to be a truly good neighbor to the people of the world who share this smaller and smaller planet of ours.

So as we honor the past, let us truly imagine the future. I hope every single one of you, sometime today, and everyone within the sound of my voice will take just a little time to dream about what you want for your grandchildren and their grandchildren and what you would like the story of the 21st century to be.

Now it is my privilege to present the person who has done more than anyone else in America to help us appreciate and properly celebrate the dawn of the new millennium. Ladies and gentlemen, the First Lady of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. at 12th St. and Constitution Ave., NW. In his remarks,

he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Robert Pinsky, poet laureate; Rev. Nathan D. Baxter, dean, Washington National Cathedral, who delivered the invocation; and Terence McAuliffe, millennium celebration fundraiser. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks at the "Millennium Around the World" Celebration

December 31, 1999

Good afternoon. I must say, after listening to them, I don't know that there's anything I have to add. I want to thank all of you for being here. I thank the First Lady for her conception of this millennium celebration and for all those who helped to make it possible. I thank Secretary Albright for her work for world peace. Governor Gutierrez and the people of Guam, we thank you for sponsoring this event. And we welcome Congressman and Mrs. Underwood, Mrs. Gutierrez and members of your family, Governor. Guam is where America's day begins, you know, and today it's where our millennium begins. I'd also like to thank the Environmental Protection Agency and its Administrator, Carol Browner; the GSA and its Administrator, Dave Barram, who is here with his family; and all others who helped to make this day possible. I'd like to ask you to express our appreciation to the World Children's Choir and the United States Army Brass Quintet. We thank them.

We wanted to spend a part of this day with diplomatic representatives from around the world and with children from around the world to signal the importance of strengthening our global community in the new millennium.

On this day 200 years ago, in 1799, our second President welcomed the 19th century. It then took 6 weeks by boat to get news from Europe. On this day 100 years ago, when President William McKinley marked the start of the 20th century, it took 6 seconds to send a text by telegraph. Today, satellites and the Internet carry our voices and images instantaneously all around the world. Never before have we known as much about each other. Never before have we depended so much on each other. Never before have we had such an opportunity to

move toward what the generations have prayed for, peace on Earth and a better life for all. We must both imagine a brighter future and dedicate ourselves to building it, and I ask you all here today to reaffirm the clear understanding that we must do it together.

Two thousand years ago, the calendar that turns at midnight began with the birth of a child on straw in a stable, with a single, shining star in the sky. It attracted no notice at the time. Today, as we meet in this international center, though all the world is now a part of this millennial calendar change, we must recognize that for more than half the world, because they are not Christians, the number 2000 has less significance: for Muslims, this is the year 1420; for Hindus, it is 1921; for Buddhists, it is 2543; Mayans honor the year 5119; and the Hebrew calendar marks this year as 5760.

So what we celebrate here today is not so much a common calendar of history or faith but a common future for all people of good will, a future of peace and harmony, a future rooted in the forces of freedom and enterprise and globalization and science and technology that have powered so much of the 20th century, but a future which now—now—may reflect timeless lessons as well, the lessons of all religious faiths: Love your neighbor as yourself; do unto others as you would have done to you; do not turn aside the stranger; see the spark of divine inspiration in every person. As long as we have had philosophers and prophets on this Earth, this lesson has been taught. Yet, it still seems the hardest for us to learn.

The past 100 years have seen the victory of freedom over totalitarianism. For that, we can

all be grateful. They have seen us coming together more and more so that it is possible to have a stage with this beautiful, brilliant array of children, and for that, we can all be grateful.

But still all around us, we see the failure to use our freedom wisely, as too many people still give in to primitive hatreds, and we still face the oldest problem of human society: the fear of those who are different from us. History shows that people do tend to be afraid of those who don't look the same or practice religion the same way or come from different tribes or have different lifestyles. Those fears, when ignited and organized by unscrupulous leaders, have led to terrible violence in the modern world. Even in the most open societies, including our own, children who learn to look down and dehumanize those who are different and perhaps to blame them for their own problems continue to grow up to commit awful hate crimes.

Still, we must begin a new century with great hope. Think of this: 100 years ago not a single country in the world recognized the right of all its citizens to choose their leaders and shape their destinies. Now, for the first time in history, more than half the world's people live under governments of their own choosing. Sixty years ago many people thought that nothing could stop dictators from imposing their will on the world through violence. But since then, democratic countries have risen, not just once but time and time again, to defeat fascism, to help nations free themselves from totalitarianism, to help stop racial apartheid and ethnic cleansing, to uphold and advance human rights. In freedom's century, we have learned that open societies are more just, more resilient, more enduring.

Even today, we see our newest discoveries bringing us closer to goals humanity has shared for centuries, to eradicate disease, educate all our children, clean our environment, provide economic support for families, and lift up nations. The forces of science, technology, and globalization have shattered the boundaries of possibility, and in the new century, our achievements will be bounded mostly by the limits on our own imagination, understanding, and wisdom.

There are, to be sure, tremendous challenges ahead. The old problems are there: leaders all too willing to exploit human difference to preserve their own power; places where freedom

still is silenced and basic rights denied; outdated, unnecessary industrial practices endangering our global environment; abject poverty, with more than a billion people living on less than a dollar a day. And then there are the new problems: the organized forces of crime, narcotrafficking, terror; governments too weak to handle the sweeping forces of globalization and their impact on their people; ordinary people across the world who have yet to see the benefits of democracy and free enterprise but have borne the burden of the economic and social changes some can delay but none can avoid.

Still I say again, we must be hopeful. It is a good thing that we are more and more free and more and more interdependent. It is possible to have prosperity while preserving the environment, and it is possible to share prosperity more broadly with those who have been too long denied. It is possible to thwart the organized forces of destruction. In short, it is possible to listen to the children in this room, who come from over 100 nations of the world, and give them a chance to live their dreams.

When we see threats to peace and dignity abroad, we can choose not to speak; we can choose not to act. But no longer can we choose not to know. That is why there was such a similarity in the vision these children from all over the globe shared with us today.

The explosion in information and the technology for getting it to people everywhere at the same time has enabled us to build a common sense of community, that is already taking shape in ways large and small. When there's a flood in Venezuela that kills thousands and thousands of innocent people, when we see the plight of young war victims in Sierra Leone who have lost their limbs, when we see hundreds of thousands of people displaced by ethnic cleansing from their homeland in Kosovo, we can choose to do nothing, but we can't pretend we don't know, and we can no longer shield our conscience or our interest from their impact. So now we care about one another in ways we never did before. On our ever smaller planet, one way or another, sooner or later, what happens anywhere may be felt everywhere.

So I'd like to make a few new year's predictions. In the new century we may not be able to eliminate hateful intolerance, but we will see the rise of healthy intolerance of bigotry, oppression, and abject poverty in our own communities and across the world.

We may not be able to eliminate all the harsh consequences of globalization. But still, we will trade more and travel more and communicate more and learn to do it in ways that advance the lives of ordinary people and lift the quality of the environment.

We may not be able to eliminate all the inadequacies of government and our global institutions, but we will see more and more governments able to protect their people from the harshest side effects of globalization and able to prepare their children—all their children, boys and girls—for the 21st century world; and we will see more—much, much more—cooperations among nations to meet common challenges and seize common opportunities.

In short, the children you see on this stage, in the new century, will become more and more part of the same community, not by giving up their national, tribal, racial, ethnic, and religious differences but by honoring them and by affirming our common humanity and our shared destiny. It is happening already. I say again, you see it in our response to an earthquake in Turkey or a hurricane in the Caribbean.

Earlier this year, the last time so many nations were represented in this room, it was on the 50th anniversary of NATO when the Allies gathered there to stand against ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Today, from southeastern Europe to the Middle East to South Africa to Northern Ireland to East Timor, the century is ending with a clear message that there is no place in the 21st century for power rooted in hatred and dehumanization. People everywhere want peace and harmony and the chance to live with their dreams not at their neighbor's expense but, instead, with their neighbor's help.

We owe it to the children here to begin this new millennium ready to take on our problems together, an unrelenting battle against poverty, sharing the promise of the new economy, leaving no one behind, deepening our democracies, preserving our shared earthly home. Today we celebrate more than the changing of the calendar. We celebrate the opportunity we have to make this a true changing of the times, a gateway to greater peace and freedom, for prosperity and harmony. If we listen to our children, they will tell us the future we should build.

Last week I received a letter from a sixth-grade class in northeastern Connecticut, who knew I would be speaking to you here today. Here's what they said: "Never forget, God didn't

put us here to fight, but to live in harmony. If we can help our children, our future leaders to find their way to love for all mankind and to teach them there is no future in racism, then we can find that the success and glory of world peace will grow and blossom into a never-dying flower."

I said at the opening of my remarks that 2000 years ago those of us who are Christians believe the new era began with a bright light in the sky. You should all know that when darkness falls tonight for the very last time in this millennium, the brightest light in the sky will be the constellation Orion. From December to April, it is the only star system visible from every inhabited point on Earth. Scientists tell us that the light from one of those stars began its journey almost exactly 1000 years ago.

In the time it took the light from Orion to reach Earth, Leif Erikson sailed; Gutenberg printed; Galileo dared; Shakespeare wrote; Elizabeth ruled; Mozart composed; Jefferson drafted; Bolivar liberated; Lincoln preserved; Einstein dreamed; Ataturk built; Roosevelt led; Gandhi preached; Mother Teresa healed; Mandela triumphed. A pretty good space of traveling light.

Now that light shines upon all of us. For all the billions of people who came before, it has been left to this generation to lead the world into a new millennium, to use our freedom wisely, to walk away from war and hatred toward love and peace. When people look back on this day a hundred years from now, may they say that is exactly what we did, that in the 21st century our children went further, reached higher, dreamed bigger, and accomplished more because love and peace proved more powerful than hatred and war.

One of America's most popular authors of children's books is Theodor Geisel, who wrote under the name of Dr. Seuss. One of the very last books he wrote was called, "Oh, The Places You'll Go." I want to end today with words he wrote in that book, looking ahead at the world our children should inherit. Listen to this and help to make it so. "And will you succeed? Yes, you will, indeed, ninety-eight and three-quarters percent guaranteed. Kid, you'll move mountains. So be your name Buxbaum or Bixby or Bray or Mordecai Ali Van Allen O'Shea, you're off to great places. Today is your day. Your mountain is waiting, so get on your way."

Good luck to the children here, and God-speed in the new millennium.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Atrium at the Ronald W. Reagan International

Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Carl T.C. Gutierrez of Guam and his wife, Geraldine; and Delegate Robert A. Underwood of Guam, and his wife, Lorraine. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Statement on the Death of Elliot Richardson

December 31, 1999

Hillary and I were saddened to learn that Elliot Richardson died today in Boston. Elliot Richardson was a man of uncommon integrity, who put the Nation's interests first even when

the personal cost was very high. He was an unparalleled public servant, a lawyer, a diplomat, a soldier, and a prosecutor. America was honored by his service, and we will miss him.

Remarks at a Dinner for the Millennium Celebration Creators

December 31, 1999

Thank you so much. Good evening. It's a real honor for Hillary and Chelsea and me to welcome all of you to the White House. Tonight I rise to offer three toasts. The first is to all of you. It is an honor to turn this page in history with you because so many of you, each in your own way, have contributed so indelibly to the narrative of this American century.

The second toast I offer is to my wife, for it was she who inspired us all to welcome the new millennium by honoring our past and imagining our future. Over the past 2 years leading up to this wonderful night, no one has done more to infuse this milestone with national purpose. And I am very grateful to her and to all those who have helped.

The third toast is, in a way, the most daunting, because I'm supposed to say something profound to a thousand years of history in 2 or 3 minutes. In the State of the Union I get a whole hour—[laughter]—to talk about a single year, and usually I run over. [Laughter] Tonight we rise to the mountaintop of a new millennium. Behind us we see a great expanse of American experience and before us vast frontiers of possibility still to be explored.

I think we would all agree that we are most fortunate to be alive at this moment in history. We end this century and the millennium with

soaring optimism. Never before has our Nation enjoyed, at once, so much prosperity, social progress, and national self-confidence, with so little internal crisis or external threat. Never before have we had such a blessed opportunity and, therefore, such a profound responsibility to build the more perfect Union of our Founders' dreams.

When our children's children look back on this century, they will see that this hopeful and promising time was earned by the bravery and hard work of men and women who, in the words of our great poet laureate Robert Pinsky, did not merely celebrate our oldest ideals like trophies under glass but kept them bright with use. They will see this moment was earned through the hard-won fight for freedom, from the beachheads of Normandy to the buses of Montgomery to the villages of Kosovo. At home and abroad, it has been our great privilege to advance the light of human liberty.

They will see this moment was earned through the drive for discovery. At the outset of the century, not even the most farsighted of our forebears could have predicted all the miracles of science that have emerged from our labs: antibiotics and vaccines, silicon chips and

the Internet, microscopes that envision the infinitesimal, and telescopes that elucidate the infinite, soon-to-be complete blueprint for human life itself.

And they will see that this moment was earned through a passion for creativity. National power may spring from economic and military might, but the greatness of a nation emanates from the life of the mind and the stirrings of the soul. So many of you have contributed to that greatness, and we are all grateful.

In this century, American artists of the page and the canvas, the stage and screen, have drawn from our diverse palate of cultural traditions and given the world a great gift of uniquely American creations with universal and timeless appeal.

The new century and the new millennium will bring a cascade of new triumphs. We see new hope for peace in lands bedeviled by ancient hatreds, new technologies both opening the storehouse of human knowledge for people across the globe and offering the promise of alleviating the poverty that still haunts so many millions of our children. We see scientists rapidly approaching the day when newborns can expect to live well past 100 years, and children will know "cancer" only as a constellation of stars. But by far, my most solemn prayer for this new millennium is that we will find, some-

how, the strength and wisdom in our hearts to keep growing together, first, as one America and then, as one people on this ever smaller planet we all call home.

If you look at the glowing diversity of race and background that illuminates America's house on this evening, a vivid illustration, we see that human capacity is distributed equally across the human landscape. I cannot help but think how different America is, how different history is, and how much better, because those of you in this room and those you represent were able to imagine, to invent, to inspire. And by the same token, I cannot help but dream of how much different and how much better our future can be if we can give every child the same chance to live up to his or her God-given potential and to live together as brothers and sisters, celebrating our common humanity and our shared destiny.

This is the future I hope every American will take a moment to imagine on this millennial evening. This is the future I pray we can all join together to build. So I ask you to join me in a toast to yourselves, to the First Lady, and to our shared future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House.

Remarks at the "America's Millennium" Celebration

December 31, 1999

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we celebrate. The change of centuries, the dawning of a new millennium are now just minutes away. We celebrate the past. We have honored America's remarkable achievements, struggles, and triumphs in the 20th century. We celebrate the future, imagining an even more remarkable 21st century.

As we marvel at the changes of the last hundred years, we dream of what changes the next hundred and the next thousand will bring. And as powerful as our memories are, our dreams must be even stronger. For when our memories outweigh our dreams, we become old, and it is the eternal destiny of America to remain forever young, always reaching beyond, always be-

coming, as our Founders pledged, "a more perfect Union." So we Americans must not fear change. Instead, let us welcome it, embrace it, and create it.

The great story of the 20th century is the triumph of freedom and free people, a story told in the drama of new immigrants, the struggles for equal rights, the victories over totalitarianism, the stunning advances in economic well-being, in culture, in health, in space and telecommunications, and in building a world in which more than half the people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time in all history. We must never forget the meaning of the 20th century or the gifts of

those who worked and marched, who fought and died for the triumph of freedom.

So as we ring in this new year, in a new century, in a new millennium, we must, now and always, echo Dr. King in the words of the old American hymn: "Let freedom ring."

If the story of the 20th century is the triumph of freedom, what will the story of the 21st century be? Let it be the triumph of freedom wisely used, to bring peace to a world in which we honor our differences and, even more, our common humanity. Such a triumph will require great efforts from us all.

It will require us to stand against the forces of hatred and bigotry, terror and destruction. It will require us to continue to prosper, to alleviate poverty, to better balance the demands of work and family, and to serve each of us in our communities. It will require us to take better care of our environment. It will require us to make further breakthroughs in science and technology, to cure dread diseases, heal broken bodies, lengthen life, and unlock secrets from global warming to the black holes in the universe. And perhaps most important, it will require us to share with our fellow Americans and, increasingly, with our fellow citizens of the world the economic benefits of globalization, the political benefits of democracy and human rights, the educational and health benefits of all things modern, from the Internet to the genetic encyclopedia to the mysteries beyond our solar system.

Now, we may not be able to eliminate all hateful intolerance, but we can develop a healthy intolerance of bigotry, oppression, and abject poverty. We may not be able to eliminate

all the harsh consequences of globalization, but we can communicate more and travel more and trade more, in a way that lifts the lives of ordinary working families everywhere and the quality of our global environment. We may not be able to eliminate all the failures of government and international institutions, but we can certainly strengthen democracy so all children are prepared for the 21st century world and protected from its harshest side effects.

And we can do so much more to work together, to cooperate among ourselves, to seize the problems and the opportunities of this ever small planet we all call home. In short, if we want the story of the 21st century to be the triumph of peace and harmony, we must embrace our common humanity and our shared destiny.

Now, we're just moments from that new millennium. Two centuries ago, as the framers were crafting our Constitution, Benjamin Franklin was often seen in Independence Hall looking at a painting of the Sun low on the horizon. When, at long last, the Constitution finally was signed, Mr. Franklin said, "I have often wondered whether that Sun was rising or setting. Today I have the happiness to know it is a rising Sun." Well, two centuries later, we know the Sun will always rise on America, as long as each new generation lights the fire of freedom. Our children are ready. So again, the torch is passed to a new century of young Americans.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial.

Appendix A—Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this book.

July 1

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom concerning the Northern Ireland peace process. In the evening, he attended the U.S.-Germany Women's World Cup soccer game at Jack Kent Cooke Stadium in Landover, MD.

The President announced his intention to nominate Phillip R. Anderson to be a member of the Mississippi River Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Cohen to be Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education at the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate James B. Cunningham to be U.S. Deputy Representative to the United Nations, with rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

The President announced his intention to nominate Earl E. Devaney to be Inspector General at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate Harriet L. Elam to be Ambassador to Senegal.

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Richard Fredericks to be Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein.

The President announced his intention to nominate Barbara J. Griffiths to be Ambassador to Iceland.

The President announced the nomination of Curt Hebert, Jr., to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory Lee Johnson to be Ambassador to Swaziland.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jimmy J. Kolker to be Ambassador to Burkina Faso.

The President announced his intention to nominate Susan Ness to be member of the Federal Communications Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sylvia Gaye Stanfield to be Ambassador to Brunei.

The President announced his intention to nominate Clifford Gregory Stewart to be General Counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Raymond D. Nasher as member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

July 2

In the afternoon, the President participated in a swearing-in ceremony in the Oval Office for newly appointed Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence H. Summers.

July 3

The President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India concerning the situation in Kashmir.

July 4

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India concerning the situation in Kashmir. Later, he made brief remarks on the South Lawn before the fireworks display.

July 5

In the morning, the President traveled to Hazard, KY. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had a telephone conversation with Northern Ireland Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble concerning the Northern Ireland peace process.

In the afternoon, the President toured the Whispering Pines neighborhood, where he talked with residents. Later, he toured the Mid-South Electric Co. In the evening, the President traveled to Memphis, TN.

July 6

In the morning, the President traveled to Clarksdale, MS, where he toured local businesses. In the afternoon, he traveled to East St. Louis, IL, where he visited a Walgreens drugstore.

In the evening, the President traveled to Rapid City, SD. Later, he toured Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.

The President announced the nomination of Q. Todd Dickinson to be Assistant Secretary and Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to appoint George Becker and to reappoint Marc S. Tucker as members of the National Skill Standards Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Amy W. Meyer as a member of the Board of Directors of the Presidio Trust.

July 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Pine Ridge, SD. In the afternoon, he traveled to Phoenix,

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AZ, where he toured Chicanos Por La Causa, Inc., and the La Canasta Mexican Food Products factory. In the evening, the President traveled to Los Angeles, CA.

The White House announced that the President will meet with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel on July 15.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Des Moines, IA, on July 16.

July 8

In the morning, the President toured the Transportation Academy Youth Training Facility at Alain Leroy Locke High School. In the afternoon, he traveled to Anaheim, CA.

July 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Torrance, CA, and in the afternoon, he returned to Los Angeles, CA.

The President announced his intention to nominate Tibor P. Nagy, Jr., to be Ambassador to Ethiopia.

The President announced his intention to appoint William K. Reilly as a member of the Board of Directors of the Presidio Trust.

July 10

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Pasadena, CA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

July 12

In the morning, the President met with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia in the State Dining Room for a working visit.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jared L. Cohon as Chair and member of the Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board.

July 13

In the morning, the President traveled to Miami Beach, FL. In the evening, he traveled to Coral Gables, FL, and later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Lee Haney as Chair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.

July 14

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Baltimore, MD, and later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate David N. Greenlee to be Ambassador to Paraguay.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ronald Morris as a member of the National Drought Policy Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy M. Zirkin as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Little Rock, AR, on August 6–10 and September 22.

July 15

In the afternoon, the President met with Crown Prince Khalifa bin Zayid of the United Arab Emirates in the Oval Office.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Lansing, MI, on July 22.

The White House announced that the President welcomed the successful outcome of talks between Argentina and the United Kingdom concerning the Falklands/Malvinas and other South Atlantic islands.

July 16

In the morning, the President traveled to Des Moines, IA. In the evening, he attended a dinner for Senator Tom Harkin at a private residence. Later, the President returned to Camp David, MD.

The President announced his intention to nominate Andrew Fish to be Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations at the Department of Agriculture.

July 18

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

July 19

In the afternoon, the President met with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel in the Oval Office and then in the Cabinet Room.

The President announced his intention to nominate William B. Taylor, Jr., for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Coordinator for U.S. Assistance to the New Independent States of the former Soviet Union.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, on July 30 to participate in the Southeast Europe Stability Pact Summit.

July 20

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffrey A. Bader to be Ambassador to Namibia.

The President announced his intention to appoint Curt Smith as Commissioner of the Pacific Salmon Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Board of Advisers on Tribal Colleges and Universities:

Alison R. Bernstein;
Lionel Bordeaux;
Tom Colonese;
Verna Fowler;
Tommy Lewis, Jr.;
Joe McDonald;
Joseph Martin;
Gerald (Carty) Monette;

Debra Norris;
Janine Pease-Pretty on Top;
Anne C. Petersen;
Faith Ruth Roessel;
Karl Stauber;
Richard Trudell; and
Patrick Williams.

The President declared a major disaster in Nevada and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flash flooding on July 8–16.

July 21

The White House announced that the President and Hillary Clinton will travel to New York City on July 23, to attend the private memorial service for John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Carolyn Bessette Kennedy.

July 22

In the morning, the President traveled to Lansing, MI, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Norman A. Wulf to be Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation with the rank of Ambassador at the Department of State.

The White House announced that the President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on July 2 and continuing.

July 23

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to New York City to attend the private memorial service for John F. Kennedy, Jr., and Carolyn Bessette Kennedy at the Church of St. Thomas More. In the afternoon, the President and Chelsea Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President traveled to Cincinnati, OH, and later, he traveled to Aspen, CO.

July 24

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Rabat, Morocco, arriving the following day.

July 25

The President met briefly with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority at the Royal Palace in Rabat. The President and Hillary Clinton then met briefly with King Mohammed VI of Morocco, successor to King Hassan II, before attending the funeral of King Hassan.

During the day, the President met separately with the following foreign leaders:

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria,
President Mustafizur Rahman of Bangladesh,

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt,
President Jacques Chirac of France,
Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel,
King Abdullah II of Jordan,
Crown Prince Saad al-Sabah of Kuwait,
President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria,
Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority,
President Abdou Diouf of Senegal,
President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, and
President Ali Abdallah Salih of Yemen.

In the evening, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

July 26

The White House announced that the President announced the release of Treasury Department regulations implementing the administration's new humanitarian-based food and medicine sanctions policy.

July 27

The President announced his intention to nominate Anne H. Chasser to be Assistant Commissioner for Patents and Trademarks at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to appoint Paige E. Reffe as a member of the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The President announced his intention to appoint J. Shelby Bryan as a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board.

July 28

The President announced his intention to nominate Martin N. Baily to be Chair and member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dorian Vanessa Weaver to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate James G. Huse, Jr., to be Inspector General at the Social Security Administration.

The President announced the nomination of Thomas B. Leary to be a member of the Federal Trade Commission.

The President declared a major disaster in Minnesota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, winds, and flooding on July 4 and continuing.

July 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Aviano Air Base, Italy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Susan M. Wachter to be Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The President announced his intention to nominate Zell Miller to be a member of the Board of Directors for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

July 30

In the morning, the President traveled to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, where he met with Prime Minister Milorad Dodik of Republika Srpska and Prime Minister Edhem Bicakcic and Deputy Prime Minister Dragan Covic of the Federation Government (Muslim and Croat) at Zetra Stadium. In the afternoon, he attended the Stability Pact summit meeting at the stadium. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward W. Stimpson to be the U.S. Representative on the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert H. Griffin and Sam Angel to be members of the Mississippi River Commission.

August 2

The President announced his intention to nominate Neal S. Wolin to be General Counsel at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stephen D. Van Beek to be Associate Deputy Secretary and Director of Intermodalism for the Department of Transportation.

August 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kathryn M. Turman to be Director of the Office for Victims of Crime at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate David J. Hayes to be Deputy Secretary at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael J. Frazier to be Assistant Secretary for Governmental Affairs at the Department of Transportation.

The President directed the Department of Health and Human Services to release \$55 million in Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program emergency funds for nine States affected by the ongoing heat wave.

The White House announced that the President will meet with Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey on September 28.

August 4

The President announced the nomination of Ivan Itkin to be Director of the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management at the Department of Energy.

The President announced the nomination of Gregory L. Rohde to be Assistant Secretary for Communications and Information at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced his intention to appoint Cecille Pulitzer as a member of the Library of Congress Trust Fund Board.

August 5

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol J. Parry to be a member of the Board of Governors for the Federal Reserve System.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul Hill to be Chair and member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate John W. Marshall to be Director of the U.S. Marshals Service at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate John J. Goglia to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dan Herman Renberg to be a member of the Board of Directors at the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The White House announced that the President will award the Presidential Medal of Freedom to the following individuals during the week of August 9:

Lloyd M. Bentsen;
Edgar M. Bronfman, Sr.;
Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter;
Evy Dubrow;
Sister M. Isolina Ferre;
Gerald R. Ford;
Oliver White Hill;
Max Kampelman; and
Edgar Wayburn.

August 6

In the morning, the President traveled to Little Rock, AR.

The President announced the nomination of Sylvia V. Baca to be Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced the nomination of Richard A. Meserve to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The President will designate him as Chair upon appointment.

The President announced the nomination of George Farr to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President announced the nomination of Linda Morgan to be a member of the Surface Transportation Board. The President will designate her as Chair upon appointment.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roger W. Ferguson, Jr., to be Vice Chair of the Board of Governors for the Federal Reserve System.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sam Kathryn Campana as a member of the National Drought Policy Commission.

The White House announced that the President will attend the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

(APEC) Leaders Meeting on September 12–13 in Auckland, New Zealand.

The White House announced that the President will meet with Prime Minister Kjell Magne Bondevik of Norway on October 15.

August 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Helena, AR. In the afternoon, he returned to Little Rock, AR.

August 8

In the afternoon, the President traveled to St. Louis, MO. In the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

August 9

In the morning, the President traveled to Ft. Myer, VA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC. In the afternoon, the President traveled to Atlanta, GA, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joshua Gotbaum to be Controller at the Office of Management and Budget.

The White House announced that the President named J. Terry Edmonds as Assistant to the President and Director of Speechwriting.

August 10

In an early evening ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Richard Sezibera of Rwanda, Hugo Noe Pino of Honduras, Joao Alberto Bacelar da Rocha Paris of Portugal, Rubens Antonio Barbosa of Brazil, Ahmed Ould Khalifa Ould Jiddou of Mauritania, George Saliba of Malta, Ernesto Maceda of the Philippines, Alfonso Rivero Monsalve of Peru, and Juan Esteban Aguirre Martinez of Paraguay.

August 11

The White House announced that the President accepted an invitation from Prime Minister Jean Chretien for a working visit in Canada on October 8.

August 12

In the evening, the President met with Jewish leaders in the Cabinet Room.

August 13

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Camp David, MD.

August 15

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to New Rochelle, NY, and in the afternoon, they returned to Camp David, MD.

August 16

In the morning, the President traveled to Kansas City, MO, and in the afternoon, he returned to Camp David, MD.

The President declared a major disaster in Utah and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a tornado, severe thunderstorms, and hail on August 11.

The President declared a major disaster in Wisconsin and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, straight-line winds, and flooding July 4 through July 31.

August 17

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard Brown as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

August 18

The President announced his intention to nominate Jay W. Johnson to be Director of the Mint at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to appoint Raj Reddy and Irving Wladawsky-Berger as Co-Chairs of the President's Information Technology Advisory Committee.

August 19

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Martha's Vineyard, MA. In the evening, they attended a birthday celebration for the President at the residence of Vernon Jordan.

The President announced his intention to appoint Carol A. Cartwright as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

The White House announced that the President appointed Deputy Assistant Attorney General Beth Nolan as Assistant to the President and Counsel to the President beginning in September.

August 20

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Nantucket, MA. In the evening, they returned to Martha's Vineyard, MA.

The President declared a major disaster in Nebraska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding August 6 through August 9.

August 21

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Nantucket, MA. In the evening, they returned to Martha's Vineyard, MA.

The President had a telephone conversation with Senator Strom Thurmond concerning Mr. Thurmond's release from the hospital.

August 22

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local

recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding caused by Hurricane Bret on August 21 and continuing.

August 24

The President announced his intention to nominate Willene A. Johnson to be U.S. Executive Director of the African Development Bank.

August 26

The President declared a major disaster in Minnesota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe ice storms, flooding, and heavy rains March 1 through May 30.

August 27

The White House announced that the President announced the appointment of former U.S. Representative Harry Johnston as Special Envoy for Sudan.

August 28

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to East Hampton, NY.

August 29

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Bridgehampton, NY.

August 30

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Syracuse, NY, and in the afternoon, they traveled to Skaneateles, NY.

August 31

In the evening, the President visited Democratic Party fundraiser Terence McAuliffe's mother, Millie, at the St. Camillus Nursing Home.

The President had separate telephone conversations with Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright concerning her upcoming trip to the Middle East and with Prime Minister Antonio Guterres of Portugal concerning the elections in East Timor.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Norfolk, VA, on September 6.

September 1

The President announced his intention to appoint Stanislaus A. Blejwas, Susan Estrich, Benjamin Meed, and Menachem Z. Rosensaft as members of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint John H. Dalton, Peter J. Kadzik, and Martha Polan Landsman as members of the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President declared a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe fires on August 24 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State

and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Dennis on August 29 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on August 20–21.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by extreme fire hazards on August 1 and continuing.

The White House announced that the President has named Mark F. Lindsay as Assistant to the President for Management and Administration and Bradley J. Kiley as Deputy Assistant to the President for Management and Administration.

The White House announced that the President will meet with President Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia on September 23.

September 2

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Auburn, NY, and later returned to Skaneateles, NY.

The White House announced that the President and Hillary Clinton have entered into a contract to purchase a home in Chappaqua, NY.

September 3

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Camp David, MD.

The White House announced that the President announced the appointment of Robert A. Bradtke as Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.

The White House announced that the President announced the appointment of Alfred H. Moses as Special Presidential Emissary for Cyprus.

September 6

In the morning, the President traveled to Norfolk, VA. In the afternoon, he participated in a classroom renovation project at Coleman Place Elementary School. Later, the President traveled to Newport News, VA. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President had separate telephone conversations with Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia concerning the situation in East Timor.

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Dennis and tornadoes on August 27 and continuing.

September 7

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Olney, MD, where he read to a first grade class and visited a third grade history class at Brooke Grove Elementary School. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Adm. Joseph W. Prueher to be U.S. Ambassador to China.

September 8

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia on U.S.-Russian relations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda Lee Aaker, Edward L. Ayers, Pedro G. Castillo, Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, and Theodore W. Striggles to be members of the National Council on the Humanities.

September 9

In the evening, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Auckland, New Zealand, arriving on September 11.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sim Farar to be U.S. Representative to the 54th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Dennis on August 29 and continuing.

September 10

The President announced his intention to nominate John F. Potter to be a member of the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences at the Department of Defense.

The President announced his intention to nominate William B. Bader to be Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs at the Department of State.

September 11

In the morning, after crossing the international dateline, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton arrived in Auckland, New Zealand.

September 12

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton met with crews participating in the America's Cup and toured the *America True* at Hobson Wharf at the New Zealand National Maritime Museum. Later, the President had a telephone conversation with Serena Williams to congratulate her on winning the U.S. Open tennis tournament.

In the afternoon, the President met separately with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia in the Merlion Room at the Stamford Plaza Hotel and Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. Later, he attended meetings of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit at the Carlton Hotel. In the evening, the President attended an APEC dinner in the townhall.

September 14

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Queenstown, New Zealand.

The President declared an emergency in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area impacted by Hurricane Floyd on September 14 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area impacted by Hurricane Floyd on September 14 and continuing.

The White House announced that the President will address the 54th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City on September 21.

September 15

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Christchurch, New Zealand. There, the President toured the International Antarctic Centre. In the evening, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Hickam Air Force Base, HI, arriving in the morning of September 15 after crossing the international dateline. They then returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ray Martinez as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sheryl Dicker and Patricia T. Russell as members of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sally Katzen as Chair of the Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise.

The President announced his intention to appoint C. Michael Armstrong as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President declared an emergency in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area impacted by Hurricane Floyd on September 14 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 15 and continuing.

September 16

The President declared a major disaster in North Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 15 and continuing.

September 17

The President announced his intention to appoint Steve Owens as a member of the Joint Public Advisory Committee of the Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Theresa Trujague as a member of the Advisory Council of the Border Environment Cooperation Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sheryl Dicker and Patricia T. Russell as members of the President's Committee on Mental Retardation.

The President announced his intention to appoint C. Michael Armstrong as a member of the President's

National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sally Katzen as Chair of the Interagency Committee on Women's Business Enterprise.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mary Carlin Yates to be Ambassador to Burundi.

The President declared an emergency in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

September 18

The President declared a major disaster in Virginia and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in New Jersey and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

September 19

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

September 20

In the morning, the President traveled to Raleigh, NC, where he was briefed by Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., at the airport. In the afternoon, he traveled to Tarboro, NC, where he toured areas damaged by Hurricane Floyd. Later, the President returned to Washington, DC.

September 21

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, where he met separately with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and President Ismail Omar Guelleh of Djibouti at the United Nations.

In the afternoon, the President met separately at the United Nations with the following foreign leaders:

Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia,
President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa,
President Carlos Saul Menem of Argentina,
President Benjamin William Mkapa of Tanzania,
President Andres Pastrana of Colombia, and
President Hugo Chavez Frias of Venezuela.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory A. Baer to be Assistant Secretary for Financial Markets at the Department of the Treasury.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ira Berlin and Evelyn Edson to be members of the National Council on the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to appoint David Berger, Lanny A. Breuer, and Nan H. Rich to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

The President announced his intention to appoint William C. Oldaker as a member of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint W. Robert Connor as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jeremy Bernard to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The President announced the appointment of Alan Philip Larson as a member of the Board of Directors for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President declared a major disaster in South Carolina and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 14 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Delaware and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 15–17.

September 22

The President announced his intention to appoint Shirley J. Humphrey to the National Nutrition Monitoring Advisory Council.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Pennsylvania and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe flash flooding associated with Tropical Depression Dennis on September 6–7.

The President declared a major disaster in New Mexico and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on July 16–August 7.

The White House announced that President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria will make an official working visit to Washington, DC, on October 28.

September 23

The President announced his intention to nominate Skila Harris and Glenn L. McCullough, Jr., to be members of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate William A. Halter to be Deputy Commissioner of the Social Security Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gerald V. Poje to be a member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Stapleton Roy to be Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research at the State Department.

The President declared a major disaster in Connecticut and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by high winds, heavy rains, and flooding associated with Tropical Storm Floyd on September 16 and continuing.

September 24

The President announced his intention to nominate A.J. Eggenberger and Jessie M. Roberson to be members of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

The President declared a major disaster in Maryland and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16–20.

The White House announced that the President named Baltimore City Police Commissioner Thomas Frazier as Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) at the Justice Department.

September 25

In the morning, the President traveled to Bethesda, MD, for his annual physical at the National Naval Medical Center. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

September 27

In the morning, the President traveled to New Orleans, LA, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Frank H. Cruz and Ernest J. Wilson III to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard H. Brown as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Sara Castro-Klaren, Hoyt H. Purvis, and Lee Williams to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Canada on October 8, to address the Forum of Federations in Mont Tremblant and to meet with Prime Minister Jean Chretien in Ottawa.

The White House announced that the President will attend the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, on November 18–19, and will visit Bulgaria before the summit and Italy and Greece after the summit.

September 28

The President announced his intention to nominate Charles Manatt to be Ambassador to the Dominican Republic.

The President announced his intention to nominate Avis Thayer Bohlen to be Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Arms Control at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan C. Kessler and LeGree S. Daniels to be members of the U.S. Postal Service Board of Governors.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ronnie Fern Liebowitz as a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Board of Visitors.

September 29

The President announced his intention to appoint Richard N. Zare as Chair and Sandra M. Faber and Jay Patel as members of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science.

The President announced his intention to appoint Marvin E. Johnson and John G. Wofford as members of the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

September 30

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Palisades, NY, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph R. Crapa to be Assistant Administrator for Legislative and Public Affairs for the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint John Gage, Nancy E. Pfund, and Susan R. Collins as members of the Web-Based Education Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Martin E. Marty as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

October 1

In the morning, the President traveled to Las Vegas, NV, and in the afternoon, he traveled to Palo Alto, CA.

October 2

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Beverly Hills, CA, and in the evening, he traveled to Brentwood, CA.

October 3

In the morning, the President traveled to Beverly Hills, CA, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

October 4

The President announced his intention to nominate Alphonso Maldon, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cornelius P. O'Leary to be a member of the National Security Education Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate John K. Veroneau to be Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Roy E. Barnes to be a member of the National Drought Policy Commission.

October 5

The White House announced that the President met with Senate Finance Committee Chairman William V. Roth, Jr., and ranking Democratic Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan in the Oval Office to discuss Medicare reform.

October 6

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald Stuart Hays to be U.S. Representative to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador.

October 7

In the morning, the President traveled to New York City, and in the evening, he traveled to Ottawa, Canada.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jeanne P. Nathan to the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

October 8

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Mont-Tremblant, Canada. Later, he met with Premier Lucien Bouchard of Quebec. In the evening, the President traveled to Chicago, IL.

The President announced his intention to nominate Alan P. Larson to be Under Secretary for Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol Moseley-Braun to be U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand.

The President announced his intention to nominate Amy L. Comstock to be Director of the Office of Government Ethics.

The President announced his intention to appoint Marc H. Morial as a member of the Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission.

October 9

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

October 10

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

October 12

In the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC. In the afternoon, he met with King Abdullah II of Jordan.

October 13

In the morning, the President traveled to George Washington National Forest, VA, and in the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jennifer L. Hernandez as a member of the Board of Directors of the Presidio Trust.

October 14

The President announced his intention to appoint Kumiki Gibson as a member of the District of Columbia Commission on Judicial Disabilities and Tenure.

October 15

In the morning, the President met with Prime Minister Kjell Bondevik of Norway.

The President announced his intention to nominate Herschelle S. Challenor to be a member of the National Security Education Board.

The President announced the nomination of Charles L. Kolbe to the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board.

The President declared a major disaster in Arizona and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, and high winds on September 14–23.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Irene on October 14 and continuing.

October 18

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Newark, NJ. In the evening, he traveled to Elizabeth, NJ, and later returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in New Hampshire and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Floyd on September 16–18.

October 19

In the afternoon, the President met with President Mireya Moscoso of Panama in the Oval Office.

In the evening, the President met with congressional leaders concerning the budget. Later, he attended a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee dinner at Sam & Harry's Restaurant and a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee dinner at a private residence.

The President announced his intention to nominate Linda J. Bilmes to be Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Administration at the Department of Commerce.

October 20

The President announced his intention to appoint Frances Ann Ulmer as a member of the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Jan A. Hartke as a member of the Enterprise for the Americas Board.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Irene on October 14 and continuing.

October 21

In the afternoon, the President met with former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Marc B. Nathanson to be a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

October 22

The White House announced that the President will travel to Oslo, Norway, on November 1–2 for a state visit, at the invitation of King Harald V.

October 25

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New York City. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Senators Edward M. Kennedy and Orrin G. Hatch and U.S. Circuit Court Judge Morris (Buzz) Arnold as members of the Board of Trustees of the James Madison Memorial Fellowship Foundation.

October 26

The President announced his intention to nominate James D. (J.D.) Bindenagel for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure as Special Envoy for Holocaust Issues.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomas A. Fry III to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management at the Department of the Interior.

The White House announced that the President will visit Greece on November 13–15 and Turkey on November 15–17, before attending the summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Istanbul, Turkey, on November 17–19. Following the summit, he will visit Florence, Italy, November 20–21 and Bulgaria, November 21–23.

October 27

In the morning, the President met with European Commission President Romano Prodi in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bernard J. Hansen as Commissioner of the U.S. Section of the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission.

October 28

In the morning, the President met with President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria in the Oval Office, and in the afternoon, they met again in the Cabinet Room.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bobby L. Roberts to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

The President announced his intention to nominate Martin S. Indyk to be Ambassador to Israel.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward S. Walker, Jr., to be Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State.

October 29

In the morning, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA. In the afternoon, he traveled to Atlanta, GA. En route, he had separate telephone conversations with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and President Robert Kocharian of Armenia. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate N. Cinnamon Dornsife to be the U.S. Executive Director to the Asian Development Bank with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bruce A. Morrison to be Chairman and member of the Federal Housing Finance Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate J. Timothy O'Neill to be a member of the Federal Housing Finance Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anthony S. Harrington to be Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

October 30

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Providence, RI, to attend the funeral service for Senator John H. Chafee, and in the afternoon, they returned to Washington, DC.

October 31

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Oslo, Norway, arriving the following morning.

November 1

In the afternoon, the President met with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel in the Holmenkollen Room II at the Radisson Plaza Hotel.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael G. Rossmann and Daniel Simberloff to be members of the National Science Board.

The President announced his intention to reappoint Patrick D. Cannon and June I. Kailes as members of the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board.

November 2

In the afternoon, the President met with Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia in the Library Room at City Hall.

The President had separate telephone conversations with Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky; Lt. Gov. Ronnie Musgrove of Mississippi; Mayor-elect Bart Peterson of Indianapolis, IN; Mayor Woodrow Stanley of Flint, MI; Mayor-elect Michael Coleman of Columbus, OH; Mayor-elect John F. Street of Philadelphia, PA; Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia, chairman, Democratic National Committee; and B.J. Thornberry, executive director, Democratic Governors Association.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Revis Ortique to be U.S. Alternate Representative

to the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Irwin Belk to be Alternate Delegate for the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The President announced his intention to nominate Earl Anthony Wayne to be Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gail S. Schoettler for rank of Ambassador as head of the U.S. delegation to the World Radio Conference.

November 3

In the afternoon, the President met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Prince Sultan of Saudi Arabia in the Oval Office.

In the evening, the President met with former Senator George J. Mitchell in the Residence at the White House.

November 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Newark, NJ. In the afternoon, he traveled to Hartford, CT, where he toured the El Mercado marketplace.

In the evening, the President was interviewed by Larry McQuillan of USA Today at the Artist's Collective. Later, he traveled to Little Rock, AR.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol J. Carmody to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Valdis Mezainis as a member of the Enterprise for the Americas Board.

November 5

In the morning, the President traveled to Hermitage, AR, where he toured the Hermitage Tomato Cooperative Association.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Chicago, IL, and in the evening, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

November 8

In the afternoon, the President met with Prime Minister Milos Zeman of the Czech Republic and Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark L. Schneider to be Director of the Peace Corps.

The President announced his intention to nominate Juanita Sims Doty and Leslie Lenkowsky to be members of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation.

November 9

The President announced his intention to nominate Gary A. Barron to be a member of the Board of

Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Antony Merck to be Commissioner of the Federal Maritime Commission of the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate Randolph D. Moss to be Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate John R. Lacey to be Chair and Laramie F. McNamara to be a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States.

November 10

In the morning, the President had telephone conversations with Speaker of the House J. Dennis Hastert and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott concerning the budget negotiations. He later had a second telephone conversation with Senator Lott concerning trade legislation for Africa and the Caribbean.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to York, PA, where he toured the Harley-Davidson Motor Co. plant. In the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. (Mike) Walker to be Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to nominate Frank S. Holleman III to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.

The President announced his intention to nominate Luis Lauro to be the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Donald R. Vereen, Jr., to be Deputy Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

The President announced his intention to nominate Deanna Tanner Okun to be a member of the International Trade Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ernest W. DuBester, Francis J. Duggan, and Magdalena G. Jacobsen to be members of the National Mediation Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jerome F. Kever and Virgil M. Speakman, Jr., to be members of the Railroad Retirement Board.

The President announced his intention to nominate Carol Waller Pope to be a member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric D. Eberhard to be a member of the Board of Trustees for the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence in National Environmental Policy Foundation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Monte R. Belger to be Deputy Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joan R. Challinor to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.

The President declared a major disaster in Vermont and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding associated with Tropical Storm Floyd on September 16–21.

The White House announced that the President rescheduled his visit to Greece and will travel from Istanbul, Turkey, to Athens, Greece, on November 19 and continue to Italy on November 20.

November 11

In the morning, the President traveled to Arlington, VA, where he participated in a Veterans Day wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns. In the afternoon, he returned to Washington, DC.

November 14

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Ankara, Turkey.

November 15

In the morning, the President participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the mausoleum of Kemal Atatürk, founder of modern Turkey.

The President announced his intention to nominate James Hoecker to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and will designate him Chair upon appointment.

November 16

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Izmit, Turkey, where they toured earthquake-damaged areas. In the afternoon, they traveled to Istanbul, Turkey.

The President announced his intention to nominate Janie L. Jeffers to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate W. Michael McCabe to be Deputy Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

November 17

In the morning, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Ephesus, Turkey, where they toured ancient ruins and the Ephesus Museum. In the afternoon, they returned to Istanbul.

In the evening, the President met with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel in the Conrad Motel. Later, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton met with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in the Throne Room at the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Later in the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended a cultural performance at the Media Center.

The President announced his intention to nominate Kathryn Shaw to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

The President announced his intention to appoint Al From as a member of the U.S. Naval Academy Board of Visitors.

The President declared a major disaster in the U.S. Virgin Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement territory and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Lenny on November 17 and continuing.

The President declared an emergency in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Lenny on November 17 and continuing.

November 18

In the morning, the President met with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia in Suite 6 at Ciragan Palace. In the afternoon, he met with President Jacques Chirac of France in Suite 6 at Ciragan Palace.

The President announced his intention to appoint Bob Armstrong as Chair and U.S. Representative to the Rio Grande Compact Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Aurelio Sisneros as Chair and Federal Representative of the Arkansas River Compact Administration (Colorado and Kansas).

The President declared a major disaster in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Floyd on September 16–19.

The White House announced that the President, accompanied by Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, hosted a small gathering of representatives from Turkish nongovernmental organizations.

November 19

In the evening, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Athens, Greece, where they attended a state dinner with President Konstandinos Stephanopoulos of Greece at the Presidential Palace.

The President named Lauren Supina as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Women's Initiatives and Outreach.

November 20

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Florence, Italy.

November 21

In the evening, the President and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria.

November 22

In the morning, the President participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Bulgarian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

In the afternoon, the President and Chelsea Clinton participated in a discussion with students from the American University of Bulgaria at the Down the Alley, Behind the Cupboard Restaurant.

Appendix A / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

The President announced his intention to appoint David J. Hickton as a member of the President's Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

November 23

In the morning, the President and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Pristina, Kosovo. There, the President met first with U.N. Special Representative Bernard Kouchner and the German Commander of KFOR, Gen. Klaus Reinhardt and later with the Kosovo Transitional Council at Pristina Airport. Later, the President and Chelsea Clinton traveled to Ferizaj, Kosovo. In the afternoon, they returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced the following organizations as winners of the 1999 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award:

STMicroelectronics, Inc.—Region Americas
(Carrollton, TX; manufacturing);

BI (Minneapolis, MN; service);

the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, L.L.C. (Atlanta, GA; service); and

Sunny Fresh Foods (Monticello, MN; small business/manufacturing).

The President declared a major disaster in the U.S. Virgin Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement territorial and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Lenny on November 17 and continuing.

November 24

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President announced his intention to appoint Rhonda Walters as a member of the Commission on Presidential Scholars.

November 28

The President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

November 29

In an early evening ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Lebohang K. Moleko of Lesotho, Mario Artaza of Chile, Roland Eng of Cambodia, Simbi Veke Mubako of Zimbabwe, Roberto Bernardo Saladin Selin of the Dominican Republic, Guillermo Alfredo Ford Boyd of Panama, Mohamed Nabil Fahmy of Egypt, Shunji Yanai of Japan, and Jibril Muhammed Aminu of Nigeria.

The President announced the recess appointment of Leonard R. Page as General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

November 30

In the morning, the President traveled to San Francisco, CA. In the evening, he traveled to Beverly Hills, CA, and Seattle, WA.

The President announced his intention to appoint John T. Pawlikowski and Jerome J. Shestack to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

December 1

In the morning, the President toured the Control Tower and Terminal Five Transit Shed at the Port of Seattle, WA. In the afternoon, he spoke briefly to representatives of the agricultural community.

December 2

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA, where he attended a reception at the Pennsylvania Convention Center. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

December 3

In the afternoon, the President participated in a menorah lighting ceremony in the Oval Office.

December 6

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended the Congressional Ball in the Map Room.

The President declared an emergency in Massachusetts and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by fire on December 3 and continuing.

December 7

The President announced his intention to appoint Deborah E. Lipstadt and Sidney R. Yates to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

December 8

In the morning, the President met with President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine in the Oval Office.

The President had separate telephone conversations with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority on the Middle East peace process.

December 9

In the morning, the President met in the Oval Office with representatives of civil rights organizations, communications industries, and other foundations to discuss efforts to narrow the digital divide. Later, he traveled to Worcester, MA. In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint Victoria McCammon Murphy to the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Stuart E. Weisberg as a member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Janie L. Jeffers and Marie F. Ragghianti as Commissioners of the U.S. Parole Commission.

December 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Little Rock, West Memphis, and Earle, AR. In the evening, he traveled to Orlando, FL.

December 11

In the morning, the President traveled to Fort Lauderdale, FL.

In the evening, the President traveled to Miami, FL, and later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving after midnight.

December 12

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended the annual "Christmas in Washington" celebration at the National Building Museum.

December 14

In the afternoon, the President met with Filipino veterans of World War II at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

The President announced his intention to appoint Gus Weill as a member of the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

December 15

In the morning, the President met separately with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk al-Shara of Syria in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Amanda Aguirre, Jeffrey Brandon, Carlos Rene Gonzales, Rosemarie Marshall Johnson, Laurance N. Nickey, Blair Sadler, Catherine Torres, and Paul Villas as members of the U.S. section of the United States-Mexico Border Health Commission.

December 16

In the morning, the President was interviewed by Peter Jennings of ABC News in the Diplomatic Reception Room.

In the afternoon, he met separately with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel and Minister of Foreign Affairs Farouk al-Shara of Syria in the Oval Office.

December 17

The President announced his intention to appoint Paul LeClerc as a member of the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities.

The President announced the recess appointment of Sarah M. Fox as a member of the National Labor Relations Board.

December 20

In the morning, the President met with First Minister David Trimble of Northern Ireland in the Oval Office on the Northern Ireland peace process.

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton hosted a Christmas celebration for children in the East Room.

The White House announced that the President expressed his deep condolences for those killed and quick recovery wishes to those injured in the two bomb blasts at election rallies in Sri Lanka.

December 21

In the morning, the President met with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to appoint Samuel H. Preston and Mary Lou Zoback as members of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science.

December 22

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Clifford Gregory Stewart as General Counsel at the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Mark L. Schneider as Director of the Peace Corps.

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Luis Lauredo as the U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to designate Robert M. (Mike) Walker as Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

December 27

The White House announced that the President will attend the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on January 29, 2000.

December 28

The President announced his intention to recess appoint Frank S. Holleman III as Deputy Secretary of the Department of Education.

Appendix B—Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted July 1

Curt Hebert, Jr.,
of Mississippi, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2004 (reappointment).

Maj. Gen. Phillip R. Anderson,
United States Army, to be a member and President of the Mississippi River Commission, under the provisions of Section 2 of an Act of Congress, approved June 1879 (21 Stat. 37) (33 USC 642).

Michael Cohen,
of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, Department of Education, vice Gerald N. Tirozzi, resigned.

James B. Cunningham,
of Pennsylvania, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be the Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, vice Peter A. Burleigh.

Earl E. Devaney,
of Massachusetts, to be Inspector General, Department of the Interior, vice Eljay B. Bowron, resigned.

Q. Todd Dickinson,
of Pennsylvania, to be Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, vice Bruce A. Lehman, resigned.

Harriet L. Elam,
of Massachusetts, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Senegal.

J. Richard Fredericks,
of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Switzerland, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Barbara J. Griffiths,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Iceland.

Gregory Lee Johnson,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Swaziland.

Sally Katzen,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, vice G. Edward DeSeve.

Jimmy J. Kolker,
of Missouri, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Burkina Faso.

Anthony Musick,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer, Corporation for National and Community Service, vice Donn Holt Cunningham, resigned.

Sylvia Gaye Stanfield,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Brunei Darussalam.

Clifford Gregory Stewart,
of New Jersey, to be General Counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Lawrence H. Summers,
of Maryland, to be United States Governor of the International Monetary Fund for a term of 5 years; United States Governor of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 5 years; United States Governor of the Inter-American Development Bank for a term of 5 years; United States Governor of the African Development Bank for a term of 5 years; United States Governor of the Asian Development Bank; United States Governor of the African Development Fund; United States Governor of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Withdrawn July 1

G. Edward DeSeve,
of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget, vice John A. Koskinen, which was sent to the Senate on February 12, 1999.

Submitted July 14

James J. Brady,
of Louisiana, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana, vice John V. Parker, retired.

Florence-Marie Cooper,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Linda H. McLaughlin, deceased.

Tibor P. Nagy, Jr.,
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

Charles A. Pannell, Jr.,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, vice Frank M. Hull, elevated.

Withdrawn July 14

Kenneth W. Kizer,
of California, to be Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs for a term of 4 years, which was sent to the Senate on January 6, 1999.

Submitted July 19

Andrew C. Fish,
of Vermont, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, vice John David Carlin, resigned.

Michael J. Gaines,
of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole Commission for a term of 6 years (reappointment).

David N. Greenlee,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Paraguay.

Timothy Earl Jones, Sr.,
of Georgia, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole Commission for the term of 6 years, vice George MacKenzie Rast, resigned.

Susan Ness,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Federal Communications Commission for a term of 5 years from July 1, 1999 (reappointment).

Marie F. Ragghianti,
of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole Commission for the term of 6 years, vice Edward F. Reiley, term expired.

John R. Simpson,
of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole Commission for a term of 6 years (reappointment).

William B. Taylor, Jr.,
of Virginia, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Coordinator of U.S. Assistance for the New Independent States (new position).

Submitted July 21

Jeffrey A. Bader,
of Florida, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Namibia.

Jackie N. Williams,
of Kansas, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of Kansas for the term of 4 years, vice Randall K. Rathbun, resigned.

Submitted July 22

Amy C. Achor,
of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service for a term expiring October 6, 2003, vice Leslie Lenkowsky, term expired.

Submitted July 27

Anne H. Chasser,
of Ohio, to be an Assistant Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks, vice Lawrence J. Goffney, Jr., resigned.

Brian Theodore Stewart,
of Utah, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Utah, vice J. Thomas Greene, retired.

Petrese B. Tucker,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, vice Thomas N. O'Neill, retired.

Thomas B. Leary,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the term of 7 years from September 26, 1998, vice Mary L. Azcuenaga, resigned.

Submitted July 28

Martin Neil Bailly,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers, vice Janet L. Yellen.

James G. Huse, Jr.,
of Maryland, to be Inspector General, Social Security
Administration, vice David C. Williams, resigned.

Dorian Vanessa Weaver,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors
of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for
a term expiring January 20, 2003, vice Maria Luisa
Mabilagan Haley, resigned.

Submitted August 2

Sam Epstein Angel,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the Mississippi River
Commission for a term of 9 years (reappointment).

Brig. Gen. Robert H. Griffin, USA,
to be a member of the Mississippi River Commission.

Stephen D. Van Beek,
of the District of Columbia, to be Associate Deputy
Secretary of Transportation, vice John Charles
Horsley, resigned.

Neal S. Wolin,
of Illinois, to be General Counsel for the Department
of the Treasury, vice Edward S. Knight, resigned.

Submitted August 3

Ivan Itkin,
of Pennsylvania, to be Director of the Office of Civil-
ian Radioactive Waste Management, Department of
Energy, vice Daniel A. Dreyfus, resigned.

Edward W. Stimpson,
of Idaho, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure
of service as Representative of the United States of
America on the Council of the International Civil
Aviation Organization (new position).

Richard K. Eaton,
of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge of the
U.S. Court of International Trade, vice R. Kenton
Musgrave, retired.

Michael J. Frazier,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transpor-
tation, vice Steven O. Palmer, resigned.

David J. Hayes,
of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior,
vice John Raymond Garamendi, resigned.

Gregory Rohde,
of North Dakota, to be Assistant Secretary of Com-
merce for Communications and Information, vice
Clarence L. Irving, Jr.

Kathryn M. Turman,
of Virginia, to be Director of the Office for Victims
of Crime, vice Aileen Catherine Adams.

Gail S. Tusan,
of Georgia, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern
District of Georgia, vice G. Ernest Tidwell, retired.

Submitted August 4

Dan Herman Renberg,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States
for a term expiring January 20, 2003, vice Julie D.
Belaga, term expired.

Submitted August 5

Ruben Castillo,
of Illinois, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing
Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2003,
vice Michael Gelacak, term expired.

Sterling R. Johnson, Jr.,
of New York, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing
Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2001,
vice Julie E. Carnes, term expired.

Diana E. Murphy,
of Minnesota, to be Chair of the U.S. Sentencing
Commission, vice Richard P. Conaboy.

Diana E. Murphy,
of Minnesota, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing
Commission for the remainder of the term expiring
October 31, 1999, vice Richard P. Conaboy, resigned.

Diana E. Murphy,
of Minnesota, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing
Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2005
(reappointment).

William Sessions III,
of Vermont, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing
Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2003,
vice Michael Goldsmith, term expired.

Submitted September 8

Jay Johnson,
of Wisconsin, to be Director of the Mint for a term
of 5 years, vice Philip N. Diehl, term expired.

Willene A. Johnson,
of New York, to be U.S. Director of the African De-
velopment Bank for a term of 5 years, vice Alice
Marie Dear, term expired.

Joseph W. Prueher,
of Tennessee, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to
the People's Republic of China.

Mark Reid Tucker,
of North Carolina, to be U.S. Marshal for the Eastern
District of North Carolina for the term of 4 years,

vice William I. Berryhill, to which position he was appointed during the last recess of the Senate.

Submitted September 13

William B. Bader,
of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of State (Educational and Cultural Affairs) (new position).

Sim Farar,
of California, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Roger Walton Ferguson, Jr.,
of Massachusetts, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 4 years, vice Alice M. Rivlin, resigned.

Roger Walton Ferguson, Jr.,
of Massachusetts, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 14 years from February 1, 2000 (reappointment).

John F. Potter,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences for a term expiring May 1, 2005, vice T. Burton Smith, Jr., term expired.

Submitted September 14

Joshua Gotbaum,
of New York, to be Controller, Office of Federal Financial Management, Office of Management and Budget, vice G. Edward DeSeve.

Joe Kendall,
of Texas, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2001, vice David A. Mazzone, term expired.

Michael O'Neill,
of Maryland, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2003, vice Deanell Reece Tacha, term expired.

John Hollingsworth Sinclair,
of Vermont, to be U.S. Marshal for the District of Vermont for the term of 4 years, vice John Edward Rouille, resigned.

John R. Steer,
of Virginia, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for the remainder of the term expiring October 31, 1999, vice Wayne Anthony Budd, resigned.

John R. Steer,
of Virginia, to be a member of the U.S. Sentencing Commission for a term expiring October 31, 2005 (reappointment).

Submitted September 16

Kathleen McCree Lewis,
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice Cornelia G. Kennedy, retired.

Enrique Moreno,
of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, vice William L. Garwood, retired.

Submitted September 22

Gregory A. Baer,
of Virginia to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, vice Richard Scott Carnell, resigned.

James M. Lyons,
of Colorado, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, vice John P. Moore, retired.

Joel A. Pisano,
of New Jersey, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey, vice Maryanne Trump Barry, elevated.

Allen R. Snyder,
of Maryland, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, vice Patricia M. Wald, retired.

Mary Carlin Yates,
of Washington, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Burundi.

Submitted September 23

Skila Harris,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for the remainder of the term expiring May 18, 2005, vice Johnny H. Hayes, resigned.

Glenn L. McCullough, Jr.,
of Mississippi, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2008, vice William H. Kenney, term expired.

Submitted September 24

A.J. Eggenberger,
of Montana, to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board for a term expiring October 18, 2003 (reappointment).

Jessie M. Roberson,
of Alabama, to be a member of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board for a term expiring October 18, 2002, vice Herbert Kouts, term expired.

Submitted September 27

Gerald V. Poje,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Chemical Safety
and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of 5 years
(reappointment).

Submitted September 28

Gary L. Ackerman,
of New York, to be a Representative of the United
States of America to the 54th session of the General
Assembly of the United Nations.

Thomas L. Ambro,
of Delaware, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third
Circuit, vice Walter K. Stapleton, retired.

Frank Henry Cruz,
of California, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for
a term expiring January 31, 2006 (reappointment).

Peter T. King,
of New York, to be a Representative of the United
States of America to the 54th session of the General
Assembly of the United Nations.

Richard Linn,
of Virginia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Federal
Circuit, vice Giles S. Rich, deceased.

Charles Taylor Manatt,
of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Ex-
traordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States
of America to the Dominican Republic.

Quenton I. White,
of Tennessee, to be U.S. Attorney for the Middle
District of Tennessee for the term of 4 years, vice
John Marshall Roberts, resigned.

Submitted September 29

Skila Harris,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term
expiring May 18, 2008, vice William H. Kennoy, term
expired.

Glenn L. McCullough, Jr.,
of Mississippi, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for the remain-
der of the term expiring May 18, 2005, vice Johnny
H. Hayes, resigned.

Withdrawn September 29

Skila Harris,
of Kentucky, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for the remain-
der of the term expiring May 18, 2005, vice Johnny

H. Hayes, resigned, which was sent to the Senate
on September 23, 1999.

Glenn L. McCullough, Jr.,
of Mississippi, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term
expiring May 18, 2008, vice William H. Kennoy, term
expired, which was sent to the Senate on September
23, 1999.

Submitted October 1

Avis Thayer Bohlen,
of the District of Columbia, a career member of the
Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor,
to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Arms Control)
(new position).

Joseph R. Crapa,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the
U.S. Agency for International Development, vice Jill
B. Buckley.

LeGree Sylvia Daniels,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal
Service for a term expiring December 8, 2007 (re-
appointment).

Greta Joy Dicus,
of Arkansas, to be an Alternate Representative of the
United States of America to the 43d session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic En-
ergy Agency.

William A. Halter,
of Arkansas, to be Deputy Commissioner of Social
Security for the term expiring January 19, 2001 (new
position).

Alan Craig Kessler,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Governor of the U.S. Postal
Service for a term expiring December 8, 2008, vice
J. Sam Winters.

J. Stapleton Roy,
of Pennsylvania, a career member of the Senior For-
eign Service with the personal rank of Career Amba-
sador, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Intel-
ligence and Research), vice Phyllis E. Oakley.

Norman A. Wulf,
of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the
United States of America to the 43d session of the
General Conference of the International Atomic En-
ergy Agency.

Submitted October 4

Alphonso Maldon, Jr.,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense,
vice Frederick F. Y. Pang, resigned.

Appendix B / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Bill Richardson,
of New Mexico, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the 43d session of the General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

John K. Veroneau,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Defense, vice Sandra Kaplan Stuart.

Submitted October 6

Daniel J. French,
of New York, to be U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of New York for the term of 4 years, vice Thomas Joseph Maroney, term expired.

Donald Stuart Hays,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador.

Cornelius P. O'Leary,
of Connecticut, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Roger Hilsman, term expired.

Submitted October 8

Amy L. Comstock,
of Maryland, to be Director of the Office of Government Ethics for a term of 5 years, vice Stephen D. Potts.

Alan Phillip Larson,
of Iowa, to be Under Secretary of State (Economic, Business, and Agricultural Affairs), vice Stuart E. Eizenstat.

Carol Moseley-Braun,
of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to New Zealand.

Submitted October 14

Charles L. Kolbe,
of Iowa, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term of 3 years (new position).

Submitted October 18

Herschelle S. Challenor,
of Georgia, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Submitted October 19

Donna A. Bucella,
of Florida, to be U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida for the term of 4 years, vice Charles R. Wilson, term expired.

Submitted October 20

Linda J. Bilmes,
of California, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice W. Scott Gould, resigned.

Linda J. Bilmes,
of California, to be Chief Financial Officer, Department of Commerce, vice W. Scott Gould, resigned.

James B. Cunningham,
of Pennsylvania, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Donald Stuart Hays,
of Virginia, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations for U.N. Management and Reform.

Richard C. Tallman,
of Washington, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit, vice Betty Binns Fletcher, retired.

James D. Whittemore,
of Florida, to be U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida, vice William Terrell Hodges, retired.

Submitted October 26

Anna Blackburne-Rigsby,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Eric T. Washington.

Thomas J. Motley,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice Robert Samuel Tignor, term expired.

Submitted October 27

James D. Bindenagel,
of California, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Envoy and Representative of the Secretary of State for Holocaust Issues.

Thomas A. Fry III,
of Texas, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management, vice Patrick A. Shea, resigned.

Martin S. Indyk,
of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Israel.

Edward S. Walker, Jr.,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs), vice Martin S. Indyk.

Submitted October 29

Anthony Stephen Harrington,
of Maryland, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

N. Cinnamon Dornsife,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. Director of the Asian Development Bank, with the rank of Ambassador, vice Linda Tsao Yang.

Bruce A. Morrison,
of Connecticut, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2007 (reappointment).

J. Timothy O'Neill,
of Virginia, to be a Director of the Federal Housing Finance Board for a term expiring February 27, 2004 (reappointment).

Submitted November 3

Irwin Belk,
of North Carolina, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Carol Moseley-Braun,
of Illinois, to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Samoa.

Revius O. Ortique, Jr.,
of Louisiana, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the 54th session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Bobby L. Roberts,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for a term expiring July 19, 2003 (reappointment).

Michael G. Rossmann,
of Indiana, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation for a term expiring May 10, 2006, vice Eve L. Menger.

Daniel Simberloff,
of Tennessee, to be a member of the National Science Board, National Science Foundation for a term expiring May 10, 2006, vice Sanford D. Greenberg.

Earl Anthony Wayne,
of Maryland, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Economic and Business Affairs), vice Alan Philip Larson.

Submitted November 8

Carol Jones Carmody,
of Louisiana, to be a member of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term expiring December 31, 2004, vice Robert Talcott Francis II.

Donald W. Horton,
of Maryland, to be U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia for the term of 4 years, vice Herbert M. Rutherford III, term expired.

Submitted November 9

Mel Carnahan,
of Missouri, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S Truman Scholarship Foundation for a term expiring December 10, 2005 (reappointment).

James John Hoecker,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2005 (reappointment).

John R. Lacey,
of Connecticut, to be Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States for a term expiring September 30, 2000, vice Delissa A. Ridgway, term expired.

Laramie Faith McNamara,
of Virginia, to be a member of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the United States for a term expiring September 30, 2001, vice John R. Lacey, term expired.

Antony M. Merck,
of South Carolina, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for the term expiring June 30, 2001, vice Ming Hsu, term expired.

Randolph D. Moss,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Walter Dellinger.

Mark L. Schneider,
of California, to be Director of the Peace Corps, vice Mark D. Gearan, resigned.

Withdrawn November 9

Beth Nolan,
of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General,
vice Walter Dellinger, which was sent to the Senate
on March 5, 1999.

Marshall S. Smith,
of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Education,
vice Madeleine Kunin, which was sent to the Senate
on March 25, 1999.

Submitted November 10

Monte R. Belger,
of Virginia, to be Deputy Administrator of the Federal
Aviation Administration, vice Linda Hall Daschle.

Joan R. Challinor,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the
National Commission on Libraries and Information
Science for a term expiring July 19, 2004 (reappoint-
ment).

Eric D. Eberhard,
of Washington, to be a member of the Board of Trust-
ees of the Morris K. Udall Scholarship and Excellence
in National Environmental Policy Foundation for a
term expiring October 6, 2002, vice Ronald Kent Bur-
ton, term expired.

Luis J. Lauredo,
of Florida, to be Permanent Representative of the
United States to the Organization of American States,
with the rank of Ambassador, vice Victor Marrero.

Carol Waller Pope,
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the
Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term expiring
July 1, 2004, vice Phyllis Nichamoff Segal, term ex-
pired.

Donald Ray Vereen, Jr.,
of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Director
of National Drug Control Policy (new position).

Ernest J. Wilson III,
of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for
a term expiring January 31, 2004, vice Alan Sagner,
resigned.

Gary A. Barron,
of Florida, to be a member of the Board of Directors
of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation for
a term expiring December 17, 2002, vice Mark Erwin.

Juanita Sims Doty,
of Mississippi, to be a member of the Board of Direc-
tors of the Corporation for National and Community
Service for a term expiring June 10, 2004, vice Robert
B. Rogers, term expired.

Ernest W. DuBester,
of New Jersey, to be a member of the National Medi-
ation Board for a term expiring July 1, 2001 (re-
appointment).

Francis J. Duggan,
of Virginia, to be a member of the National Mediation
Board for a term expiring July 1, 2000, vice Kenneth
Byron Hipp, term expired.

Frank S. Holleman III,
of South Carolina, to be Deputy Secretary of Edu-
cation, vice Madeleine Kunin.

Magdalena G. Jacobsen,
of Oregon, to be a member of the National Mediation
Board for a term expiring July 1, 2002 (reappoint-
ment).

Alan Phillip Larson,
of Iowa, to be U.S. Alternate Governor of the Inter-
national Bank for Reconstruction and Development
for a term of 5 years; U.S. Alternate Governor of the
Inter-American Development Bank for a term of
5 years; U.S. Alternate Governor of the African Devel-
opment Bank for a term of 5 years; U.S. Alternate
Governor of the African Development Fund; U.S. Al-
ternate Governor of the Asian Development Bank;
and U.S. Alternate Governor of the European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development, vice Stuart E.
Eizenstat.

Leslie Lenkowsky,
of Indiana, to be a member of the Board of Directors
of the Corporation for National and Community Ser-
vice for a term expiring February 8, 2004, vice Eli
J. Segal, term expired.

Deanna Tanner Okun,
of Idaho, to be a member of the U.S. International
Trade Commission for a term expiring June 16, 2008,
vice Carol T. Crawford, term expired.

Robert M. Walker,
of West Virginia, to be Under Secretary of Veterans
Affairs for Memorial Affairs (new position).

Submitted November 16

Janie L. Jeffers,
of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole
Commission for a term of 6 years, vice Jasper R.
Clay, Jr., term expired.

Jerome F. Kever,
of Illinois, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement
Board for a term expiring August 28, 2003 (reappoint-
ment).

W. Michael McCabe,
of Pennsylvania, to be Deputy Administrator of the
Environmental Protection Agency, vice Frederic James
Hansen, resigned.

Virgil M. Speakman, Jr.,
of Ohio, to be a member of the Railroad Retirement
Board for a term expiring August 28, 2004 (reappoint-
ment).

Submitted November 17

Rhonda C. Fields
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge
for the District of Columbia, vice Stanley Sporkin,
retired.

Kathryn Shaw
of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Council of
Economic Advisers, vice Rebecca M. Blank, resigned.

Submitted November 19

Francis J. Duggan,
of Virginia, to be a member of the National Mediation
Board for a term expiring July 1, 2003 (reappoint-
ment).

E. Douglas Hamilton,
of Kentucky, to be U.S. Marshal for the Western
District of Kentucky for the term of 4 years, vice
Brian Scott Roy, resigned.

Timothy Earl Jones, Jr.,
of Georgia, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole
Commission for a term of 6 years, vice Edward F.
Reilly, term expired.

Marie F. Ragghianti,
of Tennessee, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole
Commission for a term of 6 years, vice George Mac-
Kenzie Rast, resigned.

Withdrawn November 19

Timothy Earl Jones, Jr.,
of Georgia, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole
Commission for a term of 6 years, vice George Mac-
Kenzie Rast, resigned, which was sent to the Senate
on July 19, 1999.

Marie F. Ragghianti,
of Maryland, to be a Commissioner of the U.S. Parole
Commission for a term of 6 years, vice Edward F.
Reilly, term expired, which was sent to the Senate
on July 19, 1999.

Appendix C—Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary which are not included in this book.

Released July 1

Statement by the Press Secretary on the National Security Adviser's announcement of the release of NSC policy documents from the Kennedy through Bush administrations

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley, and Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre on export controls on computers

Fact sheet: Export Controls on Computers

Released July 2

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste on the President's trip to promote the new markets initiative

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and Assistant Press Secretary for Foreign Affairs P.J. Crowley

Released July 3

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's telephone conversations with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India concerning the situation in Kashmir

Released July 7

Statement by the Press Secretary: Job Training Program for Ireland

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton Provides Import Relief and Adjustment Assistance for U.S. Lamb Industry

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's upcoming travel to Des Moines, IA

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's upcoming meeting with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

Released July 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Treasury Secretary Larry Summers, National Economic Council Director

Gene Sperling, and Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew on the Federal budget

Statement by the Press Secretary on the release of funds under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

Released July 13

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's "right-to-know" for American workers proposal

Released July 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on human stem cell research

Fact sheet: Nonproliferation: The Clinton Administration Record

Announcement of nominations for U.S. District Judges for the Northern District of Georgia, Central District of California, and Middle District of Louisiana

Released July 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Agreement Between Argentina and the United Kingdom on the Falklands/Malvinas Islands

Released July 16

Announcement: Special Envoy for the Americas Kenneth H. (Buddy) MacKay Embarks on Andean Trip to Peru and Bolivia

Released July 17

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Adviser Gene Sperling on the Republican tax plan¹

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's being informed about the disappearance of the airplane carrying John F. Kennedy, Jr., and others

Released July 19

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Trip to Southeast Europe

¹This item was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 16, but it was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on July 17.

Released July 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Fact sheet: Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the District of Kansas

Released July 21

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President and First Lady's plans to attend the Kennedy memorial service in New York City

Released July 22

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance for Iowa

Released July 24

Announcement: Official Delegation to Rabat, Morocco, July 25, 1999

Released July 25

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and Ambassador Dennis Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator, on the funeral of King Hassan II of Morocco

Released July 26

Statement by the Press Secretary: Implementing Humanitarian Exemptions From Sanctions

Advance text of National Security Adviser Samuel Berger's remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations

Released July 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nominations for U.S. District Judges for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the District of Utah

Announcement: The President's Special Envoy for the Americas, Kenneth H. (Buddy) MacKay, Jr., To Attend Ministers Hemispheric Energy Conference in New Orleans July 28-30

Released July 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's trip to southeast Europe and budget legislation

Released July 29

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's gratitude to National Science Board member Chang Lin Tien

Statement by the Press Secretary on National Security Adviser Samuel Berger's announcement of the appointment of Special Assistant to the President and Counselor for Southeast European Stabilization and Reconstruction

Announcement: Official Delegation to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Released July 30

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's trip to Bosnia-Herzegovina

Fact sheet: Building a Durable Peace in Bosnia: Implementation of the Dayton Accords

Fact sheet: Promoting Democracy in Serbia

Fact sheet: Promoting Trade and Investment in Southeast Europe

Fact sheet: Stability Pact for Eastern Europe

Released August 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Director of National Drug Control Policy Barry McCaffrey on the national drug control strategy

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Extends Condolences to Victims of Indian Train Crash

Released August 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on the President's meeting with the National Welfare to Work Forum

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting With His Excellency Bulent Ecevit, Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey

Announcement: President Clinton Releases Second Round of Emergency Funds To Respond to Heat Wave

Announcement of nominations for U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia and U.S. Court of International Trade Judge

Released August 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Mara Rudman as Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Chief of Staff to the National Security Adviser

Released August 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the Presidential Medal of Freedom awards

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton and Vice President Gore Strengthening the Partnership With State and Local Governments

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of West Virginia

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the District of South Dakota

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California

Announcement of nominations for U.S. District Judges for the Northern District of Ohio, the Northern District of Illinois, and the Eastern District of Michigan, and U.S. Court of Appeals Judges for the Seventh Circuit and the Fourth Circuit

Released August 6

Statement by the Press Secretary on the convention concerning the prohibition and elimination of child labor

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting With His Excellency Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of Norway

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton Announces Legislation To Provide Parity for Central American and Haitian Migrants

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton Travels to New Zealand for APEC Leaders Meeting and State Visit

Statement by the Press Secretary on the establishment of a task force to coordinate the Federal response to the drought

Announcement: U.S. Special Envoy for the Americas, Mr. Kenneth H. (Buddy) MacKay, Jr., Visits Countries of the Eastern Caribbean and the Dominican Republic

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York

Released August 9

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of J. Terry Edmonds as Assistant to the President and Director of Speechwriting

Released August 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Statement by the Press Secretary: Designation of Ariana Afghan Airlines Under the Taliban Sanctions

Released August 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Transcript of a press briefing by Agriculture Secretary Daniel Glickman, Secretary of Commerce Bill Daley, and Deputy Chief of Staff Maria Echaveste on the White House Drought Relief Task Force

Statement by the Press Secretary presenting the text of the Presidential Medal of Freedom citations

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Visit to Canada

Fact sheet: White House Drought Relief Task Force

Released August 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Transcript of a press briefing by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner, Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Renewable and Energy Efficiency Dan Reicher, Department of Agriculture Deputy Chief Economist Joseph Glauber, and Deputy Assistant to the President for Environmental Issues Roger Ballentine on the Executive order on developing and promoting biobased products and bio-energy

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the creation of an interagency Manufacturing Task Force

Released August 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Barry Toiv and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of NSC Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director, Defense Policy and Arms Control

Released August 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner and Office of Management and Budget Associate Director for Natural Resources Elgie Holstein on the President's radio address¹

Released August 16

Fact sheet: The President's International Affairs Budget: Investments in Peace

Released August 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

¹ This item was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 13, but it was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on August 14.

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Released August 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert and NSC Spokesman David Leavy

Released August 19

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointment of Beth Nolan as Assistant to the President and Counsel to the President

Announcement: U.S. Special Envoy for the Americas Presses for Increased Economic Cooperation on Eight-Day Trip to South America

Released August 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Fact sheet: U.S. Humanitarian Relief Efforts for Turkey Earthquake Victims

Released August 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released August 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released August 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: National Security Staff Realignment

Released August 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Appointment of Special Envoy for Sudan

Released August 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that Chief of Staff John Podesta will address the National Press Club on September 1

Released September 1

Advance text of remarks by Chief of Staff John Podesta on research and development funding at the National Press Club

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting With Georgian President Shevardnadze

Statement by the Press Secretary on the appointments of Mark F. Lindsay as Assistant to the President for Management and Administration and Bradley J. Kiley

as Deputy Assistant to the President for Management and Administration

Released September 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Jake Siewert

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President and Hillary Clinton entered into a contract to purchase a home in Chappaqua, NY

Fact sheet: U.S. Humanitarian Relief Efforts for Turkey Earthquake Victims

Released September 3

Statement by the Press Secretary: Appointment of Alfred H. Moses as Special Presidential Emissary for Cyprus

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Names Robert A. Bradtke as Executive Secretary of the National Security Council

Released September 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on the impact of the Republican tax cut

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing 12 individuals will sign statements agreeing to all conditions of the clemency grant

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of North Carolina

Released September 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on foreign affairs

Statement by Counsel to the President Beth Nolan on the President's interview with Independent Counsel Ralph Lancaster

Released September 9

Statement by the Press Secretary: Anti-Sweatshop Fair Labor Association Names Ruff as Chair

Official delegation to New Zealand

Released September 10

Transcript of remarks and an exchange with reporters by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger aboard Air Force One

Released September 11

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released September 12

Transcript of a readout by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's meetings with foreign leaders

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Fact sheet: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

Fact sheet: The World Trade Organization Ministerial in Seattle

Released September 13

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the statement of President Bacharuddi Habibie of Indonesia on the situation in East Timor

Statement by the Press Secretary on the imprisonment of Canadian journalist Murray Heibert in Malaysia

Announcement of letter to Members of Congress on proposed campaign reform legislation

Released September 14

Statement by the Press Secretary: President To Address the United Nations General Assembly

Statement by Chairman Martin N. Baily, President's Council of Economic Advisers on the national economy

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of Vermont

Released September 15

Fact sheet: President Clinton: Protecting Antarctica and the Global Environment

Released September 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy National Security Adviser Jim Steinberg, Attorney General Janet Reno, Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre, Under Secretary of Commerce Bill Reinsch, and Office of Management and Budget Chief Counselor for Privacy Peter Swire on encryption policy

Statement by the Press Secretary: Administration Announces New Approach to Encryption

Fact sheet: Administration Updates Encryption Export Policy

Fact sheet: The Cyberspace Electronic Security Act of 1999

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Court of Appeals Judges for the Fifth Circuit and the Sixth Circuit

Announcement: Vice President Al Gore Announces New Report Demonstrating Stronger Federal and State Laws Needed To Protect Americans Against On-Line Stalking

Released September 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Easing Sanctions Against North Korea

Fact sheet: Easing Sanctions Against North Korea

Released September 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released September 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Official Working Visit of Nigerian President Obasanjo

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of journalist Sander Thoenes in East Timor

Announcement of nominations for U.S. Court of Appeals Judges for the District of Columbia Circuit and the Tenth Circuit and for U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey

Released September 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released September 24

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the appointment of the Director of the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) at the Justice Department

Released September 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart and Dr. Connie Mariano on the President's physical

Released September 27

Statement by the Press Secretary: Presidential Travel to Bulgaria, Turkey, Italy, and Greece

Appendix C / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Visit to Canada

Released September 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Prepared text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel R. Berger at the Africare dinner

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee

Announcement of nominations for U.S. Court of Appeals Judges for the Federal Circuit and the Third Circuit

Released September 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released September 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew, National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, and Council of Economic Advisers Chair Martin Baily on the continuing resolution and Census Bureau income and poverty statistics

Statement by the Press Secretary on National Security Adviser Samuel R. Berger's meeting with Jose Alexandre Gusmao (Xanana), president of the National Council for the Timorese Resistance

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel R. Berger on the challenges in Kosovo at the U.S. Institute for Peace

Released October 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released October 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Under Secretary of State for Arms Control John Holum, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy and Requirements Ted Warner, Under Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz, and Former NSC Senior Director for Defense and Arms Control Policy Bob Bell on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton Meets With Senate Finance Committee Chairman Roth and Ranking Member Moynihan To Discuss Medicare Reform

Fact sheet: National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000

Released October 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of New York

Released October 7

Announcement: Official Delegation to Canada

Announcement: President Clinton's Special Envoy for the Americas To Attend Hispanic Conference in Chicago

Released October 8

Statement by the Press Secretary on the release by the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the National Archives and Records Administration of newly declassified and other documents related to events in Chile from 1968–1978

Released October 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released October 13

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling, U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky, and Agriculture Secretary Daniel Glickman on the trade agenda

Transcript of remarks to the pool by Council on Environmental Quality Chairman George Frampton on protection of forest roadless areas

Released October 14

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the First Family has secured substitute financing for the purchase of their Chappaqua, NY, home

Released October 15

Transcripts of press briefings by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso

Released October 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida

Released October 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released October 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Housing and Urban Development Secretary Andrew Cuomo on the President's signing of the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2000

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger: The Middle East on the Eve of the Millennium: Building Peace, Strengthening America's Security

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the Middle District of Florida and U.S. Court of Appeals Judge for the Ninth Circuit

Released October 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger: American Power: Hegemony, Isolationism, or Engagement

Released October 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement: President To Visit Oslo, Norway, November 1-2, 1999

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's intention to veto Department of the Interior appropriations legislation.

Released October 23

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the President's radio address on financial modernization¹

Released October 25

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released October 26

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley, Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt, and Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder on Republican proposal for an across-the-board cut of 1.4 percent in Federal spending

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President will attend a summit meeting of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Istanbul, Turkey, on November 17-19

Released October 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nominations for District of Columbia Superior Court Judges

Released October 28

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the gross domestic product report

Released October 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala on action to preserve privacy of medical records

Released October 30

Statement by the Press Secretary on the U.S. District Court of West Virginia's ruling on mining regulations

Text of a letter from Chief of Staff John Podesta to Speaker J. Dennis Hastert on legislation to protect the Social Security surplus

Released October 31

Announcement: Official Delegation Accompanying the President to Norway

Released November 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Norway-U.S. initiative to provide prosthetic devices and rehabilitation services for mutilated and disabled victims of the war in Sierra Leone

Statement by Special Advisor to the White House Counsel James E. Kennedy on the closing on the First Family's house in Chappaqua, NY

Released November 2

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the District of Columbia

Released November 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released November 4

Advance text of remarks by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger to the Bilderberg Steering Committee, entitled Strengthening the Bipartisan Center: An International Agenda for America

¹This item was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 22, but it was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on October 23.

Appendix C / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1999

Released November 5

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President and House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert have agreed to work together to enact legislation on the President's new markets initiative

Statement by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on the labor market report

Released November 6

Announcement: President Clinton Announces Nationwide Initiative To Prevent Telemarketing Fraud¹

Released November 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Education Secretary Richard Riley and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Bruce Reed on class size reduction

Released November 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Listing: Cabinet Meeting

Released November 10

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's visit to Greece

Released November 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Mark Grossman, and NSC and Special Assistant to the President for Southeastern Europe Chris Hill on the President's visit to Europe.

Announcement: U.S. Special Envoy for the Americas Headed for Panama and Colombia To Discuss Trade and Other Bilateral Issues

Fact sheet: Southwest Europe Trade Preference Act

Released November 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright

Released November 16

Transcript of remarks to the pool by NSC Director for Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Guarnieri

Transcript of remarks to the pool by Lynn Thomas, USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance on assistance to Turkey following the earthquake

Fact sheet: White House Policy Declaration on Environment and Trade

Released November 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's meeting with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel

Fact sheet: Background on U.S. Caspian Energy Policy

Fact sheet: Caspian Energy Pipelines

Announcement of nomination for U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia

Released November 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Chief of Staff John Podesta and Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew on the budget agreement

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the President's bilateral meeting with Russian President Boris Yeltsin

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the OSCE summit

Transcript of a press briefing by Energy Secretary Bill Richardson and Special Adviser to the President and Secretary of State for Caspian Basin Energy Diplomacy John Wolf on the signing of the pipeline agreement

Statement by the Press Secretary on Senator Warren B. Rudman

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's meeting with Turkish nongovernmental organizations

Fact sheet: Achievements of the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe

Released November 19

Statement by the Press Secretary: Executive Order on Declassification

Announcement of nomination for U.S. Marshal for the Western District of Kentucky

Fact sheet: Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)

Released November 20

Fact sheet: Measures To Strengthen U.S.-Greek Relations

¹This item was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 5, but it was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m. on November 6.

Released November 22

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and NSC Director for South-eastern Europe Chris Hill on the President's discussions with the President and Prime Minister of Bulgaria

Fact sheet: U.S. Initiatives To Assist Bulgaria/South-east Europe

Released November 23

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Samuel Berger and United Nations Mission in Kosovo Principal Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jock Covey on Kosovo

Fact sheet: Winning the Peace in Kosovo: A Progress Report

Fact sheet: U.S. Winterization Efforts in Kosovo

Transcript of remarks by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to the people of Ferizaj, Kosovo

Released November 24

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling and U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky on the Seattle Round of the World Trade Organization

Released November 29

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary: Meeting With His Excellency Ernesto Zedillo, President of Mexico

Announcement: Attendees at the Signing of H.R. 3194, "Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2000"

Released December 1

Transcript of a press briefing by U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the Seattle Round

Released December 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and National Economic Council Director Gene Sperling on the International Labor Organization convention

Statement by U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky and Council on Environmental Quality Chairman George Frampton: On Trade Liberalization and Forest Protection

Released December 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Labor Secretary Alexis Herman and Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Martin Baily on economic growth

Released December 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the "Ask the White House" Internet service

Fact sheet: Human Rights Day 1999 and Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Award

Fact sheet: Taliban Persecution of Women and Girls in Afghanistan

Announcement: Attendees at Congressional Black Caucus Meeting

Released December 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released December 11

Statement by the Press Secretary: Official Delegation for Panama Canal Turnover

Released December 14

Transcript of a press briefing by Council on Environmental Quality Chairman George Frampton and Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt on expansion of the national park system

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released December 15

Transcripts of press briefings by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Stuart Eizenstat on action by Germany to compensate Nazi victims of forced labor

Released December 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the Israel-Syria peace talks

Released December 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for European Affairs Antony J. Blinken on the European Union-U.S. summit

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Released December 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Statement by the Press Secretary on the bombing in Sri Lanka

Released December 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Carol Browner on tougher emission standards for cars and sport utility vehicles

Fact Sheet: U.S.-EU Joint Statement on Northern Europe

Fact sheet: U.S.-EU Statement of Common Principles and Action Plan on Small Arms and Light Weapons

Released December 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released December 27

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton's Visit to World Economic Forum, Davos, Switzerland

Released December 28

Announcement: The Clinton Administration Unveils New Initiative To Protect Consumers Buying Prescription Drug Products Over the Internet

Appendix D—Presidential Documents Published in the Federal Register

This appendix lists Presidential documents released by the Office of the Press Secretary and published in the Federal Register. The texts of the documents are printed in the Federal Register (F.R.) at the citations listed below. The documents are also printed in title 3 of the Code of Federal Regulations and in the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents.

PROCLAMATIONS

<i>Proc. No.</i>	<i>Date 1999</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>64 F.R. Page</i>
7207	July 1	To Extend Nondiscriminatory Treatment (Normal Trade Relations Treatment) to Products of Mongolia and To Implement an Agreement To Eliminate Tariffs on Certain Pharmaceuticals and Chemical Intermediates	36549
7208	July 7	To Facilitate Positive Adjustment to Competition From Imports of Lamb Meat	37389
7209	July 16	Captive Nations Week, 1999	39895
7210	July 22	Imposition of Restraints on Imports of Certain Steel Products From the Russian Federation	40723
7211	July 23	Parents' Day, 1999	41001
7212	July 26	25th Anniversary of the Legal Services Corporation, 1999	41003
7213	July 26	National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, 1999	41005
7214	July 30	To Provide for the Efficient and Fair Administration of Action Taken With Regard to Imports of Lamb Meat and for Other Purposes	42265
7215	Aug. 24	Women's Equality Day, 1999	46813
7216	Aug. 25	Minority Enterprise Development Week, 1999	47091
7217	Aug. 25	Small Manufacturing Week, 1999	47093
7218	Aug. 27	America Goes Back to School, 1999	47337
7219	Sept. 2	Contiguous Zone of the United States	48701
7220	Sept. 14	National Hispanic Heritage Month, 1999	50417
7221	Sept. 15	National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1999	50731
7222	Sept. 16	Citizenship Day and Constitution Week, 1999	51183
7223	Sept. 17	Ovarian Cancer Awareness Week, 1999	51185
7224	Sept. 17	National Farm Safety and Health Week, 1999	51415
7225	Sept. 17	National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Week, 1999	51417
7226	Sept. 24	Gold Star Mother's Day, 1999	52625
7227	Sept. 30	100th Anniversary of the Veterans of Foreign Wars	53877
7228	Sept. 30	National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 1999	54193
7229	Sept. 30	National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 1999	54195
7230	Sept. 30	National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 1999	54197
7231	Oct. 1	Fire Prevention Week, 1999	54755
7232	Oct. 1	Child Health Day, 1999	54757
7233	Oct. 5	German-American Day, 1999	54759
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